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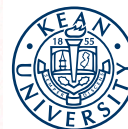


KEAN UNIVERSITY **STRATEGIC PLAN** *2025-2030*



Newark Normal School, c. 1855

Newark • Public
Normal • School



KEAN



North Avenue Academic Building, c. 2025

INTRODUCTION

As Kean University reaches its 170th anniversary, we stand at a pivotal moment in our institutional journey. Founded in 1855 as a normal school dedicated to teacher preparation, Kean has evolved into a comprehensive, research-focused university that serves as an anchor institution for our communities and a catalyst for transformative change across New Jersey and beyond. This strategic plan represents our collective vision for the next five years, a blueprint that will guide Kean's continued ascension as an urban research university committed to excellence, equity, innovation, and impact.

The development of this plan emerged through a rigorous, structured, and inclusive university-wide process guided by the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP). Our Strategic Planning Committee underwent months of intensive training through dozens of specialized planning modules, equipping them with best practices in higher education strategic planning, environmental scanning, resource alignment, and outcomes assessment. This SCUP-guided methodology ensured our planning process adhered to the highest standards in the field while maintaining Kean's unique institutional context.

This comprehensive planning approach engaged students, faculty, staff, alumni, community partners, and industry leaders through carefully designed planning teams, surveys, and collaborative working sessions. Through methodical synthesis and analysis, we distilled our shared aspirations through our six interconnected strategic core values that will define Kean's future: Academic Excellence, Equity, Inclusivity, Wellness, Social Mobility, and Public Impact. These priorities reflect not only our institutional values but also respond directly to the evolving needs of our students, the demands of an increasingly complex global economy, and our responsibility to address pressing societal challenges.

Kean University today serves a diverse student population across multiple campuses and through various modalities: our main campus in Union, New Jersey; Kean Ocean in partnership with Ocean County College; Wenzhou-Kean University in China and our community of global learners through Kean Online. Our students represent the rich diversity of New Jersey and beyond, including significant populations of first-generation college students, working professionals, and historically underrepresented groups. We embrace this diversity as our greatest strength and are committed to ensuring that every student finds at Kean not just an education, but a transformative experience that unlocks their full potential.

The landscape of higher education is rapidly changing. Demographic shifts, advances in knowledge and technology, evolving workforce and regulatory demands, growing economic disparities and ideological divisions present both challenges and opportunities. This strategic plan positions Kean to navigate these changes proactively, leveraging our distinctive strengths while embracing innovation to meet the needs of current and future generations of students. As New Jersey's urban research university, we are uniquely positioned to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, to make discoveries and address real-world problems while preparing students for meaningful careers and engaged citizenship.

Our vision for Kean 2030 is ambitious yet achievable. We envision a university recognized nationally for academic excellence, where groundbreaking research addresses urban, regional, and global challenges; where every student, regardless of background, finds pathways to success; where diverse perspectives are celebrated and nurtured; where wellness is integrated into all aspects of university life; where we serve as an engine of social mobility; and where our transformative ambitions and impact are anchored in New Jersey but extend far beyond our campus boundaries.

This strategic plan is not merely aspirational, it is operational. Each strategic priority is supported by overarching goals and targeted strategies that will guide our resource allocation, decision-making, and assessment efforts over the next five years. The plan establishes clear accountability mechanisms while maintaining flexibility to adapt to emerging opportunities and challenges in our dynamic environment.

As we implement this plan, we will draw upon Kean's enduring strengths: our dedicated faculty scholars who excel in both teaching and research; our passionate staff committed to student success; our engaged alumni who carry our mission into their communities and professions; our strategic partnerships with industry, government, and community organizations; and most importantly, our remarkable students whose talents, perspectives, and ambitions inspire everything we do.

The challenges before us are significant, but so is our resolve. By working collaboratively across disciplines, departments, and campuses—and by forming meaningful partnerships beyond our institutional boundaries, we will realize the full potential of Kean University as a transformative force for our students and society. Together, we will build on our proud history while charting a bold course toward a future of expanded opportunity, inclusive excellence, and lasting impact.

This strategic plan represents not an endpoint but a beginning—an invitation to the entire Kean community to participate in bringing this vision to life. As we move forward together, we reaffirm our commitment to our founding mission while embracing the challenges and opportunities of a new era. The future of Kean University starts now.

MISSION

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.

VISION

Kean University is committed to being a fiscally sustainable global pioneer in transformative and accessible education. Rooted in our core values, we empower our learning community to be forward-thinking leaders. Driving research and engagement, Kean creates lasting societal impact as a resilient anchor institution.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

GOAL

Establish Kean University as a transformative urban research institution that enhances student lives, advances knowledge, and strengthens communities through integrated academic excellence.



