



KEAN



A PROPOSAL FOR

KEAN JERSEY CITY

TRANSFORMING URBAN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN NEW JERSEY

Dear New Jersey City University Board of Trustees,



With great enthusiasm and a deep sense of purpose, I present Kean University's response to your Request for Proposal for a strategic merger with New Jersey City University. As New Jersey's Urban Research University, Kean would lead this historic merger with fiscal strength and institutional vision that honors NJCU's legacy while expanding its impact. Our proposed framework preserves and builds upon NJCU's essential role as an anchor institution in Hudson County while providing the robust infrastructure, resources and innovative academic programs of the Kean system. Kean's demonstrated operational excellence and strong financial position ensure we can execute this merger thoughtfully and successfully, creating a model that will strengthen higher education across our state.

Our recent visit to your campus solidified our decision to pursue this transformational opportunity. We witnessed firsthand the unwavering commitment of NJCU's administrators, faculty and staff to furthering the institution's legacy and mission. During our visit, the team walked the campus and community with intentionality. We saw a university that continues to be an integral part of Jersey City's history and fabric, and a community that needs an anchor institution to support the renaissance of Jersey City and the region. Most importantly, we encountered dynamic students who reminded us of ourselves — engaging, ethnically diverse, first-generation students full of hope and ambition who represent the rich diversity and future of New Jersey and deserve what only Kean can bring to this merger.

As President of Kean University, I am personally committed to the mission at hand. Our institutions share a dedication to providing accessible, high-quality education to diverse and underserved populations. This alignment of values and goals makes our approach not just logical, but truly inspiring.

Please accept our attached response to the RFP as our full commitment to exploring this transformational opportunity. We believe that Kean and NJCU can Climb Higher, Together.

We look forward to shaping a brighter future for higher education in New Jersey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Repollet', written over a light blue circular background.

Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.
President, Kean University



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to watch a video
about the vision
for Kean Jersey City*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



KEAN
JERSEY CITY

Kean University proposes a transformative merger between Kean University (Kean) and New Jersey City University (NJCU), two pivotal public institutions in New Jersey with deeply aligned missions. The merger aims to build a stronger, more resilient institution that not only preserves but also significantly amplifies both universities' core strengths and enduring missions. It will focus on creating robust pathways for social mobility, providing students from underserved populations with the tools, resources and opportunities they need to achieve economic success and contribute to their communities. By uniting Kean's expanding research focus with NJCU's deep-rooted urban commitment, Kean will expand its role a powerful, sustainable force for educational access, innovative research and community development to serve New Jersey's diverse urban communities for generations.



The merger will leverage the complementary strengths of Kean and NJCU to address the complex challenges facing New Jersey's urban areas, ensuring that their shared commitment to transforming lives through education expands in scope and influence. The merger will establish Kean as a statewide anchor uniquely positioned to catalyze positive change in New Jersey. We will offer enhanced educational opportunities, conduct cutting-edge research on urban issues, and drive economic development in ways that honor and extend the historical missions of both Kean and NJCU. This merger represents a visionary step toward creating a more impactful, sustainable model of urban-focused higher education for the 21st century and beyond.



A SHARED LEGACY AND COMPLEMENTARY STRENGTHS

Kean Mission Statement:

Kean University, New Jersey's first Urban Research University, creates a world-class, innovative and inclusive society through equity and excellence in teaching, learning, global research, and impactful public engagement.

NJCU Mission Statement:

New Jersey City University empowers its students through a highly accessible, equity-driven, and transformative education. An NJCU education focuses on students' personal, professional, and civic development to facilitate their socio-economic mobility. We uplift our diverse community of students, including historically underserved and underrepresented, first-generation, and adult learners.

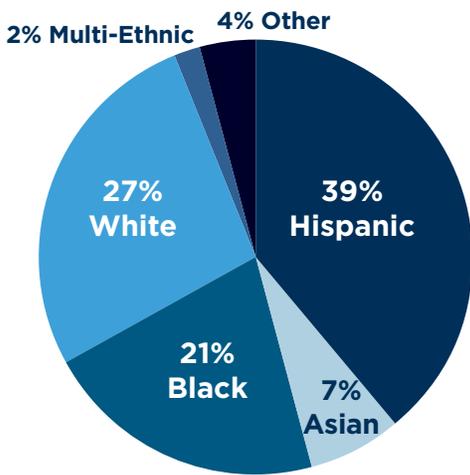
In the mid-19th century, as the United States was grappling with rapid industrialization and urbanization, New Jersey recognized a pressing need for well-trained teachers to educate its growing population. This recognition laid the groundwork for what would eventually become two of the state's most important public institutions of higher education: Kean and NJCU.

Today, Kean and NJCU, both Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), stand as testaments to the power of public higher education to transform lives and communities. From their beginnings as normal schools, they have evolved into universities that offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs. Kean now boasts over 18,000 students worldwide and more than 50 undergraduate and 70 graduate programs, while NJCU serves more than 5,000 students with a myriad of undergraduate and graduate programs.

Kean's innovative leadership team has demonstrated exceptional ability to navigate the rapidly evolving higher education landscape while maintaining strong fiscal health. This combination of forward-thinking adaptability and financial stability makes Kean uniquely positioned to continue to build on NJCU's historic mission. Together, we can create an even stronger foundation for serving New Jersey's diverse communities and advancing social mobility through accessible, high-quality education.



KEAN'S COMMITMENT AS A HSI AND MSI



ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF STUDENTS AT KEAN USA

A SHARED HISTORY OF ACCESSIBLE URBAN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND ENHANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Kean's identity as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is fully integrated into every aspect of the University. This commitment began in 1972 with SUPERA, one of the nation's first Spanish Speaking Programs, and continues today through multiple initiatives: Project Adelante's pipeline development program, an innovative statewide Latino Network partnership, staff development via the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Fellowship Program, and the Center for Raising Excellence and Cultural Empowerment (CRECE). CRECE serves as Kean's Hispanic leadership institute, developing future leaders through education and mentorship.

As both a HSI and Minority-Serving Institution (MSI), Kean brings a wealth of experience and resources to support diverse student populations. This commitment aligns perfectly with NJCU's mission of empowering students through accessible, equity-driven education. The merger would make Kean a powerful institution in New Jersey dedicated to serving underrepresented communities, potentially increasing access to higher education and improving outcomes for minority students across the state.

Kean's commitment to serving a broad array of ethnic minorities is evident through its long-standing programs aimed at increasing retention of minority students. In recent years, the University has made significant gains in the recruitment and retention of Black males. Additionally, Kean's policy work with the Legislative Black and Hispanic Caucuses and urban mayors representing New Jersey's largest minority communities demonstrates its dedication to addressing the needs of diverse populations beyond the campus.

By combining Kean's established HSI and MSI programs with NJCU's urban focus, the merger would uniquely position us to address the educational needs of New Jersey's diverse population. This merger would strengthen and contribute significantly to the state's goals of increasing educational attainment and workforce development among minority communities.



A SHARED COMMITMENT TO URBAN EDUCATION



Kean and NJCU share a profound commitment to transformative urban education. This alignment of missions forms the bedrock of a potential merger that promises to elevate both institutions' legacies while creating a powerhouse in urban higher education. A transformational union between Kean and NJCU would enhance Kean's ability to address the complex challenges of modern higher education. By leveraging Kean's multi-campus expertise and a shared commitment to urban education, this merger will advance our mission, creating a sustainable and impactful educational model for the future.

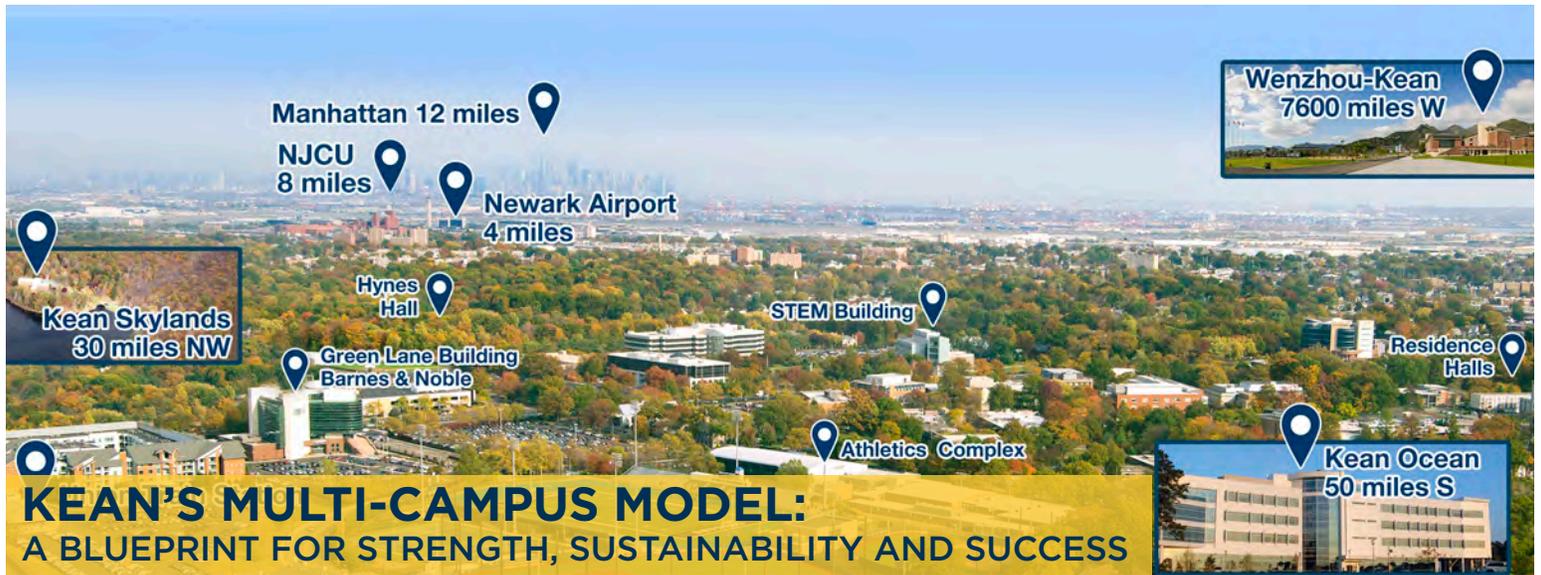
KEAN BY THE NUMBERS

62%
PELL ELIGIBLE

51%
FIRST-GEN

4,000+
TRANSFER





KEAN UNION: MAIN CAMPUS

The main campus spans more than 185 acres in Union and Hillside and serves as the base for Kean’s multi-campus system. With a NJ Transit train station on campus, Kean is fully accessible to students, faculty and staff throughout the New York metro area. Over the past 15 years, the campus has transformed into a point of pride for students, faculty, staff and alumni. New academic buildings with state-of-the-art laboratories, studios and classroom spaces, and recently updated athletic and residential spaces, further optimize the student experience. The President’s Advisory Council (PAC) and other student groups play a pivotal role in campus life.



