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ACRONYMS USED IN THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

AA – Office of Affirmative Action
AACU – Association of American Colleges and Universities
AIC – Academic Issues Committee
AGB – Association of Governing Boards
APP – Academic Policy and Programs Committee
ARTP – Appointment, Retention, Tenure and Promotion
AToD – Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Task Force
AY – Academic Year
AOD – Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Services
BHE – Board of Higher Education
BOT – Board of Trustees
BoT – Back on Track Program
CACREP – Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
CAPS – Center for Advising, Persistence and Success
CARES – Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act
CASHI – Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions
CBPM – College of Business and Public Management
CNAHS – College of Natural, Applied and Health Sciences
CLA – College of Liberal Arts
CLS – Center for Leadership and Service
COE – College of Education
COI – Conflict of Interest
CSI – College Student Inventory
CSMT – The Dorothy and George Hennings College of Science, Mathematics and Technology
CRT – College Retention and Tenure
CURF – Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships
CWA – Communications Workers of America
DSSR – Division of Student Success and Retention
DEI – Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
DHE – Department of Higher Education
EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity
EHS – Office of Environmental Health & Safety
ELC – English Language Center (WKU)
ELL – English Language Learners
ELO – Ethics Liaison Officer
ENR – Enrolled Not Registered
EOF – Educational Opportunity Fund
EPIC – Entry Program Into College
FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid
FCP – Facilities and Campus Planning
FRI – The Freshman Research Initiative
FSCL – Food Scrap Composting Laboratory
FY – Fiscal Year
GE – General Education
GE SLOs – General Education Student Learning Outcomes
GPSC – Graduate and Part-time Student Council
HR – Human Resource
IE – Office of Institutional Effectiveness
IFPTE – International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
IT – Library and Information Services Center (WKU)
INCLUDES – Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science
KCC – Kean Counseling Center
KeanWISE – Kean Web Information System Express
KFT – Kean Federation of Teachers
KUAFF – Kean University Adjunct Faculty Federation
KU SLOs – Kean University Student Learning Outcomes
LEAP – Learn, Earn and Persist Program
LIEP – Learning and Immersion Enrichment Program (WKU)
LMS – Learning Management System
LSAMP – Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation
NACAC – National Association for College Admission Counseling
NASPA – National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
NCAA – National Collegiate Athletic Association
NIH – National Institutes of Health
NJAC – New Jersey Athletic Conference
NJCSTM – New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics
NJLESA – New Jersey Law Enforcement Supervisors Association
NJPC – New Jersey Presidents Council
NJSOLEA – New Jersey Superior Officers Law Enforcement Association
NJSPBA – New Jersey State Policeman's Benevolent Association
NTLC – Nancy Thompson Learning Commons
NWGC – Nathan Weiss Graduate College
OAA – Office of Accreditation and Assessment
OAS – Office of Accessibility Services
OCIS – Office of Computer and Information Services
OER – Open Educational Resources
ORSP – Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
OSSR – Office of Student Success and Retention
PASSPORT – Program for Academic Support Services Providing Opportunities to Remarkable and Talented Students
PIEP – Pre-University Intensive English Program (WKU)
PoE – Power over Ethernet
PSC – Presidential Search Committee
SPLOs – Program Student Learning Outcomes
RRC – Research Recruits Program
RSS – Residential Student Services
S&P – Standard & Poors
SAP – Satisfactory Academic Progress
SASSC – Student Academic Services Support Center (WKU)
SCDC – Student Career Development Center
SHS – Student Health Services
SI – Supplemental Instruction
SIU – Step-it-Up Program
SLO – Student Learning Outcome
SPA – Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates
SpF – Students Partnering with Faculty
SUPERA – Spanish Speaking Program
SVPAA – Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
UPC – University Planning Council
UR – University Relations
VAWA – Violence Against Women Act
WKU – Wenzhou-Kean University
ZEV – Zero Emission Vehicles
Executive Summary

Since it was founded as the Newark Normal School in 1855, Kean University has changed in many ways. It has enlarged its scope of endeavor from teacher training programs (which remain strong) to embrace first undergraduate, then graduate instruction in a wide variety of areas. The Normal School became a College which became a University. It moved from Newark to Union, and then from the main campus in Union to develop two additional locations in New Jersey and another in Wenzhou, China. Along the way, the local school became a regional hub that developed a statewide vision that grew into a truly global institution.