Kean University earned the prestigious R2 research university designation under the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, signifying a major milestone in the University's evolution as a research institution. This classification places Kean among the top eight percent of colleges and universities nationwide for research activity and doctoral degree production

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SUBGOALS

1. Cultivate student success through innovative teaching and research training practices and comprehensive support systems that prepare graduates at all degree levels for meaningful professional contributions.
2. Advance faculty-led research, including work with demonstrable community impact, positioning Kean as a leader in addressing urban, regional and global challenges.
3. Develop signature academic programs aligned with workforce needs that enhance Kean's educational identity and value proposition.
4. Create an integrated academic ecosystem across all Kean campuses that maintains consistent standards while leveraging each location's unique strengths and opportunities.
5. Foster a culture of teaching and research excellence through comprehensive faculty development that balances pedagogical innovation with disciplinary expertise and scholarship.
6. Build a dynamic network of alumni, industry and university partners, as well as community organizations that enriches academic programs, provides real-world learning opportunities, and creates career pathways for students.
7. Expand global engagement through international learning and research partnerships, exchange programs, and curriculum internationalization to prepare students for success in an interconnected world.

STRATEGIES

CURRICULUM INNOVATION

- Update programs and create new offerings aligned with industry trends, workforce demands, and new technical and intellectual challenges
- Continue curriculum/GE parsimony and flexibility

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

- Expand travel and other global exchange programs, joint research opportunities, faculty and student exchange, and international branding
- Integrate structures and oversight across campuses with specific strategic objectives for each additional location

STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

- Develop mentorship programs both on-campus and with industry partners
- Implement early academic interventions and career readiness activities
- Enhance undergraduate, graduate and doctoral advising, mentorship, and career development programs
- Offer expanded research and global opportunities
- Create effective feedback loops for continuous improvement

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

- Invest in faculty development, support and infrastructure for research, teaching, and cross-disciplinary initiatives
- Provide adequate time (RTR/load adjustments), internal and external funding, research development training, and recognition for achieving academic distinction
- Enhance senior faculty recruitment efforts

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTERS

- Establish transdisciplinary and focused centers of excellence in key research areas such as urban development, healthcare, arts, humanities, and STEM
- Drive innovation, recruitment, and funding opportunities through specialized centers

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Integrate community service into academic programs (e.g., CBPM UBI)
- Host public forums and events that address community needs
- Increase employer and industry partnerships through:
 - Internships and co-op programs
 - Advisory councils/boards
 - Industry-funded research projects
 - Industry-oriented certificates and training programs
- Connect alumni with current students for career guidance and internship/job opportunities
- Create targeted fundraising initiatives
- Sponsor and host professional conferences
- Support faculty service in professional organizations and boards



At Kean University's annual Research Days, bold ideas met real-world innovation. Students and faculty across disciplines are driving change that matters. As New Jersey's Urban Research University and an R2-designated institution, Kean is committed to advancing evidence-based solutions that support our communities and the world.

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EQUITY

GOAL

Foster a university-wide culture of belonging and opportunity where all students, faculty, staff, and community partners have access to resources, recognition, advancement, and support necessary for success.



Learning alongside Kean University's Senior Human Rights Fellow Ndaba Mandela, grandson of Nelson Mandela, students gained powerful insights into human rights and global citizenship on a recent Travelearn to South Africa.

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SUBGOALS

1. Establish transparent, fair, and accessible systems that effectively serve the needs of all university community members.
2. Provide meaningful professional/collegial development and advancement pathways for all faculty and staff.
3. Develop mutually beneficial relationships with external communities that extend educational and discovery opportunities and create shared value.

STRATEGIES

TRANSPARENT RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND DECISION-MAKING

- Implement data-informed distribution of resources and opportunities for teaching and research across departments, programs, and campuses
- Establish clear criteria for priorities including infrastructure investments

EQUITABLE RECOGNITION AND ADVANCEMENT PATHWAYS

- Standardize promotion, tenure, and staff advancement processes with clear criteria
- Develop comprehensive mentoring programs for faculty and staff at all career stages

CROSS-CAMPUS INTEGRATION AND CONSISTENCY

- Standardize quality and resources across all Kean locations
- Develop equitable technology infrastructure that connects university locations

COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY RECIPROCAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Standardize accessible pathways for community members to engage with university offerings
- Recognize and reward community engagement initiatives

INCLUSIVITY

GOAL

Foster an inclusive campus environment that leverages diverse perspectives to enhance student success, faculty engagement, and staff development through intentional relationship-building, belonging initiatives, and community involvement.



Over 2,000 students participated in the Common Read of Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*, a novel rich in themes of environmental justice, and social equity. This university-wide program brings Kean's diverse campus community together.