KEAN OCEAN: A SYMBIOTIC PARTNERSHIP

For nearly two decades, Kean has offered degree-completion programs on the campus of Ocean County College (OCC) through Kean Ocean. This successful partnership with OCC demonstrates the University’s ability to extend its reach while maintaining academic excellence. Courses have been offered in both Toms River and Manahawkin. This model produces hundreds of graduates annually, highlighting Kean’s capacity to transcend geographical constraints.



WENZHOU-KEAN UNIVERSITY: GLOBAL EXCELLENCE

The remarkable growth of Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) in China, now home to nearly 5,000 students, exemplifies Kean’s ability to replicate institutional excellence across cultural and geographic boundaries. WKU’s significant contributions to research and scholarly publications underscore the success of Kean’s global model and create opportunities for educational and cultural exchanges between Kean USA and WKU faculty, students and staff.



KEAN SKYLANDS & KEAN AT BROOKDALE

Kean Skylands is a resource for research and programs on 40 acres of protected land in Jefferson Township, located in western Morris County, New Jersey. Kean at Brookdale offers courses at the college's Lincroft location.

KEAN GLOBAL EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CAMPUS: PIONEERING ACCESSIBILITY

Kean's Global Campus stands at the vanguard of educational equity and accessibility, serving approximately 2,100 students through diverse, innovative programs. At its core, the Global Campus leverages Kean Online's (KOL) nationally ranked courses to deliver cutting-edge education. However, its reach extends far beyond traditional online learning. The Global Campus is a comprehensive academic hub, offering tailored pathways for returning adults to complete their degrees, prior learning assessment, targeted micro-credentialing opportunities, and robust workforce training and development programs for the broader community. This multifaceted approach skillfully balances academic rigor with the flexibility demanded by non-traditional learners.

"SYSTEMNESS": UNIFYING DIVERSE CAMPUSES

Kean's success in managing multiple campuses while maintaining a unified institutional ethos is a testament to its "system" approach. Each campus, whether physical or digital, shares Kean's foundational values while developing its own unique character. This model ensures focused effectuation of the University's mission and consistency in quality while allowing for tailored responses to local needs. Supported by generous donors of the Kean University Foundation, the University serves students from underrepresented backgrounds across the system.

Kean's proven experience managing a multi-campus university system uniquely positions it to facilitate a merger with NJCU. The University's existing infrastructure enables efficient resource sharing, unified technology systems and standardized best practices while preserving flexibility for campus-specific needs. This model maximizes operational efficiency while ensuring all students benefit from shared academic resources, research capabilities, faculty expertise and support services across locations.



KEAN UNIVERSITY: NJ'S ANCHOR UNIVERSITY FOR URBAN COMMUNITIES



Anchor institutions are large, typically non-profit organizations like universities, hospitals or cultural institutions rooted in local communities. These institutions are characterized by their significant economic impact, ability to bring resources and expertise to bear on local challenges, and long-term commitment to their communities. They play a crucial role in regional development, often serving as major employers, economic drivers and centers of innovation and community engagement.

Kean is an impactful anchor institution in Union County, where it is located, and in high-needs urban communities across New Jersey. A recent independent report shows the University's overall economic impact is more than \$1.32 billion. This effort aligns with Kean's role as New Jersey's urban research university and its commitment to addressing social and economic challenges in urban areas.



KEY ELEMENTS OF KEAN'S ANCHOR INSTITUTION STRATEGY:

- **Urban Research Focus:** Kean is a leader in urban research, leveraging its academic expertise to address pressing urban issues.
- **Community Engagement:** The University engages with local communities, forming partnerships and collaborations to address urban challenges.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Kean utilizes diverse academic strengths, including urban policy, architecture and social sciences, to tackle complex urban problems.
- **Commitment to Equity:** The University addresses historical inequities and promotes equitable development in urban areas.



NJ'S PREMIER URBAN RESEARCH AND POLICY INSTITUTE



With over 30 years of experience shaping urban policy in New Jersey, the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University represents a powerful asset for Jersey City and Hudson County in the proposed merger of Kean and NJCU.

Founded in 1991 and named after pioneering African American Assemblyman John S. Watson, the Institute has a long history of working closely with urban municipalities, mayors and policymakers across New Jersey. For decades, it has been instrumental in advising governors and urban legislators and shaping major urban policies throughout the state. The Institute's work spans various critical areas, including economic development, environmental justice, health policy and the positive development of urban children.



The Watson Institute's approach of "linking people to policy" has proven effective in creating real-world solutions for urban communities. For example, in 2015, the Institute developed the first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) specifically focused on improving urban communities. The steering committee consisted of 200 multi-sector stakeholders and 20 urban municipalities, demonstrating the Institute's capacity to bring together diverse stakeholders to address complex urban challenges.

As Kean embraces its role as New Jersey's urban research university, the Watson Institute is poised to expand its impact. President Repollet has emphasized Kean's position as a statewide urban anchor institution, enabling the Institute to lead in developing practical, scalable and sustainable solutions to the state's most pressing social, civic and economic challenges.



The Institute's work in environmental justice, exemplified by the leadership of Nicky Sheats Ph.D., Esq., in passing New Jersey's landmark cumulative impacts legislation in 2020, could be particularly beneficial for addressing environmental concerns in Jersey City and Hudson County.

For Jersey City and Hudson County, this means access to a wealth of expertise and resources dedicated to urban policy and development. The Watson Institute's various centers, such as the New Jersey Urban Mayors Policy Center, the Center for the Urban Environment, and the Center for Economic and Workforce Development, can provide targeted support for Jersey City's specific needs.

The Institute's work in environmental justice, exemplified by the leadership of Nicky Sheats, Ph.D., Esq., in passing New Jersey's landmark cumulative impacts legislation in 2020, could be particularly beneficial for addressing environmental concerns in Jersey City and Hudson County. Furthermore, the Watson Institute's history of collaboration with the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association and minority caucuses in the New Jersey Legislature positions it well to support the development of Jersey City's interests at the state level. This could lead to more targeted policies and resources directed toward the city's growth.

As an urban anchor institution, Kean, through the Watson Institute, can play a transformative role in Jersey City by:

- Conducting research tailored to Jersey City's specific urban challenges
- Providing policy recommendations based on data and best practices
- Facilitating partnerships between the city, community organizations and businesses
- Offering educational programs and workforce development initiatives
- Supporting community engagement and civic participation

By leveraging the Watson Institute's expertise and Kean's resources, Jersey City stands to benefit from evidence-based policies, innovative urban solutions and increased investment in its communities. This has the potential to improve various aspects of life for Jersey City residents, from economic opportunities and environmental quality to education and health outcomes. It positions Kean as a true urban anchor institution, capable of making a lasting impact on the lives of Jersey City residents and contributing to the city's sustainable development and prosperity.



KEAN'S EXPERTISE: BUILDING ON SUCCESS FOR NJCU



Kean's proven expertise in managing diverse academic enterprises strongly positions it to lead the proposed merger with NJCU. As an experienced system administrator, Kean will preserve NJCU's institutional legacy while fostering growth and innovation as follows:

- Uphold NJCU's role as an anchor institution for Jersey City and Hudson County
- Create new opportunities through combined strengths in urban education and research
- Enhance comprehensive student support systems to improve retention and graduation rates
- Implement innovative program delivery methods, supporting returning students and nontraditional learners
- Leverage Kean's strong financial foundation - demonstrated through surplus budgets, clean audits, strong credit ratings, significant debt reduction (\$80 million) and self-funded capital projects (\$100 million) - to ensure institutional stability and growth
- Apply proven fiscal management strategies that balance operational efficiency with strategic investment in student success, while maintaining a commitment to affordability and expanding educational access across all campuses





RFP

RESPONSES



STUDENT SUCCESS, STUDENT AFFAIRS AND STUDENT LIFE

Describe how the merger aligns with NJCU's mission of providing access to higher education for underserved populations.

Kean University's mission statement and core values are strikingly consistent with NJCU's mission to expand access and opportunity for historically marginalized populations. As the first Urban Research University in New Jersey, Kean "creates a world-class, innovative and inclusive society through equity and excellence in teaching, learning, global research, and impactful public engagement." With core values like inclusivity, social mobility and public impact, Kean continues a long tradition of commitment to a richly diverse student body.

For six consecutive years, *U.S. News & World Report* has recognized Kean among top national universities for social mobility. At Kean, social mobility is about:

- Creating access to higher education for students, and potential students, who may need flexibility and support to persist to graduation while balancing coursework with competing priorities like work and family responsibilities
- Equipping students with the education and skills to launch productive careers and earn more than their parents
- Breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty to elevate families
- Changing the trajectory of students' lives and uplifting not just students but their families and communities, an essential part of Kean's role as an anchor institution



Consistent with Kean's longstanding mission and priorities, the Division of Student Success and Retention works with key divisions like Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to provide comprehensive support services. In addition to longstanding programs focused on student success, like the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF), the Center for Veteran Student Success, and the Supera Spanish Speaking Program, new support programs were launched, including:

- The Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS), a team of professional academic advisors who serve all students and focus on first- and second-year students as well as transfer students with fewer than 60 credits
- Bridge to Success, a program that provides proactive support for students deemed academically at risk who would traditionally be denied acceptance based on admissions criteria, which grew organically out of EOF
- The Office of Student Retention and Educational Innovation, which offers proactive programming focused on retention and persistence to graduation, like the Halfway to Graduation ceremony to celebrate students who are passing the 60-credit mark, and reactive support via concierge advocacy for students with challenges that transcend a single office or division

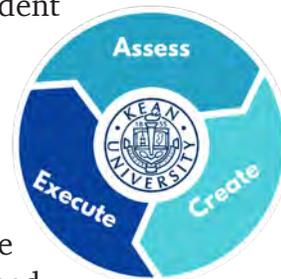
Kean's groundbreaking Spanish Speaking Program, Supera, created in 1972, has grown significantly in the last three academic years, while our Center for Veteran Student Success, consistently ranked top in the nation by *Military Friendly* magazine, provides comprehensive 1:1 transition services. At Kean, collaboration between Student Affairs and Student Success and Retention creates inclusive communities and fosters peer support networks.

Academic Affairs serves as a critical partner in our student success ecosystem by creating comprehensive academic support structures, including expansive tutoring and evidence-based supplemental instruction programs that reach students through multiple touchpoints. This multimodal approach ensures that students learn about academic support through targeted outreach, clearly defined syllabus resource sections, focused advisement sessions, and even casual interactions at the student center. Coordinated efforts normalize help-seeking behavior and create multiple pathways for students to access the support they need.

Describe your current student success strategy and what student support services are available at your institution, particularly for freshman to sophomore retention. How do you envision this working for NJCU students?

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN STUDENT-CENTERED SUCCESS

When President Lamont O. Repollet assumed leadership at Kean University in 2020, the institution embarked on a comprehensive assessment process to evaluate and strengthen its student success and support systems. Anchored by the President's innovative ACE (Assess, Create, and Execute) Model, student success became the central focus of his first year. This thorough assessment led to a university-wide restructuring and the establishment of key initiatives, including the Division of Student Success, the Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS), the President's Task Force on Advising, and the Division of Strategic Analytics and Data Illumination (SADI). These strategic investments reflect a commitment to fostering a supportive and data-informed environment for student achievement.