While the entire history took fully 166 years to unfold, Kean's development accelerated dramatically over the last 50 years. It became Kean College in 1973, then Kean University in 1997. Wenzhou-Kean University enrolled its first students in 2011. The Kean Ocean “Gateway” Building, a joint project with Ocean County College, opened in 2012. The newest site, Kean Skylands, has been in operation less than three years.

These changes have been consequential and their planning visionary, but the fundamental pillars of Kean were laid at its founding in 1855. The University has always embraced the mission of providing opportunity for those who have had too little of it. It has always recognized the imperatives of public purpose for universities funded by taxpayers and remains to this day attentive to constituencies beyond the campus. It has embraced rigor while eschewing the kind of elitism that would make it less accessible to the constituencies it was founded to serve. It has always placed the fortunes of its students first, while recognizing that their interests are often as well served by indirect as well as direct investments, such as the quality of faculty and the institution’s ability to advance research excellence alongside direct curricular and career support.

Today, Kean University is at yet another inflection point. President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., took the reins on July 1, 2020, in the teeth of COVID-19. The pandemic demanded the lion’s share of his attention, as it did for every university leader in the country. Safety, and maintenance of our students’ academic momentum in the face of unprecedented challenges, simply had to take center stage. Those urgencies did not, however, dampen his insistence on upholding the University’s long-standing commitments and building on them to meet the challenges of the day. Under Dr. Repollet, Kean has reaffirmed its commitment to equity and inclusion, building new platforms to recruit and retain a diverse faculty, to admit and support students in the best position to benefit from the education we provide, and to strengthen institutional supports for achieving its inclusion goals.

Kean has also set its sights on achieving Carnegie R2 status within the next five years, recognizing that research excellence would be, increasingly, one of the most ringing value propositions it could provide for students and the off-campus communities it serves. Dr. Repollet has championed Kean’s emerging role as the leading urban research institution for the State of New Jersey, bringing aboard into Cabinet roles executives with deep experience developing university-community partnerships. These efforts build on Kean’s efforts begun during the prior administration to grow capacity to support student research, particularly for undergraduates,
cognizant of the outstanding success that many institutions have had in advancing students’ success by involving them in research projects.

None of these would be hot-button priorities for an institution with Kean’s student-focused mission if they did not provide immediate value for our enrollees. To ensure that they do, Kean has launched a number of new initiatives – a Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS); a Cougar Connections Center of Social Work; a new office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI); redoubled effort on the part of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) to support student engagement in research; and a joint center for student co-curricular experiences in the form of internships and short-term study abroad opportunities, among others – to put students in the forefront of the University’s strategic objectives. Kean takes square aim at persistence and graduation rates that must improve if it is to be true to its mission and provide optimal service to all of the constituencies whose good fortunes we promote.

None of this would be possible without two key procedural commitments that President Repollet has made and on which there has been demonstrable progress in the 16 months since his arrival. First, Kean is to be an inclusive and collegial institution with respect to decision making. Executive leadership is now fully engaged with University Senate, with the union (the Kean Federation of Teachers), and College-based decision-making bodies. This shift reflects both an attitudinal and ethical commitment of the President as well as a frank recognition that in a research-led enterprise, researchers, together with Trustees, students, and senior leadership, must have a strong voice in determining the institution’s direction.

Second, Kean is committed to open, transparent and data-driven decision making. The University needs constantly to investigate our successes and our failures. It needs to foster a culture of innovation, not compliance, and provide all units, academic and administrative, with the information they need to improve their practices, as well as to celebrate achievements. To that end, Kean is co-locating all of the University’s measurement and assessment functions and providing to the individual units of the University the information they need to succeed. This allows Kean to underscore for all constituencies the key themes by which it measures success, learn from failures, and build best practices anew while reducing data collection burdens on downstream units and harmonizing our ability to focus on shared goals.

With regard to the individual standards:

Standard One: Mission and Goals
Kean’s mission has been consistent throughout its history while also expanding to embrace emerging imperatives, such as globalization, re-specified understandings of inclusion and equity, and the strategic commitments of successive administrations. Its R2 and urban research goals are bold but demonstrably evolutionary developments that are the logical next steps in the experiment that began in Newark in 1855.

