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## NJIT president pick too quick, some say

By Nic Corbett  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

New Jersey Institute of Technology's board of trustees has abruptly ended its national search for a new president and given the job to the man who has been filling the position for just over two months.

The move came Monday, days after three members of a presidential search committee quit after concerns were raised that the process was too hasty.

The trustees voted unanimously to install Joel Bloom, 64, as leader of the 9,500-student university in Newark through June 30, 2014, officials said yesterday. His compensation hasn't been determined.

No candidates were interviewed, trustee Kathleen Wielkopolksi said, and a planned forum with what would have been the finalists was scrapped.

"Given Dr. Bloom's extensive career and record of accomplishment here at NJIT, there was no need to introduce

him to the NJIT community," Wielkopolksi said.

Bloom, who has been vice president for academic and student services for 21 years, has been paid \$6,000 a month on top of his \$281,441 annual salary to serve as interim president after Robert Altenkirch left in November to become president of the University of Alabama at Huntsville.

The announcement of Bloom's appointment comes less than two months after a presidential search

was launched. Two meetings of the 20-member committee were planned for this month. NJIT did not hire a search firm.

A notice announcing a special meeting of the board of trustees Monday was posted Friday on NJIT's website.

"We're surprised at this turn of events," said Mill Jonakait, chair of the faculty senate. She was not on the search committee. "We thought we were in the middle of a search."

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JOEL BLOOM

Jonakait said three of five members the faculty senate had appointed to the committee quit over concerns the process was not following accepted standards. The faculty is now concerned Bloom, who may be perfectly qualified for the job, "may come in under

something of a cloud."

Professor Farzan Nadim said he thinks Bloom likely was the best candidate, but that the process was an "affront."

"It's basically saying that we have no respect for the faculty of this university, and we will go ahead and do what we want," said Nadim, who was not involved in the search.

The committee received

about 35 applications and 18 nominations, Wielkopolksi said. Bloom, an applicant "with numerous internal endorsements," quickly rose to the top of the list because he got the most votes — 14 out of 16 — among search committee members who cast ballots recommending him to the trustees. She said the goal has always been to announce a new leader in February.

Bloom's appointment provides stability, Wielkopolksi said, in educating future science and technology leaders, responding to opportunities for workplace and economic development, building NJIT's national reputation and going forward with a \$150 million

fundraising campaign.

"He provides a seamless transition during this unsettled period for higher education in New Jersey," she said.

Bloom was a New Jersey assistant commissioner of education for six years until 1990. He received bachelor's and master's degrees from Hunter College of the City University of New York. He also holds master's and doctoral degrees from Teachers College at Columbia University.

"My leadership style is inclusive," Bloom said. "It's transparent. It's accountable. If we say we're going to do something, we should be doing it."

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