Kean University offers a host of student support services guided by “Moon Shot for Kean,” which provides a comprehensive framework to improve freshman-to-sophomore retention through systematic, data-driven interventions. Our adoption of Moon Shot's best practices, powered by SADI and Navigate360, creates a coordinated and comprehensive University-wide approach to first-year student success through several key strategies:

- **Early Identification and Intervention** — Navigate360's predictive analytics identify at-risk students before academic challenges become critical and coordinated care networks ensure swift response to early warning signs.
- **Academic Policy Reform** — Smart registration policies reduce unnecessary holds that often derail first-year progress and streamlined withdrawal and course repeat policies provide clear pathways for academic recovery.
- **Enhanced Student Support** — A proactive advising model reaches out to students before they seek help and emergency aid programs address financial barriers.
- **Cohort-Based Learning Communities** (General Education Restructure) — First-year students join learning communities with theme-based concentrations.
- **Data-Driven Success Strategies** — Regular analysis of student performance data identifies success patterns.
- **Financial Support Framework** — Early identification of financial challenges lead to targeted intervention before financial issues affect enrollment.



By implementing these services and strategies, Kean creates a comprehensive support system that addresses the primary factors affecting first-year retention: academic preparation, social integration, financial stability and institutional engagement. This systematic approach ensures that first-year students receive the support they need to successfully transition to their sophomore year and continue on their path to graduation.

As we continuously improve to promote student-centered systems and programs, one key service offered to Kean students is the concierge advocacy provided by the Office of Student Retention and Educational Innovation. A team of retention specialists work individually with students to resolve complex issues and remove barriers to persistence. Working with colleagues across the institution, the team saves students the time and frustration of navigating bureaucracy and administrative processes.

Depending on an individual student's needs, team members may advocate for additional scholarship funds, the removal of registration holds, an emergency mini-grant to keep a student enrolled, or whatever will most effectively empower the student to focus on academics. In addition to assisting individual students, the retention team develops and launches programs to proactively engage students and promote persistence to graduation. With a special focus on first-generation students, and students from historically marginalized groups, the team offers special services to address the needs of the students we serve, including:

- Cougar Pop-Up Shop, where every semester students shop for professional attire at no cost in a boutique-store environment in the Student Center
- Halfway to Graduation ceremony to celebrate students passing the 60-credit threshold
- Kean's chapter of the first-generation national honor society, Alpha Alpha Alpha

The Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS) introduced professional advisors for students, which frees faculty advisors to focus on careers, graduate school and mentorship. The University-wide adoption of Navigate360, a student success platform, enables Care Teams consisting of CAPS advisors, faculty advisors, Residence Life professionals and others to share information, which eliminates frustration for students and empowers student-facing staff to provide cohesive, coordinated support. Advisors work collaboratively with ease and share information with colleagues in key offices like financial aid, student accounting and the Registrar's office, thus eliminating information gaps or extra steps (and staff time) to communicate.

On the academic side, a complete overhaul of the General Education curriculum is in progress, which will promote retention of first- and second-year students by placing all incoming first-year, full-time students in cohorts with cross-curricular coursework co-taught by collaborating faculty, and easing the process to change majors or transfer between colleges.

With such large-scale changes underway, Moon Shot for Kean ensures alignment of varied initiatives, practices and programs that are aimed at closing performance gaps in various subgroups. This effort promotes cross-divisional communication and collaboration, creating a unified, holistic view of the student-centered changes sweeping across our campuses.

Describe how the partnership could support key objectives such as increasing graduation rates, creating pathways to financial security, addressing student challenges, and enhancing the student experience outside the classroom.



**SECOND
SEMESTER
RETENTION
RATE OVER
90%**



INCREASING GRADUATION RATES AND ADDRESSING STUDENT CHALLENGES

Kean University has achieved the highest graduation rates in over a decade through a strategic integration of personalized support services, advanced student success platforms and data-driven decision-making. This comprehensive approach empowers students with timely, targeted assistance, enabling them to overcome challenges, stay on track, and maintain steady progress toward achieving their academic goals and graduation.

For many Kean and NJCU students, the path to graduation is complicated by family responsibilities, work obligations, and financial stress that disproportionately impact first-generation students and students from historically marginalized groups. Through an aligned effort to examine and improve systems that impact the student experience, and embrace a student-centered mindset to promote student success, Kean aims to elevate 4- and 6-year graduation rates for undergraduates but does not stop there. We educate students and families on the fiscal benefit to graduating in four years, including a Fifteen to Finish campaign encouraging full-time registration at 15 credits per semester, but we also track graduation rates beyond the traditional thresholds.

In advancing the ultimate goal of all students persisting to graduation as expeditiously as possible, we recognize that many of our students may take longer than four or six years to earn an undergraduate degree based on circumstances and responsibilities well beyond the University's campus or control. For students balancing competing priorities outside of higher education, the stressful demands of work and life often disrupt their education for many reasons. As demonstrated by the concierge student advocacy described above, Kean is committed to supporting each individual student's path to success. To maximize outcomes for students and for the institution, we meet students where they are and never give up on their potential to persist to graduation.

As we continue to enhance and expand these services, our retention and graduation rates affirm that our student-centered approach is making a meaningful difference in transforming lives through education. The success of our students is not only measured in degrees awarded, but also in the lasting impact they make as graduates prepared to meet the challenges of an ever-evolving global society.



CREATING PATHWAYS TO FINANCIAL SECURITY

Kean's partnership with Territorium to launch a Comprehensive Learner Record (CLR) system marks a significant advancement in supporting student success and career readiness. The Territorium CLR system is a skills-focused solution that provides students with a comprehensive record of their skills and competencies, going beyond traditional transcripts. As the first university in New Jersey to implement this technology, Kean's launch of Territorium in 2022 with the College of Business and Public Management and the Division of Student Affairs has been hugely successful. It equips students, regardless of background, with the tools they need to succeed in their careers and future educational objectives beyond Kean.

Through the Office of Career Services, Kean implements a strategic Cougar Career Journey that guides students through progressive stages of career exploration, development and success. Beginning in their freshman year, students engage in career exploration through Focus2Career assessments, career workshops and early networking opportunities. Career advisors work individually with students to refine resumes, develop interview skills and create personalized career action plans.

What distinguishes Kean's approach is its integration of career development across the university experience and within each academic degree program. Through partnerships with academic departments, student organizations and employers, Career Services creates multiple touchpoints for career exploration and professional development. This comprehensive support continues beyond graduation, as Career Services remains available to alumni, helping them navigate career transitions and professional advancement.



Kean is committed to providing holistic support to students to address all barriers to success and offers a variety of services to meet student needs outside the classroom, including:

Kean Wellness Center

- Holistic, integrated health and wellness services delivered with a student-centered and culturally-inclusive approach
- 24-hour access to crisis counseling and guaranteed connection with a therapist within 24 hours via Uwill

Basic Needs Security

- Cougar Pantry access to food, health and hygiene products
- Emergency aid programs
- Cougar Connections Center for Social Work to facilitate coordinated support





ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Community Engaged Learning (CEL) courses integrate academic learning with community service, allowing students to apply their classroom knowledge to real-world situations. Students take courses focused on themes like economic development, sustainability, democracy and civic engagement. At Kean, Community Engaged Learning is incorporated into the General Education (GE) curriculum through initiatives like the GE Learning Community Pilot Program. This program allows students to take three or four courses with peers in their college, focusing on themes such as economic development, sustainability, or democracy and civic engagement.



The benefits of Community Engaged Learning for Kean students include:

- Improved academic skills and grades
- Enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving abilities
- Developed leadership and interpersonal skills
- Improved career planning and valuable work experience

By integrating Community Engaged Learning into its curriculum, Kean prepares students for success in their future careers and as active members of their communities, while also making a positive impact on the surrounding areas. Kean enhances the student experience beyond the classroom through a dynamic and intentional approach to student engagement and development, including:

- 180 student organizations spanning academic, cultural and special interest areas
- A dynamic Student Government Association
- Greek Life leadership opportunities
- Comprehensive residential life programs with themed living-learning communities





Kean's TravelLearn Program offers students transformative educational experiences that extend learning beyond traditional classroom boundaries. Through this innovative short-term study abroad initiative, students travel internationally led by expert faculty who combine academic coursework and immersive cultural exploration. These 7-10 day programs, integrated into regular academic courses, allow students to experience global perspectives while earning academic credit. From exploring traditional medicine in China, to studying environmental science in Iceland, these carefully curated experiences connect theoretical learning with real-world applications.



The program's broad range of destinations and academic focuses ensure that students from all majors can find opportunities that enhance their educational journey. These experiences not only enrich students' academic portfolios but also develop the global perspectives essential for success in today's interconnected world.



Describe how your faculty are prepared and supported to teach minority and first-generation students?

The Hub for Faculty Development at Kean offers numerous workshops and resources focused on belonging, mental health, and engaged and inclusive teaching, especially for interacting with first-generation students, students from historically marginalized groups and first-time, full-time students.

Relevant workshops are offered to all faculty and built into self-paced online modules for ease of use. Previous workshops include:

- *Fostering Belonging through Critical Conversations* — focused on creating an inclusive classroom environment
- *Making the Campus into a Classroom* — focused on showing faculty what resources are available to engage students in learning outside the classroom
- *What Do I Say* — focused on supporting students with mental health challenges
- *Effective Teaching and Learning Strategies Inspired by Improv Comedy* — focused on embracing the importance of failure and value of spontaneity through active learning strategies

A new community of practice focused on belonging and student success will launch in February 2025, as part of the Student Experience Project led by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and the Coalition for Urban Serving Universities. Spearheaded by faculty and the director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Kean team will explore the latest research on belonging and student success, receive coaching from campus leaders who have successfully implemented such communities of practice at other institutions, and gather tools and resources to support faculty in implementing evidence-based practices in the classroom.

The next section details the development of a new General Education curriculum at Kean. Coincident with that effort has been a more than two-year-long series of faculty development efforts oriented around experiential pedagogies, elevating students' capacity to pose and answer their own questions as a key learning modality, and developing proficiency with both technological tools and classroom techniques that enhance student engagement, particularly for first-generation students.

Kean also launched, in Summer 2022, a new Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The CTL operates as a peer resource, its director drawn from the faculty and supported by the Associate Provost for Faculty Development (a new position as of Fall 2023). The CTL has welcomed several hundred faculty over several thousand individual encounters in its two-and-a-half years of operation.



Your 4- and 6-year undergraduate graduation rates are low. What are your plans to improve them?