Standard Two: Ethics and Integrity
Kean is a public institution in the State of New Jersey. Its employees are bound by all State ethics laws and receive annual training on those requirements. Beyond that, Kean requires Board of Trustees approval for all bid waivers and obtains annually from every employee sworn evidence of any financial conflict. Academically, Kean is committed to
helping students, faculty and staff understand all of the rules about authorship and patent-level innovation so that they become effective moral agents able to steward both their own and others’ interest in scholarly and creative content. The University also sees its commitment to transparency as an ethical imperative, providing every constituency at Kean with the data needed to become fully empowered analysts, partners and critics of our goals, strategies and accomplishments.

Standard Three: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
This chapter is devoted to academic instruction rather than co-curricular activity and curricular support. The narrative in this section shows an evolving and increasingly rigorous attention to what and how students learn. As it has for many universities, the pandemic accelerated Kean’s attention to delivery modalities and heightened awareness of the range of supports provided for learners face-to-face, online, and increasingly, in hybridized formats.

Standard Four: Support of the Student Experience
This chapter is devoted to co-curricular support rather than the in-class experience, though the advisement sections overlap. Kean has been expanding its capacity to offer students internships and short-term programs, some of them study abroad, that amplify the value of their curricular-only experiences. Kean seeks to build uptake in internships and all experiential programs. It is committed to providing students with as many opportunities as possible to move what they learn in the classroom into real-world practice in institutional and more public settings. The University intends thereby not only to improve retention and graduation, but to build better citizens.

Standard Five: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
Kean has long been devoted to establishing measurable student outcomes. Its work with SLOs began well before the last accreditation cycle and has seen many refinements and reconfigurations since. The University is now engaged in a system-wide project of trying to understand how all of the direct (e.g., class size, delivery modality, use of OER, advisement uptake, etc.) and indirect (e.g., quality of technology support, student utilization of non-academic campus services, condition of physical plant, etc.) efforts toward educational success make persistence, graduation and thriving post-graduation, more likely.

Standard Six: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
This chapter brings together the data collection and analysis efforts described under narrower purposes in the preceding chapters. It details the many levels of planning underway at Kean and how those are harmonized and integrated to chart a clear path forward. Like any public institution, Kean must plan with an eye to decisions made in the State’s capital, which may or may not align with the University’s short-term goals. To that end, the chapter details ways that the University is diversifying its revenue streams, largely predicated on the community-engaged value propositions and the strong outcomes for underserved populations that drive earned revenue beyond tuition as well as private philanthropy.

Standard Seven: Governance, Leadership and Administration
Under Dr. Repollet, Kean is engaged in a sustained and thoroughgoing effort to reinvigorate the University's governance, inviting broad participation in decision making, insisting on transparency about standards and processes, and fostering inclusive practices at every level of our operation. Kean has always conformed to its overall and unit-level governance charters, but it is manifestly true that several constituencies, very much including the Senate and the faculty union, felt less involved with key decisions than they wanted to be under the prior administration; that has changed. Cabinet officers now routinely attend Senate meetings; administration partners with both the faculty and staff unions in pursuing the University's mission; faculty self-organize into various interest groups – full professors interested in the future of the University, data scientists who want to harness the power of analytics across the campus's Colleges, faculty dedicated to research and teaching about sustainability, etc. – and those voices are heard and welcomed by administration. This is more than a matter of atmospherics; evidence of the pivot can be found in changes to the labor contract, the empanelment of task forces considering a wide range of issues, prompt action responding to the work of those task forces, and steady, insistent public messaging that underscores the value that Kean places on inclusion and participation. The very process of this Self Study is an example of the way that Kean includes the entire community in coming to better understand its strengths, its weaknesses, and how we craft a better path forward working together.

Kean could not be undergoing accreditation review at a better time. At one level, the University is changing rapidly with regard to personnel, policy, funding formulas and a host of other things, making a snap-shot assessment very complicated. At another, Kean is right now reorganizing its institutional data regime to improve every aspect of the University's work. We welcome the insight and guidance of peers who have been down these pathways themselves and can help us reflect on how best to achieve our goals.

