

Dear Colleagues,

On Thursday February 10, 2022, Yehoshua Perl and I spoke to the Board of Trustees during their Public Comments section. We both spoke about the direction that we think NJIT should be taking in the future. Yehoshua spoke first, mostly about increasing faculty hiring and graduate student funding while reducing the athletic budget. I followed and spoke about graduate student funding and the Egypt-Tatweer Misr initiative. Some of my colleagues have asked me to provide the text of what I said to the Board. Below covers the gist of my comments, though it is not a verbatim copy of my remarks as I had not pre-written them.

Best, Amitabha Bose

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Comments by Amitabha Bose to the NJIT Board of Trustees

February 10, 2022

Hello, my name is Amitabha Bose and I am a Professor in Mathematical Sciences. I would like to begin by thanking Fadi and Joel. Under your collective leadership, the university has made some important gains. Joel, I wish you luck in the future. Fadi, we look forward to welcoming you back to the Faculty.

Before continuing, I want to make clear to the Board that the comments that follow are my own. I am not representing the Faculty, Faculty Senate or any other group. They are mine as an individual faculty member.

Whether you agree with the specifics of Dr. Perl's argument, his overall message is correct. When an institution has a finite budget, it must of course make decisions on how to allocate funds. We have spent the last 15 years funding athletics, bringing many of our sports teams up to D1. Fine, we have had some success. Now it is time to make a concerted effort to fund an increased number of graduate teaching assistantships to bring them up to the R1 level. At the current levels, we simply cannot compete against our peer institutions.

Let me turn now to the topic I came here to speak about, the Tatweer-Misr Egypt initiative. Despite my belief that many faculty would like to see NJIT increase its international footprint, this agreement failed to garner faculty support. In fact, at its December 2021 Institute meeting, the faculty overwhelmingly rejected the agreement. Why did it fail and what can be done about it?

It FAILED because the agreement was based on a shoddy report from Colliers Consultant, a company hired by you, the Board.

It FAILED because the agreement was signed without Faculty Senate input, in fact without Faculty Senate knowledge, in a complete violation of the norms of Shared Governance.

It FAILED because when the faculty finally had a chance to review the agreement, we found all kinds of problems related to Academic Freedom, Intellectual Property Rights, Faculty Rights, Student Rights, Staff and Labor Rights. We found that the agreement would potentially put our faculty and staff in foreign legal jeopardy simply for doing our jobs following our own laws and rules.

It FAILED, simply put, because it was a bad agreement!

What can be done about this? In December 2021, then Faculty Senate President Tony Rosato sent the Faculty Senate Reports on the agreement to Board Chair Mr. Cohen. I presume that the Board has had the opportunity to review those reports. If not, Board members can find them on the Faculty Senate website.

One of the recommendations made in the report was for the Board and Dr. Bloom to constitute a group of faculty, students and staff to work in the spirit of Shared Governance to address all the concerns that were raised and forge a new agreement. You, the Board, really need to make the effort to do so. Because if you don't, and you bring back to the faculty an agreement that either does not have a strict firewall between the two campuses or an agreement that adheres largely to the same parameters as the first, I can guarantee you that the Faculty is likely to again reject it. And this would be a shame because it will shackle the incoming President. He will be forced to clean up a mess not of his own doing. I don't believe the Board should hand the incoming President a welcome present that is so unappetizing!

Thank you.