Kean is actively improving graduation rates through a comprehensive strategy built on our Moon Shot for Kean initiative. As New Jersey's Moon Shot pioneer, Kean is not just participating in educational transformation, we are leading it by implementing data-driven approaches that have already yielded our highest graduation rates in over a decade. Our plan focuses on five key areas:

1. Technology-Driven Student Support

- Implementation of Navigate360 and Division of Strategic Analytics and Data Illumination (SADI)
- Real-time tracking of student progress
- Predictive analytics to identify at-risk students
- Mobile-first approach with 24/7 support access for students
- Coordinated care networks connecting advisors, faculty and support staff

2. General Education Reform

- Enacting first major update since 2004
- Eliminating major-specific GE requirements that previously required students who change their major (70% of Kean students) to take additional GE courses
- New curriculum focuses on inquiry, place-based learning and experiential education at locations across New Jersey
- Thematic learning links multiple courses such as migration and sustainability, helping students and the faculty understand their work as fundamentally linked rather than disparate areas of study
- Learning communities bring peer groups together consistently to foster connections
- Pilot phase of 125 students, 21 faculty ongoing with 1,000 students planned for Fall 2025 and full implementation in Fall 2026
- Survey feedback shows positive response from students and faculty

3. Academic Program Optimization

- Right-sizing majors to align with national credit-hour standards, reducing bloated credit requirements that hindered graduation
- Development of interdisciplinary minors (Data Analytics, Sustainability, Africana Studies)
- Goal for all students to complete one or two interdisciplinary minors
- Streamlining degree pathways while maintaining high academic standards

4. Enhanced Support Services

- Integrated advisement through Navigate360, creating a comprehensive student success ecosystem
- Embedded tutoring programs
- Coordinated faculty-tutor communication
- Comprehensive wellness support
- Emergency aid programs

5. Co-Curricular Enhancement

- Structured academic support outside the classroom
- Enhanced library engagement
- Systematic faculty development in student support strategies
- Improved coordination between academic and support services



This comprehensive approach demonstrates our commitment to supporting all students, particularly first-generation and underrepresented populations, toward timely graduation. Below are additional specific examples of Moon Shot best practices Kean is currently implementing to improve retention and graduation rates.

- Micro-grants
- Course schedule optimization platform
- Registration hold reform
- Waitlist analytics
- Multi-Language course development
- Open educational resources



Kean students, much like those at NJCU, lead complicated lives, and many have no family experience of higher education. Our goal is to prevent students from falling through the cracks. It is imperative that we seize every opportunity to support students in their studies, foster their engagement with the University, and strengthen their connections with one another. This comprehensive approach to student success ensures that every Kean student, regardless of background, zip code or circumstance, has the support and resources needed to achieve their educational and professional aspirations.

It is worth noting that Kean's important work in improving retention and graduation rates under the Moon Shot initiative extends across all our locations - from Union to Toms River and our Global Campus - demonstrating how equity-focused changes can be implemented to enhance graduation rates at scale. Our success is reflected in our consistent recognition among top national universities for social mobility by *U.S. News & World Report*, validating our approach to student success.



Kean has built a robust financial foundation marked by a history of surplus budgets, clean audits and strong, stable credit ratings. In fact, over the past eight years, the University has demonstrated its commitment to fiscal responsibility by reducing its debt by nearly \$80 million, continually growing its financial reserves and successfully funding nearly \$100 million in capital projects through self-generated resources. Additionally, the University has significantly increased institutional scholarships, making higher education more accessible to its students. What makes these accomplishments even more noteworthy is that they have been achieved in the context of Kean continuing to be New Jersey’s most affordable comprehensive public college or university.

Please provide 3 years of audited or draft financial statements, detailed current year budget and forecast, and detailed long-range forecasts?

Documents shared digitally:

- FY 2024 Draft Financial Statement Report
- FY 2023 Financial Statements Report
- FY 2022 Financial Statements Report
- FY 2025 Budget and Forecast

Kean University will provide detailed long-range forecasts to NJCU if selected to move forward in this process.

Your institutional expenses per FTE student have risen considerably since 2015. Why is this occurring? Have those increases contributed to student success?

The observed increase in institutional expenses per FTE since 2015 reflects many strategic investments designed to improve the academic quality of the institution, physical plant and the overall student experience.

Key among these investments is the implementation of a multi-faceted approach to student support, anchored by sophisticated data analytics that enable precise identification of student needs and targeted interventions. Through the establishment of our Division of Strategic Analytics and Data Illumination (SADI), we have democratized access to student success metrics, fostering a data-centric culture that informs strategic decision-making across all institutional levels. This infrastructure supports our Center for Advisement, Persistence and Success (CAPS), which delivers holistic advisement services specifically designed to address equity gaps among first- and second-year students.

We have also leveraged technological innovation through the implementation of automated early alert systems and strategic communication platforms. These systems facilitate proactive interventions, timely scholarship notifications and critical registration deadline reminders. Additionally, data analytics has guided the strategic deployment of supplemental instruction components within gateway courses where students historically faced academic challenges.

The efficacy of these investments is demonstrated through multiple success metrics:

- Enhanced retention rates across demographic groups
- Improved graduation rates
- Reduced equity gaps in critical gateway courses
- Strengthened student engagement indicators

While these student support initiatives have increased our per-FTE expenses, they have simultaneously created a more robust educational ecosystem where students experience stronger institutional connection and support. The enhanced sense of belonging fostered by these comprehensive support structures has contributed to improved outcomes.

Moreover, the resulting increase in FTE enrollment has enabled further investment in high-impact practices, including learning communities and enhanced academic support services. This creates a sustainable cycle where improved student outcomes drive enrollment stability, supporting continued investment in student success initiatives.

The following is a list of other targeted investments and institutional factors that have contributed to the rise in expenses per FTE student since 2015.

- 1. Need-Based and Academic Support Scholarships:** Kean has significantly increased its investment in institutional scholarships to ensure affordability and access. Need-based scholarships provide financial relief for low-income students, reducing barriers to enrollment and retention. Academic support scholarships are awarded to those needing extra support during the summer sessions, encouraging persistence and degree completion. Recent initiatives include targeted funding for students facing financial hardships close to graduation and for students with high academic merit, low-income, and a financial gap between financial aid and tuition charges.
- 2. Growth in the Number of Tenure-Track Faculty and Academic Offerings:** Kean has developed and expanded high-demand programs, particularly in STEM, healthcare and business. A unique program established in the Fall 2021 was the Equity in Action (EIA) Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship designed to increase the diversity of Kean University's faculty. Kean continuously seeks to attract promising researchers, clinicians and educators from different backgrounds, races, ethnic groups and other diverse populations.
- 3. Impact of Inflation and Rising Operational Costs:** Like most institutions, Kean has been significantly impacted by inflation. Rising costs in utilities, supplies and contracted services have increased the overall expense burden. Additionally, inflation has affected overall compensation costs, as competitive wages are essential to attracting and retaining qualified staff and faculty.

- 4. Modernization of Facilities and Technology:** Kean has made significant upgrades to its facilities and technology infrastructure to better support hybrid and online learning, improve student engagement, and enhance campus life. Examples of these upgrades include:
- **Campus Wi-Fi Infrastructure:** Comprehensive upgrades to the campus Wi-Fi network have ensured fast, reliable internet access, enabling students and faculty to seamlessly engage in hybrid and online learning.
 - **Recreational Facilities and Fitness Center Upgrades:** Renovations to recreational areas and fitness centers provide state-of-the-art equipment and spaces, promoting health and wellness among students, faculty and staff.
 - **Expanded Sports Programs:** Kean has bolstered its athletic offerings, expanding opportunities for both women's and men's sports programs to foster inclusivity, teamwork and school spirit.
 - **Scientific Labs:** Advanced laboratories for research and instruction have been developed, supporting cutting-edge scientific exploration and enhancing hands-on learning for STEM students.
 - **Hynes Hall Business School Building:** The construction of Hynes Hall provides a modern space equipped with innovative technology and collaborative learning environments for business students.
 - **North Avenue Academic Building:** This state-of-the-art facility enhances the academic experience with classrooms designed to accommodate active learning and interdisciplinary collaboration.
 - **Liberty Hall Academic Center:** The multifaceted facility serves as a dynamic hub for learning, cultural enrichment and community engagement. The center features modern classroom spaces, versatile event venues, extensive archives and an art gallery highlighting diverse artistic expressions.

These modernization efforts have created an enriched campus environment that supports academic success, physical well-being and community engagement, directly contributing to improved student satisfaction and outcomes.

- 5. Creation of the Cougar Connections Center for Social Work:** Recognizing the increasing need for mental health and social support, Kean launched this center to connect students with essential resources. It offers social work counseling for students facing challenges related to housing, food insecurity or mental health. The Center also coordinates with community partners to provide seamless access to external resources.
- 6. Establishment of the Office of Government Affairs and Community Partnerships:** Kean University has strategically invested in the creation of the Office of Government Affairs and Community Partnerships to advocate on behalf of students and the University regarding legislation that impacts higher education. This office also plays a key role in increasing Kean's visibility, branding and reputation and has been instrumental in securing state and federal funding and influencing policy to benefit students resulting in increased resources for grants and infrastructure improvements.

While these investments have resulted in rising expenses per FTE, they have also produced measurable improvements in key student success metrics, including higher retention and graduation rates, and have elevated the academic profile of the University. These outcomes demonstrate a clear return on investment in terms of institutional performance, student success and financial sustainability.



Please share your long-term vision for the merged institution’s sustainability.

Kean envisions a student-centered, financially sustainable institution that leverages the strengths of both Kean and NJCU. The long-term strategy includes:

Operational Efficiency

The integration will prioritize shared services, streamlined administrative functions and data-driven resource allocation to achieve cost savings while elevating the quality of services and programs. In addition, a comprehensive review of NJCU’s top 20 annual spend categories will be completed to identify additional cost-savings and areas of opportunity. This review will include Information Technology operations and support, banking services, utility costs, etc.

Revenue Diversification

Expanding enrollment, particularly in international, graduate and online programs, will be key to growing tuition revenue. We will also pursue increased research funding, partnerships and philanthropic support to enhance financial resilience.

Strategic Alignment of Academic Programs

The merged institution will align academic offerings to focus on high-demand, workforce-aligned programs, ensuring relevance and value for students while maintaining steady enrollment growth.

Debt and Asset Management

A comprehensive evaluation of the combined institution’s debt obligations and asset portfolio will inform decisions on optimizing the financial structure of the merged entity, including monetizing underutilized assets and repurposing facilities to better serve institutional goals.



**MOODY’S
RATINGS
A2**

**S&P Global
Ratings
A-**





ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING



MISSION

VISION

STRATEGY

COLLABORATION

CONSOLIDATION

UNITY

The integration of academic programs through a merger between Kean and NJCU promises a whole larger than the sum of the parts. There are differences between our academic profiles in terms of emphasis, scale and growth, but our missions align neatly. There is a great deal of overlap in academic programs, with many opportunities to focus instruction on conjoined programs at either Union or Hudson, particularly at the graduate level.

This overview will begin with a review of mission and strategy, addressing both universities' mission statements as well as Kean's Core Values, NJCU's Vision Statement, and the 10 goals in NJCU's Academic Master Plan. Next is a discussion of academic programs at the meta-disciplinary level with individual programs, both extant and in preparation, highlighted to illustrate pathways for collaboration and consolidation. This section will also cover opportunities for growth and Kean's practices of assessment. The final section, preceding a brief conclusion, is devoted to the two faculties and how they would be integrated into a single academic whole.