Kean University's informal motto is “Cougars climb higher!” The University believes that, in the chapters that follow, the reader will encounter a University that has steadily pursued a vital mission for more than a century and a half, that currently meets all MSCHE standards and requirements but is newly invigorated by a visionary leader, and that fully embraces the importance of involving every member of this community in the bold course it has charted. Cougars indeed climb higher, and they climb together.
Standard I: Mission And Goals

Standard Statement

The institution’s mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Mission Statement

The current Mission Statement emphasizes Kean’s dedication to excellence and a student-centered educational environment, including:

Kean offers a wide range of demanding programs dedicated to excellence in instruction and academic support services necessary to assure its socially, linguistically and culturally diverse students the means to reach their full potential, including students from academically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with special needs, and adults returning or entering higher education.

Kean is steadfast in its dedication to maintaining a student-centered educational environment in which diversity can flourish and an atmosphere in which mutual respect characterizes relations among the members of a pluralistic community. The University seeks to combine excellence with equity in providing opportunities for all students.

Furthermore, Kean’s Mission Statement emphasizes academic rigor and research:

Kean is a teaching university, and Kean faculty dedicate themselves to student learning as well as academic rigor. The focus on teaching excellence is supported by a commitment to research, scholarship, creative work and innovative uses of technology. The focus includes the advancement of knowledge in the traditional disciplines and the enhancement of skills in professional areas. Kean is committed to providing global educational opportunities for students and faculty (Evidence Inventory, 1).

Satisfactorily Met the Standard and Criteria

A review of the four criteria established by Middle States as measures of Standard I compliance indicates that the University satisfactorily meets these criteria, and the narrative that follows will highlight evidence to document how Kean meets this Standard.

Goal-setting: Engaging the Community
Kean University is committed to providing affordable, accessible and world-class educational opportunities that prepare students to think and respond critically and creatively in a rapidly changing world and serve as active and contributing members of their communities.

The University’s mission has been its north star since its founding as the Newark Normal School in 1855. Through name changes, physical moves, and expansions throughout New Jersey and into China, the mission has kept the University focused on its most important priority – its students (Evidence Inventory, 1).

Kean’s mission statement was modified in 2006 to add globalization to the University’s longstanding commitment to diversity, excellence and equity by broadening its institutional scope, encouraging global thinking, and committing to global educational opportunities for faculty, staff and students.

While the University’s mission remains relatively constant, the Strategic Plan, which is the roadmap to fulfilling the mission by representing the University’s goals, evolves over time to meet the changing needs of the Kean community.

University Planning Council

University strategic planning, led by the University Planning Council (UPC), is the core process through which institutional goals and objectives are identified. The UPC further ensures the strategic plan advances the University’s mission and vision (Evidence Inventory, 1), and that plans are directly linked to annual assessment processes that inform resource allocation, as demonstrated on the Kean University Assessment Process Flow Chart (Evidence Inventory, 82). These assessment processes are comprehensive and inclusive of all institutional units, academic programs and divisions, and they are cyclical as exemplified by annual assessment reviews (Evidence Inventory, 121). The oversight and support the UPC provides in strategic planning and assessment processes ensure planning, resources and institutional improvements are inclusive of members representing the Kean community at large.

The UPC is made up of representative members of the Kean community, who are inclusive of University leaders, faculty, staff and students (Evidence Inventory, 104). Membership in the UPC includes the Chairperson and Vice Chair, who, in addition to six other members, are appointed by the University President. Also included are members representing each of the colleges and bargaining units (i.e., KFT, KUAFF, CWA, IFPTE, and NJSPBA). Fourteen members are representatives of major University divisions (e.g., Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and University Relations). Other members include a University Senate Chairperson or designee; the Kean Foundation CEO and one designee; and Ex Officio members from the Offices of Assessment and Accreditation, Institutional Effectiveness, and Institutional Research. And of great importance to equitable and inclusive leadership, there are three Kean students – one undergraduate, one graduate, and one part-time student – who also hold seats in the UPC. This representative composition of the UPC membership guarantees balanced and diverse perspectives in institutional decision making. Terms of service are for a period of three years with the exception of student members and bargaining unit representatives. Two consecutive appointments will be followed by a one-year hiatus with the exception of Vice Presidents and Ex Officio members.
The UPC webpage and posting of general and special meeting minutes (Evidence Inventory, 104) also serve to document planning and improvement processes and communicate with University members and stakeholders. The UPC reports its findings and makes recommendations in an annual report to the President (Evidence Inventory, 121), a verbal report to the Board of Trustees (BOT), and through an open forum to the Kean community. However, it is not only the representative membership of the UPC that engages in critical aspects of institutional improvement. By the time the UPC reports its findings, the Kean community at large, including all units and divisions, have been continuously and actively engaged in the planning and improvement processes at the institution.