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STRATEGIES

ACCESSIBILITY & RESOURCES

- Ensure all campus spaces, digital resources, and learning materials are accessible to students of all abilities
- Create, update, and promote a tool that centralizes and defines on-campus resources for faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students

MENTORSHIP, RELATIONSHIP, & KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

- Establish mentorship initiatives that connect students, faculty, and staff across diverse backgrounds to promote relationship-building, knowledge-building and sharing, and professional growth

ASSESSMENT & DATA-DRIVEN IMPROVEMENT

- Administer campus climate surveys to assess students' sense of belonging and use data to inform strategy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

- Partner with local and regional organizations to offer service-learning projects, practical and research internships, and volunteer opportunities that connect faculty, staff, and students to diverse communities and experiences



WELLNESS

GOAL

Enhance the well-being of students, faculty, and staff by developing a comprehensive wellness framework that promotes mental, physical, and social health, expands access to resources, and fosters a sense of belonging across the university community.



Kean University's Yoga Teacher Certification Program - one of only two in New Jersey that offers certification and college credit - enhances classroom teaching skills and empowers future healthcare professionals by teaching students to embody mind, body and spirit. This growing program fosters wellness, connection and leadership in and beyond the classroom.

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STRATEGIES

HOLISTIC WELLNESS ASSESSMENT & ANALYTICS

- Leverage data analytics and campus research capabilities to develop, assess and tailor wellness programming, outreach, and resources for faculty, staff, and students

INTEGRATED WELLBEING PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

- Expand professional development opportunities that integrate wellness strategies for workplace well-being

ACCESSIBLE WELLNESS RESOURCE ECOSYSTEM

- Develop a centralized wellness hub with tailored resources and a segmented communication strategy to ensure faculty, staff, and students receive relevant wellness information

COMMUNITY-CENTERED WELLNESS ENGAGEMENT

- Ensure campus community representation within the well-being champion network
- Create and strengthen collaborative efforts within and across divisions and care units in providing students, faculty, and staff with integrated services for a holistic experience



Kean University's on-campus Kean Clinical Diagnostics Laboratory (KDL) recently expanded its offerings to include low-cost diagnostic screenings, enhancing access to vital health services for students.

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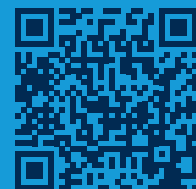
GOAL

Establish the university as a transformative force for socioeconomic advancement by creating comprehensive pathways that enable students from all backgrounds to achieve educational attainment, career success, and lifelong economic prosperity.



From retail worker to a 4.0 GPA in Kean University's elementary education program, Lashae Jones is a powerful example of perseverance and purpose. As the salutatorian of Kean's Class of 2025, she is building a brighter future for herself, her children and her future students – proving what is possible when determination meets opportunity.

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STRATEGIES

STUDENT SUCCESS INFRASTRUCTURE

- Create a plan to engage the campus community, monitor, evaluate, and implement cost-effective strategies for improving all students' persistence, completion, and progression

EFFICIENT EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS

- Create a plan to establish efficient transfer pathways from community colleges to reduce total educational costs

CAREER DEVELOPMENT & INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

- Strengthen partnerships with businesses, industry, and other educational institutions to provide internships, fellowships, career-readiness opportunities, and professional connections

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT & TRANSPARENCY

- Implement transparent data systems tracking educational outcomes, employment rates, and earnings to demonstrate value

FINANCIAL EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT

- Expand financial literacy programs to help students make informed decisions about educational financing and career planning

PUBLIC IMPACT

GOAL

Leverage our engaged faculty, talented student body, and research capacity to drive scalable, measurable, and sustainable impact. By deploying academic expertise, policy innovation, and educational resources, the University strives to catalyze lasting societal change.



Kean University researchers are tackling the urgent challenges posed by climate change, including coastal erosion and flooding. Interdisciplinary teams of geologists, ecologists and social equity experts are collaborating to develop real-world solutions that safeguard our communities and coastal environments.

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SUBGOALS

- Harness faculty scholarship, student engagement, and institutional research capacity to address urgent sustainability challenges—locally, regionally, and globally—through discovery, interdisciplinary collaboration, community partnerships, and evidence-based solutions.
- Advance the University’s commitment to environmental stewardship by modernizing campus infrastructure, optimizing energy use, and implementing eco-friendly design and operations that reduce the institution’s carbon footprint and operating costs.