MISSION, VISION AND STRATEGY



NJCU’s Mission Statement focuses on students, whom it empowers “through a highly accessible, equity-driven, and transformative education.” The second sentence of the statement clarifies the breadth of that effort, involving “students’ personal, professional, and civic development to facilitate their socio-economic mobility.” The final sentence underscores that the “uplift” provided by NJCU extends to “historically underserved and underrepresented, first generation and adult learners.”



Kean’s Mission Statement, recently distilled into a single sentence, starts with the centrality of our teaching mission but extends to address our commitments in research and engagement beyond the campus. “Kean University, New Jersey’s first Urban Research University, creates a world-class, innovative and inclusive society through equity and excellence in teaching, learning, global research, and impactful public engagement.” The six Core Values that follow expand on the motivations behind the mission: a belief in academic excellence, equity, inclusivity, wellness, social mobility, and public impact. These are in turn principles and orientations that echo in the language of NJCU’s Vision Statement, which adds the commitment to “uplift[ing] our community through teaching, research and service,” and includes attention to partnerships.

**\$10 MILLION+
ON RESEARCH
AND
DEVELOPMENT
IN FY23**

Both institutions’ broad statements of commitment and purpose frame a consistent approach to our students and the larger purposes of the University. While Kean is already designated as a research institution by the state and expects to be designated as a Carnegie R2 when the next classification is released in February, Kean’s vision of research integrates attention to students and the larger communities we serve. Our research efforts are consistently grounded in impact, both applied and translational. That does not mean that we turn away from basic science; rather, we seek ways to involve our students in its production and to move as quickly as possible to deliver benefits for the communities we serve. Those orientations also frame the academic resonances of research: we seek to produce graduates steeped in the practices of inquiry, attentive to place, and guided through experience as well as classroom instruction to understand how they can make the differences they choose in the world and better their communities.

What is your current process for academic program evaluation and what criteria are used?

Kean assesses program performance against the programs' own articulated goals, which are informed as well by overarching University commitments to persistence, graduation and post-graduate success. It bears mention that many of these considerations are baked into the standards required by external accreditors, which are, collectively, a major presence at Kean. Sixty-two of Kean's programs are externally accredited. All our accredited programs require the production of a self-study report (SSR), involve a trip to campus (sometimes virtual) by a site visit team (SVT), and a subsequent determination of either initial or continuing accreditation by that accreditor's decision-making body.

Kean mirrors that process for programs that are not externally accredited through a parallel on-campus assessment program. Every five years, a program will craft its own SSR and share that with a single designated external evaluator (chosen in concert with the Dean and our central Office of Accreditation and Assessment), who will submit a report to program leadership, the cognizant Dean, and the Office of Academic Affairs. The programs will then make changes, should any be recommended or deemed prudent on the basis of the report to acquire new expertise among the faculty, change program content to square with national and global standards in the discipline, enhance student success, connect more consistently with industry, or whatever else might improve program outcomes and enrollments.

Whether programs are accredited externally or reviewed internally, we expect every program to stay steady-state or grow. We expect all programs to improve semester-to-semester and year-to-year persistence, and to graduate a larger percentage of enrollees, ideally over shorter periods of time (though not less than four years from the point of first freshman enrollment). We also expect to see consistent programmatic practices, such as engagement with employers and alumni, the production of discipline and profession-relevant scholarship, the engagements of students in those scholarly products, and thought leadership in field-relevant pedagogies.

Kean is also committed to evidence of equitable outcomes in all our instructional programs (indeed, in all elements of the Kean experience). To that end, we are New Jersey's lead in EAB's Moon Shot initiative, which harnesses EAB's Navigate advisement platform to surface and address gaps in achievement among different groups of learners (e.g., performance variances by race and ethnicity, gender, first generation status, language learning status, Pell eligibility and other variables). Deans are regularly presented with evidence of achievement gaps and tasked with working with their chairs and other faculty members to reduce and eliminate them. These assessments are ongoing, not tied to the five-year review cycle.

Finally, we collect and assess data every semester on progress toward the student learning outcomes (SLOs) in general education, minors and majors. We have just implemented a new data collection protocol, leveraging our learning management system (LMS) to access evidence of student achievement and largely eliminate the burdens of collection, which had heretofore hampered both participation and quality, as well as compromising the bandwidth required to take the results of assessment and drive them back into curricular reform and innovation.



Describe how the partnership will enhance academic programming complementarity and support NJCU's focus on student-center learning. What are the possible complementary academic programs?

Almost all of the academic programs offered at NJCU are offered at Kean, though sometimes with different nomenclature and some substantive differences in emphasis (e.g., the topics covered in NJCU's BS in Sports Management are very similar to Kean's BA in Recreation Administration-Sport and Event Management and/or the BA in Recreation Administration-Community Recreation). Where the programs are the same in degree title and coverage, potential mergers could take place. Examples abound, such as the BS in Criminal Justice, the BA in Psychology, the BA in Mathematics, etc. Programs with the same titles but with different accreditations, such as the BS in Accounting and the BS in Computer Science, will require more detailed evaluation, but could almost certainly be merged assuming the right distribution of faculty and other resources stipulated by accrediting bodies. The long-term viability of all programs will be assessed once the University gathers all available data.

META-DISCIPLINARY CLUSTERS

Business and Administrative Disciplines: The main concern is accommodating Kean's Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation, which stipulates the ratios between students and faculty who are prepared in different ways (e.g., Scholarly Academics, Practice Academics, Scholarly Practitioners and Instructional Practitioners) as well as the balance among the types of faculty. A detailed analysis will require knowing what degrees faculty members hold, when they earned them, and their full publication records. There are two areas in this disciplinary cluster for which Kean has no parallels: the BS in National Security Studies and the BS in Supply Chain, Logistics, and Maritime Port Management. We see both as attractive areas of growth. There are clear potential synergies between the NJCU and Kean expertise in Cybersecurity and the National Security Studies degree. For the second: both campuses are adjacent to ports; Kean has faculty with expertise, a minor in supply chain, and an existing relationship with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which we are seeking to expand. We see strong potential for building a roster of stand-alone and stackable credentials for delivery in both face-to-face and online modalities. The D.Sc. in Civil Security – Leadership, Management and Policy, is a very promising area to grow.





Biology and Chemistry

We offer complementary programs. NJCU's joint program (in Medical Laboratory Science) and Kean's (in Clinical Lab Science) are both offered in partnership with Rutgers. Kean has emphases that NJCU does not (e.g., the BS in Forensic Science) that would enhance options for current NJCU students. Both programs have depth in teacher preparation, and Kean is currently funded through the National Science Foundation (NSF) Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program to build the pipeline in this area.



Computer Science

Kean has a robust computer science (CS) program with imminent plans to create a doctorate. Kean's CS program is accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET); determining what a merger might look like would require detailed analysis of ABET criteria, including adequacy of instruction and research spaces and faculty qualifications.



Mathematics and Data Analytics

This is an area ripe for collaboration with scholars in both business and mathematics.



Health Programs

Kean has all the allied health programs offered at NJCU with substantially more graduate programs. There are clear opportunities for students to earn both undergraduate and graduate degrees.



Fine and Performing Arts

Although NJCU has more degree programs in these areas, Kean has solid representation through our established Fine Arts, Music and Theatre departments. A thorough review of the quality of performance and practice spaces, together with student enrollment and faculty distribution, will be required before deciding whether the center of gravity for these programs should be on the Jersey City or Union campus.



Education

NJCU's strengths in education at the graduate level are impressive. Kean would be interested in building on the excellent foundation within NJCU's educational technology leadership doctoral program and the robust offerings in special education at the master's level.

Humanities and Social Sciences

Like NJCU, Kean serves some of these disciplines through merged departments. Further analysis is needed to determine both student demand for the several majors as well as relative strengths by campus. Some majors may be sunset at a given location or at both, but the ability to provide general education courses in both Jersey City and Union would be critical. A critical angle to explore here is the extent to which some of these courses can be recrafted around both place – issues germane to Hudson and Union counties – and technology, thinking primarily of AI and the strong contributions that the humanities can bring to successful use of AI.



Locational and Modality Considerations

Kean is moving several of its graduate offerings to either fully online (all of our fully online classes are asynchronous) or hybrid modalities (“hybrid” at Kean meaning that there is at least some synchronous instruction which may be offered on a remote or face-to-face basis, depending on programmatic needs; hybrid classes may also incorporate asynchronous instruction). Some programs still have demonstrably robust in-person markets. For the latter, NJCU's Harborside Campus is an attractive site to possibly locate all the merged campuses' administrative degree programs at the graduate level, and perhaps some human services programs such as social work. The facility already has a high volume of foot traffic addressing the needs of in-service workers and organizations through the NJ Small Business Development Center. Combining that energy with traditional academic programs in business, criminal justice and public administration has a good deal of appeal.

Kean’s Division of Transformational Learning: Enhancing Accessibility and Opportunities

Founded in 2021 to further the University’s commitment to expanding equitable access for students and the communities we serve, the Division of Transformational Learning is focused on providing quality, flexible and affordable learning opportunities to both traditional learners and our growing community of nontraditional learners.

Having expanded dramatically in the last several years, Transformational Learning is focused primarily on leveraging the online modality to reach more students across our state and region through our accessible undergraduate and graduate programming, certifications, and other re-skilling and upskilling opportunities for our students and the workforce.

Transformational Learning, Kean Global and Kean Online Overview



The Transformational Learning enterprise at Kean University houses four operating units: the Kean Global Education and Resource Campus, Kean Online, The Kean Center for the Assessment of Learning, and the Kean Educational Affiliation Network (KEANetwork).

The Kean Global Education and Resource Campus is the University’s hub for Kean Online, Kean’s new adult degree completion efforts, Continuing and Professional Studies, micro-credentialing programs, and workforce development and industry/employer partnerships.

Kean Online represents the heart of

the Transformational Learning enterprise’s work. This high-performing unit – widely believed to be the fastest growing in the state - has more than doubled enrollment over the last three years. Currently offering over two dozen high-quality online degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and representing every College at the University, Kean Online has recently further expanded to include new BS in Marketing, MBA, MSW, and MS in Accounting programs. It also offers some courses in Spanish.

Kean has been a statewide leader in addressing the state’s comprehensive “Some College, No Degree” initiative. Degree completion is now a key component of the University’s push to improve access and equity for NJ’s working adults. Begun as a pilot program in March 2024, this new program is geared around helping the roughly one million New Jersey residents with some college but not a degree “finish their climb” at Kean. Still in the pilot phase and initially focused on recent Kean stop-outs and Kean staff, the Global Campus now has about 200 students in the pilot program completing their BA in Liberal Arts. Early student feedback has been extremely positive.

Within the Global Campus infrastructure, Kean made a strategic investment in the development of the Center for the Assessment of Learning (CAL). As an innovation center for the assessment,

measurement and evaluation of college-level learning, CAL plays a critical role in degree completion programs across campuses at Kean, addressing the unique needs of nontraditional students. In urban environments, many adult learners bring valuable life and work experiences that are often overlooked in traditional academic settings. CAL serves as a bridge, legitimizing these experiences by transforming them into college credits through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), portfolio assessment and academic program reviews in partnership with industry partners and employers. CAL has also become a part of the University's retention and success strategy for its traditional and nontraditional students.

The KEANetwork is Kean's education-as-a-benefit partnership program. The program serves about 500 students through a broad range of almost 100 University partners (corporate, municipal and other partners) across the state to help their workforces learn and grow.



Which of your distance education (online) programs could be combined with NJCU to gain better efficiencies in faculty student and teaching loads?

Although NJCU has a much more limited online footprint than Kean, the programming offered is complementary - and not duplicative - of Kean Online's offerings. NJCU's center of gravity is in two areas that are of interest to Kean: education and certificate programming.

Education: NJCU currently offers one online doctoral program in their College of Education that would be of great interest to Transformational Learning: an Ed.D. in Technology Leadership. This is an area where Kean currently does not have an online program but has strong interest, and with Kean's formidable team of instructional designers and technologists, Kean would be able to add BOTH instructors and students to the program. Similar synergies exist at the master's level in education as well, where NJCU offers several master's programs in the education area that are again additive to, not duplicative of, Kean Online's offerings. Of particular interest are the education masters programs in EdTech, special education, and teaching (elementary & secondary).

Certificates: Kean Online has recently begun expanding its certificate programming. The certificates that NJCU offers would be of interest to Kean Online, again in an additive and not duplicative fashion. The certificates in assistive technology, special education, and school nursing are all of interest and highly complementary to Kean's current programming.

**KEAN ONLINE
RECORD
ENROLLMENT
2K+**



Kean Online is also pursuing several online program opportunities in homeland security and cybersecurity, so we are pleased to learn that NJCU has an MS in National Security Studies. Again, a complementary offering in an area where Kean Online is poised for expansion.

Transformational Learning and NJCU Online “FIT”

The Division of Transformational Learning is committed to being an engine of growth and diversification for Kean and could provide the same opportunities and services to NJCU. More specifically, the current position of Transformational Learning at Kean could provide a particularly attractive opportunity for the students of NJCU given that Kean offers an unusually broad number of undergraduate degree programs online - 10 in total. Most NJCU students unable to drive to a physical Kean campus location may be able to pursue and complete their undergraduate degree flexibly through the Global Campus and Kean Online. Any working adults finishing their undergraduate degree at NJCU could continue their work through Kean’s Global Campus and the BA Liberal Arts online degree program.

Transformational Learning an NJCU Opportunity Summary

Kean sees great complementarity and economies of scale across NJCU’s focused and high-interest online programming, and significant overall complementarity in our shared commitment to providing high-quality affordable higher education opportunities to the populations we serve. Kean recognizes strong synergies with NJCU’s online programs and shares a commitment to providing affordable, high-quality higher education to underserved populations. Kean proposes to establish a Transformational Learning Hub at NJCU’s Jersey City campus, leveraging its successful Global Campus model and revenue-generating initiatives. This expansion would allow Kean to replicate impactful, community-focused programs in Hudson County like the Generation 2 Generation Family University, which addresses educational disparities and workforce development needs in urban communities by providing educational resources, workforce training and academic degree opportunities to caretakers and family members of students in Kean’s PK-12 pipeline development programs. The partnership would enhance both institutions’ abilities to serve as anchor institutions and meet evolving credentialing requirements in Jersey City and surrounding areas.



A Single Faculty

In the wake of President Repollet's bold commitment to achieving R2 status upon his appointment in 2020, Kean has undertaken several changes to the way that faculty are hired, retained, evaluated, tenured and promoted. No tenure track faculty are now hired without a compelling research program. Most have completed and published the results from at least one research project prior to hire. Tenure and promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor are now completed as a single action. No one is tenured at that level who is not also promoted. Faculty whose initial appointment was at the Associate rank would be considered for tenure without promotion to Full Professor, which would require a separate action.

As a result, the University has significantly reshaped the professoriate in just three years. More than 150 new members of the full-time faculty have been hired since August 2021, including 53 percent of the tenure stream faculty (meaning those aspiring to and currently holding tenure) as of Fall 2024. All newly appointed Assistant and Associate Professors are research-active scholars. Kean has sought and successfully recruited scholars whose work squares with the University's mission as an anchor institution and urban research university. Across the board, leadership emphasizes not research at the expense of teaching, but research in the service of teaching, with inquiry elevated in the curriculum, laboratory and field experiment. We seek and have brought to campus scholars with a particular interest in urban life in all its dimensions, and who want to create a vehicle for community empowerment that extends to Kean's students but does not stop there: Kean very deliberately positions itself in service to the community beyond the campus.

To make these changes possible, Kean has significantly increased faculty release time for research. Research releases are afforded for the first year upon hire and available for extension on a competitive basis thereafter. More than two dozen faculty now support their own research release using extramural funds, which in many cases also pay for graduate students to participate on research teams, improving our ability to recruit and support graduate students. Last year we created a new position of Associate Provost for Faculty Development, and the year before a new Center for Teaching and Learning. Kean invests in its faculty and seeks a balanced development program, building their success and satisfaction as teachers, mentors, collaborators and scholars.

Should the two universities merge, it would be Kean's intention to craft a single faculty, recognizing the range of expectations made of different faculty members at their point of hire and the different supports available to them since they joined either Kean or NJCU. Indeed, this is not dissimilar to the challenge that Kean faced in this decade as it reshaped its faculty. There were some faculty who crafted distinguished research or creative portfolios despite high workloads and scant support, but that was not how they were evaluated. In the first phase of Kean's transition, it was equally important that these long-serving faculty members, who had for decades constituted the core of Kean's instructional efforts, be made to feel part of the new identity involving research and community service.

We have accomplished that through respectful iteration of expectations, making sure that supports are in place to facilitate achievement of slightly different approaches to making a scholarly mark, and adjusting promotional expectations to account for different experiences. For example, we have made a concerted effort to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), knowing that it is generally more plausible to gain traction in those endeavors than in "pure" disciplinary research. We would anticipate that same process in merging with NJCU, finding the right pathways of development, and involving everyone in a vibrant, affirming commitment to community service.



FACULTY & STAFF



Describe how you envision dealing with any faculty and staff compensation inequities?

Kean is committed to ensuring that compensation levels for faculty and staff align with existing labor contracts and market dynamics. Our approach will include the following key strategies:

Comprehensive Compensation Audit

A thorough review of faculty and staff compensation will be conducted to identify consistency with existing labor contracts, peer institutions and market conditions.

Union Collaboration

Kean will engage proactively with faculty and staff unions, as well as non-aligned employees, to fully understand compensation concerns and explore strategies for the resolution of agreed upon challenges.

Budget Alignment

Any identified compensation inequities will be addressed in the merged entity's long-range financial plans, ensuring a unified and equitable workplace that reflects the value of all employees.

Describe how you envision integrating NJCU's executive and administrative infrastructure (e.g., staff and systems)?



The integration of NJCU's executive and administrative infrastructure will prioritize efficiency, transparency and alignment with the strategic goals of the merged institution. Key steps include:

Organizational-Assessment

A detailed assessment of NJCU's executive leadership and administrative functions will identify redundancies, overlapping roles and opportunities for alignment.

Unified Leadership Structure

Kean will adopt a unified leadership model to streamline decision-making and ensure consistency in operations. Leadership roles will be assigned based on expertise, institutional needs and strategic priorities.

Staff Retention and Redeployment

Efforts will focus on retaining talented staff by allocating roles to align with the needs of the merged institution, with the intent of minimizing disruption and workforce attrition.

Systems Integration

Administrative systems, such as finance, HR, student records, and IT, will be integrated to ensure seamless operations. Kean's recent implementation of Workday, Navigate and other enterprise solutions provides a strong foundation for this integration.

Professional Development and Change Management

Staff will receive professional development to adapt to new systems and processes, ensuring a smooth transition. Kean will also implement change management strategies to address concerns and foster collaboration.

Stakeholder Engagement

Faculty, staff and other stakeholders will be actively engaged throughout the integration process, with clear communication and opportunities for input at every stage.

By leveraging each institution's operational strengths and emphasizing a collaborative approach, the merged institution will create an efficient, cohesive administrative and executive framework that supports its mission and values.



ATHLETICS



Describe how you envision athletics post-merger?

Athletics Post-Merger Vision

Kean University envisions a transformative approach to athletics following the merger, integrating the values, proud history and programs of NJCU Athletics with Kean's commitment to excellence, equity and inclusivity.

Comprehensive Realignment of Athletics

The merger brings together two vibrant athletic traditions under the umbrella of Kean University Athletics & Recreation.

- Unified Entity
 - Combines 23 NCAA athletics programs with expanded club sports and intramural activities
- Headquarters and Campus Reach
 - Union campus as the central hub for athletics
 - Recreational, intramural and club sports offerings on the Jersey City campus tailored to student needs
- Program Expansion
 - Inclusion of NJCU's Men's and Women's Wrestling, Women's Cross Country and eSports
 - Introduction of new activities like Women's Flag Football and Pickleball

Enhanced Facilities and Signature Events

Kean is committed to leveraging and expanding facilities and events to foster student engagement.

- **Facilities Usage:** Periodic NCAA competitions at Jersey City's John J. Moore Athletics and Fitness Center and other venues
- **Signature Events:** Development of athletic events and activities specific to the needs and stakeholders in Jersey City – launch of an annual “Kean Club Sports Day,” bringing together athletes from all campuses for celebration and competition

Support for Student-Athletes Transitioning from NJCU

Kean ensures former NJCU student-athletes are equitably supported.

- **Opportunities to Try Out:** Integration into Kean's NCAA teams, with support for athletes pursuing opportunities elsewhere
- **Support Services:** Access to mental health resources and academic advising during the transition

Student-Athlete Success and Academic Support Services

Kean's commitment to academic success for student-athletes is evident through strategic investments in staffing, structured programs, personalized guidance, and a focus on retention and graduation. The positive culture of Kean Athletics, grounded by its comprehensive student-athlete-centered philosophy and practices, has enabled Kean's student-athletes to excel on the field, in the classroom and within communities, reflecting the University's holistic approach to development.

- **Academic Success**
 - An overall GPA of 3.198 for all student-athletes
 - First-year retention rates consistently above state and national averages at 84%
- **Graduation and Retention**
 - Reduced academic distress to just 6.7% through targeted interventions.
 - Programs like GAMER and The Starting Line ensure steady progress toward graduation.
- **Community Engagement and Global Exchange**
 - Participation in Community Engaged Learning courses, student research and service learning programs support the development of civically-engaged and informed student-athletes.
 - Student-athletes are strongly encouraged to take advantage of global exchange partnerships at our WKU Campus in China and international partnership sites around the world.
- **Life Readiness**
 - Active participation in academic and co-curricular initiatives, leadership development programs and workforce and life skill readiness workshops, provide skills for post-college success, ensuring student-athletes are prepared for future challenges.

Multi-Campus Integration of Student Success Initiatives for Student-Athletes

GAMER Program

The Graduation, Athletic Matriculation, Enrollment, and Retention (GAMER) program is a cornerstone of academic support.