STRATEGIES

RESEARCH-DRIVEN POLICY LEADERSHIP

- Enhance Kean’s knowledge-driven public impact to facilitate the flow of knowledge and innovation among faculty research interests, sponsored research infrastructure, policy-oriented infrastructure, and community partners
- Strengthen the research and advisory capacities of faculty experts to serve policymakers through seeding new centers of research excellence and pathways to impact such as the Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research and Governmental Affairs
- Expand the Watson Institute’s interdisciplinary research portfolio to address emerging societal challenges and link people to policy
- Engage faculty and students in Community Engaged Learning Courses and community-based research in partnership with local, state, and global organizations
- Leverage Kean’s Anchor University mission to embed research in service of the public good, translating scholarship into action for communities in New Jersey and beyond



APPLIED KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

- Develop integrative research-to-practice pathways that translate academic discoveries into community-based solutions
- Create sustainable models for university-community partnerships that leverage institutional resources to transform regional outcomes
- Collaborate with stakeholders and decision-makers to co-develop and implement research-informed solutions to complex public issues
- Assess the real-world impact of public policies to ensure they are equitable, evidence-based, and achieving their intended outcomes

SUSTAINABILITY

- Embed sustainability challenges from local and global communities into coursework and capstone projects, fostering experiential learning and community-engaged scholarship.
- Invest in smart technologies such as energy-efficient lighting, building automation systems, and real-time energy monitoring to reduce consumption and improve performance.

EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEM AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- Strengthen the Transformational Learning unit to prepare students as agents of public impact through experiential education
- Establish collaborative frameworks between graduate and undergraduate academic programs and External Affairs to enhance public visibility of institutional contributions
- Build the capacity of community members, organizations, and institutions to actively engage in policymaking and shaping processes—laying the foundation for long-term, community-driven sustainability
- Develop the next generation of policy professionals equipped to leverage data, research, and public policy for scalable and sustainable impact in the public, nonprofit, and private sectors
- Embed civic engagement, systems thinking, and public problem-solving into curricula to cultivate a policy-literate, impact-driven academic ecosystem

PUBLIC IMPACT

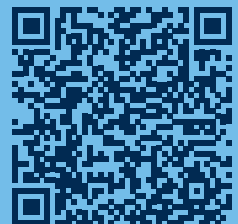
PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ADVANCEMENT

- Support comprehensive community health & wellness initiatives that address systemic inequities through evidence-based interventions
- Foster cross-sector partnerships that create sustainable infrastructures for community well-being and resilience
- Collaborate with local, state, federal, and international agencies and organizations to ensure population health research informs policy and practice in communities across the globe
- Establish public fora, summits, and convenings to engage stakeholders, inform communities, and drive dialogue on critical public health issues
- Leverage Kean's research and academic assets to shape actionable solutions around the social determinants of health — especially in historically underserved communities.
- Advance culturally competent and community-driven health strategies that prioritize access and long-term impact



Kean University strengthened its impact as a regional anchor institution through the launch of the Certificate in Workforce Readiness (CWR), a pilot program aimed at providing the families of students in Kean's pre-college programs with the skills, tools and support needed to advance their careers and achieve economic empowerment.

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CONCLUSION

FROM VISION TO ACTION: KEAN'S STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION IN MOTION

As Kean University journeys toward 2030, the strategic plan has evolved from a static document into a dynamic, action-driven roadmap for institutional transformation. With nearly 60 campus representatives from across colleges, divisions and student constituencies shaping our goals through SCUP training, and nearly 150 leaders trained in execution, we have built a comprehensive framework that turns aspirations into measurable progress. This structured approach, anchored in bi-annual assessment cycles, creates accountability, fosters reflection and empowers continuous recalibration, ensuring that strategic momentum is not only maintained but accelerated.

This shared commitment is guided by Kean's six core values – Academic Excellence, Equity, Inclusivity, Wellness, Social Mobility and Public Impact – which provide both direction and unity across our campuses in Union, at Kean Ocean, Wenzhou-Kean University, Kean Online and the emerging Kean Jersey City location. As we prepare to celebrate our 170th anniversary, these values serve as the North Star for every action, ensuring that advising, research, teaching and program development are all aligned toward a singular institutional mission. Through this alignment, our vision to be a fiscally sustainable global leader in transformative and accessible education is coming to life through every goal achieved, every check-in completed and every strategy brought to fruition.

This transformation is not the work of a few; it is the shared endeavor of an engaged and empowered community. From faculty innovating in the classroom, to staff enhancing student support, to students shaping campus culture, every member of Kean contributes to a strategic vision that is both bold and inclusive. Our collective actions, guided by intentional strategy and unified values, are forging a future where Kean is not only responsive to societal needs but a leader in addressing them. As we continue to align purpose with practice, we strengthen our identity as New Jersey's premier urban research university where access, excellence and impact are not just ambitions, but realities lived every day.

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