- **Dedicated Advisors:** Athletics Academic Liaisons (AALs) assigned to varsity teams for personalized support.
- **Proactive Monitoring:** Semester check-ins for students with GPAs below 2.5, reducing academic distress to 6.7% by Spring 2024.

The Starting Line Initiative

Supporting first-year student-athletes with structured academic resources.

- **Requirements:** Mandatory 3 hours of tutoring or study hall per week for first-year students.
- **Impact:** Academic distress rates decreased from 20% in 2020 to 14.5% in 2024; retention rates reached 84%.



CLAWs Workshops

Cougar Leadership Academy Workshops (CLAWs) develop life and leadership skills through tailored workshops.

- **Focus Areas:** Personal growth, social responsibility, leadership and career development.
- **Collaboration:** Workshops led by Kean's Career Services, Counseling Center and other departments.

Mental and Emotional Well-Being

Kean Athletics offers comprehensive mental health resources to ensure student-athletes thrive physically and emotionally.

- **Athlete Mental Health Link App**
 - Daily self-assessments and access to licensed clinicians.
 - Tools for managing emotional, mental and physical well-being.
- **Clinical Services**
 - One-on-one counseling with licensed social workers.
 - Referrals for additional support like housing or food insecurity.
- **Level Up Initiative**
 - Virtual training sessions for student-athletes balancing athletics and academics.



Innovative Partnerships

The Department of Athletics also capitalizes on university partnerships with professional sports organizations. Through these internal and external programs, student-athletes on all campuses have ample opportunities to network with and learn from professionals in various fields in specialized courses and service projects with the following Kean partners:

- The NBA
- The NFL's Football Operations Office
- New York Jets
- New York Red Bulls
- New Jersey Devils
- The Staten Island Ferryhawks

Community Engagement and Leadership

Kean fosters a culture of leadership and community engagement among its student-athletes, enabling them to give back while gaining valuable professional experiences. Kean student-athletes are active participants in leadership development and co-curricular activities within Athletics, Student Affairs and their academic majors.

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)

SAAC is a platform for student-athletes to influence decisions and foster community. SAAC programs and initiatives promote communication between athletics administration and student-athletes; provide a voice for student-athletes; encourage participation in community projects and campus organizations; promote special events for student-athletes; communicate information to teammates; participate in opportunities to enhance leadership skills; and promote a positive student-athlete image.

- Team Representation: Two representatives from each varsity team.
- Responsibilities: Enhance communication, promote special events and encourage community service.





Kean University Building Stronger Urban Communities (KUBS)

The KUBS Program empowers student-athletes to serve as mentors and leaders in urban communities.

Mentorship Opportunities: Student-athletes mentor local youth, fostering character and educational growth.

Community Leadership: Participants lead initiatives to strengthen urban neighborhoods, promoting health, literacy, and social equity.

Expanding Services to Jersey City

Kean will ensure that NJCU students experience the same level of support and engagement.

- In-Person Support
 - Kean Athletics staff members will be physically present at the Jersey City campus to provide in-person support and recreational opportunities to student-athletes and students.
- Teamworks Platform
 - To ensure a smooth transition, all student-athletes will receive an account to Teamworks, an online platform that is utilized for compliance, recruiting, and team operations, and provides real-time communications between student-athletes and the Athletics Department.
- Transportation
 - Transportation will be provided for practices, workshops and recreational opportunities on the Kean-Union campus. This will allow students to access resources on the Union campus that cannot be replicated at the Jersey City campus.





ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT INTEGRATION STRATEGY

Please share your student enrollment strategy and projections. Describe potential strategies for increasing enrollment through innovative programs that attract a diverse student body. Please share any strategic planning documents that you have.

The proposed merger presents an unprecedented opportunity to strengthen our commitment to urban higher education and expand our impact as a HSI and MSI. This comprehensive enrollment management strategy outlines our approach to integrating operations while enhancing our ability to serve varied student populations through proven systems and programs aimed at supporting multi-language, economically diverse learners across a wide-ranging college readiness continuum. Kean University will provide more detailed strategic planning documents to NJCU if selected to move forward in this process.

Strategic Integration Plan – Undergraduate Admissions

Our unified undergraduate admissions approach leverages the strengths of both institutions to create a more robust recruitment and enrollment process. As both institutions already utilize the Slate CRM system, we will enhance our ability to identify and engage prospective students throughout northern New Jersey, with strategic concentration on Hudson, Bergen and Essex counties. Our partnerships with Encoura, EAB and College Board strengthen our search strategies, allowing us to identify and connect with students who will benefit most from our programs.

The admissions process features advanced-technology application processing, creating a more efficient and responsive system for prospective students. Our direct admissions processing allows us to strategically identify students meeting our learner profile criteria and offer acceptance before they apply to our institution.

Our urban recruitment strategy centers on our premier PK-12 partnership division, Entrepreneurial Education Initiatives (EEI). This division extends beyond traditional dual enrollment, providing:

- District-wide strategic planning
- Feasibility studies
- Executive coaching for district leaders
- College readiness programming
- Natural pipeline development through early relationship building

95%
STUDENTS
FROM NEW
JERSEY



Our virtual campus engagement platforms complement traditional recruitment methods, providing greater accessibility through:

- Financial aid information sessions
- Scholarship workshops
- Academic program showcases
- School counselor resources
- KEANetwork programming for government and industry partners



Financial Aid and Student Services Integration

The merger revolutionizes our approach to financial aid and student services through:

- RNL-based financial leveraging strategies
- Comprehensive FAFSA campaign initiatives
- Enhanced need-based support structures
- Experience-based scholarship matching
- Multilingual financial counseling services
- Culturally competent aid advising
- 24/7 self-service aid portal
- Streamlined verification processes

Academic Services Integration

Our integrated academic services feature:

- Seamless registration processes
- Efficient transcript services
- Comprehensive degree auditing
- Optimized classroom allocation
- Flexible teaching modalities
- Multi-campus course delivery options
- Enhanced operational efficiency

Strategic Integration Plan – Transfer Admissions

Our transfer strategy emphasizes strong partnerships with key community colleges, particularly in Hudson, Essex and Bergen counties. Building on our proven success model, we offer:

Proven Distance Partnership Model

Our flourishing legacy partnership campus in Ocean County demonstrates our expertise in managing successful educational partnerships across significant distances. Despite being over 60 miles from our main campus, Kean Ocean has created a seamless transfer ecosystem through shared facilities and resources, consistently serving hundreds of students annually. This established success validates our ability to create similar thriving pathways in Hudson, Essex and Bergen counties.

Transfer Support Framework

- Clear articulation agreements
- 3+1 program opportunities
- Standardized credit evaluation
- Automated transfer credit assessment
- Strategic transfer pathways
- Comprehensive support services



Technology Infrastructure and Innovation

Our technological foundation centers on:

- Integrated Slate CRM system
- Advanced third-party search capabilities
- Automated communication workflows
- Mobile-first design architecture
- Real-time transfer credit evaluation
- Digital document management

Enrollment Operations and Efficiency

Operational integration focuses on:

- Bilingual service delivery
- Streamlined student support
- Automated workflow systems
- Digital document processing
- Virtual queuing systems
- Cross-trained staff development

Commitment to Urban Education

Our dedication to student success begins with strategic recruitment and continues through graduation, leveraging sophisticated data analytics and targeted outreach to identify and engage prospective students across our urban communities. Through SADI and Navigate360 platform, we track student success metrics throughout the enrollment funnel, from initial contact through admission, enrollment and progression to graduation. This data-informed approach allows us to develop personalized intervention strategies and support services that address the unique needs of our diverse student populations.

The admission process seamlessly transitions into a comprehensive advisement and retention strategy that combines proactive academic support, financial aid optimization and student engagement initiatives. Our strategic partnerships with local schools and businesses create natural pipelines for recruitment while strengthening our position as an anchor institution in the communities we serve. Through our PK-12 partnerships division, Entrepreneurial Education Initiatives (EEI), we build early connections with prospective students and provide targeted support throughout their academic journey. This integrated approach ensures that students not only enroll but persist and succeed through graduation.

By unifying our recruitment, admission and retention strategies with robust student support services and technological innovations, we create a seamless pathway to degree completion. Success metrics demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach through improved retention rates, higher graduation rates and stronger post-graduation outcomes. This comprehensive strategy represents more than traditional enrollment management – it embodies our commitment to transforming lives through education by supporting students at every step of their academic journey. Through careful implementation of these integrated support systems, we maintain our fundamental commitment to access, equity and student success while preparing graduates for meaningful careers and continued educational advancement.



Strategic Integration Plan – Graduate and International

We see tremendous opportunities to grow graduate enrollment at NJCU particularly in the School of Business at Harborside location in administrative sciences (e.g., Business, Public Administration, etc.) and other areas attractive to working professionals. This is also a space particularly well suited to accelerated recruitment of international students for all programs with a global emphasis in addition to the administrative and applied disciplines most attractive to that audience.

Graduate Program Focus Areas

- MBA with specializations in Financial Technology and Global Business
- Master of Public Administration with Urban Development concentration
- M.S. in Business Analytics and Data Science
- Executive Education certificates in high-demand fields

International Student Recruitment Strategy

- Targeted recruitment in key markets with established NYC connections
- Partnership development with overseas educational institutions
- Virtual recruitment events timed for international markets
- Multilingual marketing materials and application support
- Enhanced visa processing support services

Professional Network Integration

- Corporate partnership programs with Jersey City employers
- Internship pipelines with Manhattan-based organizations
- Guest speaker series featuring industry leaders
- Professional mentorship opportunities
- Career services tailored to international job seekers

Technology and Infrastructure

- Hybrid-flexible classroom technology
- Global time zone accommodation for virtual components
- Digital student service delivery systems
- Credential evaluation services
- Virtual career fair platform

This merger could leverage NJCU’s locations, including Harborside, to create a distinctive graduate and international education hub that serves both local professionals and global learners. The focus on administrative sciences and professional programs, combined with comprehensive support services and strategic partnerships, positions us for sustainable growth in these key markets.





INTEGRATION PROCESS



Describe how you envision involving faculty, staff and board in the discussions. At what point in the process?

President Repollet received approval in December 2024 from the Kean University Board of Trustees to proceed with the first step in a potential integration process. The Kean Board recognized such a process will be both extensive and intensive for any potential merger candidate, and that legislative authority is needed to address certain matters, including dissolution of a standing institution and its merger into another state institution. The Kean Board gave the University President and his administrative team broad authority to respond to NJCU’s request for proposals. The thoughts shared in this section reflect those of the administrative leadership team.

Regarding involvement in merger discussions, the President of Kean University envisions a process where all parties involved in, and ultimately impacted by, a proposed merger are given an opportunity to share their perspectives and insights. The goal is to facilitate a transparent process that delivers academic, cultural and financial success for all involved parties. Those discussions would take place at appropriate intervals during the potential merger process with NJCU faculty, staff and administration representatives. Creating a Merger Advisory Committee with representatives from various groups and both institutions would play a key role in that success.

Certainly, Kean needs to complete a period of rigorous due diligence, learning all it can about the financial resources and restrictions of NJCU, and understanding as best as possible its current academic and administration operations. To the extent NJCU faculty and staff can enlighten that due diligence work, their input would be appreciated and accepted via formal routes to be determined at a future date. Once the due diligence period concludes and Kean can better formulate its strategy for success in Jersey City, the administration would welcome input from all constituents at NJCU through, perhaps, the advisory committee and other public formats. This work would likely begin in fall 2025, once a selection is approved by university and state authorities.

Ultimately, the decision on whether Kean moves forward with a strategy to merge NJCU into its larger organization and operate a campus in Jersey City lies with the Kean University Board of Trustees. The Board certainly anticipates future discussions with members of the NJCU board should its proposal be accepted.

Describe how you envision the integration of NJCU to occur within the context of its existing organization (e.g., shared systems opportunities, shared governance, shared faculty, shared courses, etc.).

SYSTEMS

All opportunities to eliminate duplication of services in an effective, financially expedient, and secure manner would be sought and embraced. Kean would identify opportunities to implement its existing systems in all appropriate areas, while systems at NJCU that are superior to those at Kean should be considered. The objective is to consolidate, leverage and standardize technology systems, as well as processes and procedures, to increase efficiency and reduce costs. The resulting systems architecture will advance the strategy of making systems simple, standard, secure and sustainable.

COURSE INTEGRATION

The integration of academic courses between Kean and NJCU would be strategically implemented through several key phases, prioritizing student success and academic quality. Initially, we would maintain existing course offerings at both locations while conducting a thorough analysis of:

Curriculum Alignment and Innovation

- Course overlap identification and standardization
- Complementary program strengths
- Joint course development opportunities
- Shared general education framework
- Cross-campus enrollment possibilities
- Technology-enhanced delivery methods
- Faculty expertise utilization
- Assessment standardization

Implementation Strategy

- Maintaining current course schedules during transition
- Gradual integration of aligned curricula
- Development of flexible delivery options
 - Hybrid-Flex (HyFlex) course delivery
HyFlex is a teaching modality that combines in-person and online learning, allowing students to choose how they attend each class session - either face-to-face in the classroom, synchronously online, or in some instances asynchronously online. The course design must provide equivalent learning opportunities across all participation modes.
 - Synchronous multi-campus classes
 - Asynchronous online options
 - Hybrid learning models
 - Cross-campus collaborative courses
- Strategic course scheduling across locations



GOVERNANCE

The Kean University Board of Trustees would continue to govern the integrated institutions. The Kean Board, in consultation with NJCU representatives and relevant authorities, would determine appropriate seat allocation and representation on the governing body to ensure the community and city have a voice in governance. This work could include expanding the board membership to include a seat or two dedicated to Jersey City and/or Hudson County residents. Such appointments would be made through the existing process of nomination through the Governor's Office and confirmation by the state Senate.

Additional Governance Structures at Kean

As part of the merger process, Kean University is committed to fully integrating NJCU faculty, staff and students into its governance model and structure. This integration will be carefully considered across various entities, including the University Senate, University Planning Council and other key committees. The goal is to ensure meaningful representation and participation from all members of the newly expanded Kean community, upholding the principles of shared governance and inclusive decision-making fundamental to Kean's mission.

The integration of NJCU into Kean's governance structures will be carefully phased in, with thoughtful consideration given to representation, voting rights and committee participation.

University Planning Council (UPC)

The University Planning Council (UPC) stands as a cornerstone of Kean's shared governance model, serving as the primary body responsible for strategic planning and institutional effectiveness. Acting as an advisory committee to the President, the UPC brings together diverse perspectives from across the University community, inclusive of our faculty and staff from various campuses, to ensure that all major institutional decisions align with Kean's mission and strategic objectives.

Structurally, the UPC's membership reflects Kean's commitment to inclusive decision-making, comprising representatives from every sector of the University community. This includes presidential appointees, faculty representatives from each academic college appointed through the University Senate, student delegates, bargaining unit representatives, administrative leadership from University divisions, Kean University Foundation members, and key ex officio participants. Members typically serve three-year terms, creating a balance between continuity and fresh perspectives in the planning process.

The UPC's core responsibilities extend beyond traditional strategic planning to encompass comprehensive institutional assessment and effectiveness measures. Through collaborative processes, the council aims to drive Kean's advancement while maintaining accountability through regular assessment of progress. The UPC's work ensures that all University initiatives, from academic programs to resource allocation, align with Kean's strategic priorities and support its mission.

- NJCU representatives would be eligible for all at-large seats
- Equal consideration for committee leadership roles
- Full participation in subcommittees
- Representation on executive committee
- Voting rights on all UPC matters



University Senate

The University Senate serves as a primary shared governance body at Kean University, providing crucial advisory guidance to the President and administration on academic and institutional matters. The Senate's membership reflects the University's commitment to collaborative decision-making, comprising representatives from faculty, professional staff, and students across all academic colleges and administrative units.

Senate members typically serve three-year terms, fostering both stability and regular renewal in the governance process. The body operates through a structured committee system that addresses key areas including curriculum, academic standards, professional development and student affairs. Through regular meetings and active committee work, the Senate ensures that academic policies, programs, and initiatives align with the University's mission while maintaining high standards of educational excellence.

The Senate's recommendations and actions play a vital role in shaping academic policies, curriculum development and institutional advancement, making it an essential component of Kean's shared governance model.



Student Government

The Kean University Student Government serves as the official representative body for all students, working to enhance campus life, advocate for student interests and manage student activities and organizations. Operating through an executive board and specialized committees, Student Government maintains oversight of student activity fees, campus programming and student organization funding.

Student Government functions through a collaborative structure that enables both unified advocacy and localized programming. Its leadership includes elected student representatives who serve one-year terms, working closely with University administration to address student needs and concerns. Through regular meetings, policy development, and strategic planning, Student Government plays a vital role in shaping the student experience and fostering a vibrant campus community.

President's Advisory Council

Kean University's President's Advisory Council (PAC) is a roundtable of student leaders from across campus who bring a wide range of experiences, viewpoints and backgrounds to provide the President and his administration with direct input and feedback regarding concerns and solutions around the University. In addition, PAC members serve as Kean University ambassadors and gain access to various career, leadership and mentorship opportunities.

To seamlessly integrate this structure with Kean Jersey City, students based in Jersey City will be recruited to cover issues unique to that campus. Students can submit applications at the start of every fall semester and, if selected, are appointed for a one-year term. Members may be re-appointed based on their performance throughout the academic year. Quality of application, involvement with the campus community and surrounding communities, ability to work with fellow peers, and suitability to handle sensitive material are all considered when selecting new members.

Suggest strategies for managing cultural integration between our institutions.

Cultural integration and change management are critical components in the merger between Kean and NJCU. This process is essential for creating a unified institution that preserves the strengths of both universities while fostering a new, shared identity. The importance of cultural integration in this merger cannot be overstated. It ensures that:

- Students from both institutions feel equally valued and supported.
- Faculty and staff can collaborate effectively across former institutional boundaries.
- The merged university maintains a cohesive mission and vision.
- The strengths and traditions of both institutions are respected and preserved.

Effective management of cultural integration in this context involves:

- Implementation of cultural due diligence assessments (e.g., surveys and interviews and focus groups with all stakeholders) and an analysis of operating styles
- Clear and frequent communication about the merger process and its implications
- Opportunities for stakeholders from both institutions to provide input and feedback
- Training and support for faculty and staff to adapt to new systems and processes
- Careful attention to aligning policies, procedures, and academic programs

The aligned missions and similar student demographics of Kean and NJCU provide a strong foundation for efficient cultural integration. Both institutions have a history of serving diverse, often first-generation college students, and share a commitment to providing affordable, high-quality education. This common ground can facilitate:

- Easier alignment of academic programs and student support services
- Shared understanding of student needs and challenges
- Smoother integration of faculty and staff who already share similar professional goals
- More rapid development of a unified institutional culture

To implement this integration effectively, the merged institution will:

- Form cross-institutional teams to work on key integration issues.
- Host joint events and workshops to bring together students, faculty, and staff from both campuses.
- Develop a new, shared set of values and goals that incorporates elements from both institutions.
- Create opportunities for students from both campuses to interact and collaborate.

By prioritizing cultural integration and change management, the merger between Kean and NJCU will create a stronger, more unified institution that better serves its students and communities.



Integration of Student Services and Student Life

The integration of student services and student life programming between Kean and NJCU will create a comprehensive support ecosystem that enhances the student experience across all campuses. By leveraging Kean's proven success with multi-campus operations and NJCU's deep connection to Hudson County, we will develop a unified student services model that maintains local campus identity while providing expanded opportunities for all students. This model will feature seamless access to support services through both physical and virtual delivery methods, ensuring that students can access resources regardless of their primary campus location. The integration will enhance existing programs while creating new opportunities for cross-campus engagement, including shared cultural celebrations, leadership development programs, and student organization collaborations.



A key focus of our student life integration will be the thoughtful alignment of affinity groups and Greek organizations across both campuses. Our approach will preserve the unique traditions and histories of existing Greek chapters while creating opportunities for expansion and collaboration. By establishing a unified Greek Council structure that maintains local chapter autonomy, we will foster inter-campus relationships and shared programming opportunities. Cultural and identity-based student organizations from both institutions will be supported in developing collaborative programming that celebrates our diverse student population while maintaining their distinct campus presence. This approach allows for the preservation of established community bonds while creating new opportunities for student engagement and leadership development.



Our commitment to student success will be further strengthened through the strategic alignment of support services and student life programming. We will create an integrated network of resources that follows students throughout their academic journey, combining Kean's robust retention initiatives with NJCU's community-centered programming. This comprehensive structure will address diverse student needs through expanded access to mental health services, career development resources, academic support programs and wellness initiatives across all locations. Through careful coordination of student life programming, intentional creation of cross-campus engagement opportunities, and support for both existing and new student organizations, we will foster a vibrant campus community that celebrates the unique character of each location while building a shared institutional identity that enhances the overall student experience.



What is your timetable for proceeding?

JANUARY – MARCH 2025

- RFP response to NJCU
- NJCU Board selection
- Kean University Board of Trustees Decision
- Letter of Intent

APRIL – JUNE 2025

- Establish Due Diligence period, parameters
- Establish transition committees
- State budget proposal development for FY26
- Establish governance decision-making processes
- Determine leadership roles

JUNE 2025

FY26 State Appropriations commitment finalized

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025

- Continue transition planning
- Develop MSCHE substantive change request submission
- Identify US DOE requirements
- Complete due diligence period

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2025

- Review due diligence findings
- MSCHE substantive change submitted
- Pursue US DOE approvals
- Continue transition planning
- Identify fiscal requirements for FY27

2026

- Secure final approvals from MSCHE and DOE
- Finalize transition planning
- Implement efficiency strategies
- Formalize merger
- Plan Fall 2027 recruitment





*Scan the QR code
to watch a video
about the vision
for Kean Jersey City*

DISCLAIMER: This proposal is subject to final contract terms and conditions and is being submitted prior to any due diligence. The information contained herein is solely for your general information and should not be considered a contractual commitment by Kean.



KEAN

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COUGARS CLIMB HIGHER