**Planning and Collaboration**

For the Kean University Strategic Plan, the UPC identifies key goals, develops objectives related to each goal, and establishes actionable items as part of an action plan (Evidence Inventory, 97). The action plan becomes a roadmap to success in achieving the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. There is also clear and direct alignment between institutional and divisional goals and objectives. Specifically, each division has its own set of goals aligned to the goals and objectives found in the institutional Strategic Plan, allowing divisions to focus on centralized priorities that emerge within the context of the overarching goals of the University.

There are goals, objectives and action plans created internally at the unit, program, divisional and institutional levels. Actionable items also emerge externally from unit and divisional collaborations with professional accreditation agencies. There are 61 Kean University undergraduate and graduate programs that are accredited through agencies outside the institution. These agencies help establish program-specific goals and objectives that help maintain the integrity of Kean's programs and degrees, by providing additional requirements, assessment processes and reporting cycles that help inform decisions and resource allocation at all levels of the institution. Kean University publicizes an updated list of accredited programs and their accrediting agency information (Evidence Inventory, 114) for reference and transparency, and to highlight these critical partnerships.

In line with the UPC, the institutional units, academic programs and divisions, and the external accrediting agencies, there are two offices that are critical to strategic planning and institutional improvement at Kean University. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and the Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) manage regular comprehensive assessments in pursuit of excellence, equity and institutional improvement. These two offices provide support to all academic and administrative units, programs and divisions at Kean in the development of mission-specific objectives that align with the University’s Strategic Plan at the start of each academic year. Further, OAA and IE provide ample training, both in-person and on-demand, focusing on best practices for data collection, using multiple measures, and demonstrating impact in alignment with previously stated goals, to ensure sufficient support is offered throughout the assessment cycle (Evidence Inventory 105, 133, 224).

See Standard VI for additional information on the assessment process.
Figure 1. Kean University Assessment Cycle.

Vision 2020

As Kean moves forward under new leadership, it is important to reflect on the successes and shortfalls of its previous planning and assessment efforts. Vision 2020 represented the Strategic Plan that guided the University’s operations from 2013 through 2020 (Evidence Inventory, 122).

Significant Accomplishments

At the conclusion of Vision 2020: Kean University 2013-2020 Strategic Plan (Evidence Inventory, 122), the UPC produced a summary report on the success of the cycle, outlining key Strategic Plan accomplishments and successes (Evidence Inventory, 179).
**Academic Programs**

Academic programs were added that garnered significant student interest, responded to local, regional and national needs, and leveraged Kean’s existing strengths, including doctoral programs in Counseling and Supervision, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech-Language Pathology; Master’s programs in Educational Administration – Principals, Supervisors and School Business Administrators Option, Genetic Counseling, Psychology – Forensic Psychology Option, and Special Education – Applied Behavioral Analysis and Autism Spectrum Disorders Option; and bachelor’s degree programs in Architecture at both Kean USA and Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU), Earth Science – Environmental Option, Mathematical Sciences, and Public Health (Evidence Inventory, 122).

Kean University’s baccalaureate programs were revised to comply with the State of New Jersey’s 120-credit mandate, making a college education more affordable and accessible for the majority of students (Evidence Inventory, 415).

**Student Success and Retention**

The Office of Student Success and Retention (now a Division), designed to enhance more effective collaboration between the divisions of Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs, was initially established in 2018 to support students by creating a multi-faceted retention program to identify at-risk students and facilitate academic and administrative interventions to assist students in persisting through to graduation; launching a universitywide Early Academic Alert system and affording students support services for writing and academic coursework; expanding Supplemental Instruction, a non-traditional academic assistance program to support students enrolled in historically difficult gateway courses (those with a high distribution of D and F final grades and withdrawals) that serve as roadblocks toward persistence and retention; implementation of a first-generation mentoring program that pairs first-year students with alumni mentors; rolling out Cougar Climb, a co-curricular path that promotes active student engagement with the ultimate goal of timely graduation and a successful career; and implementing the Learn, Earn and Persist (LEAP) program for rising sophomores who demonstrate both financial need and academic achievement (Evidence Inventory, 116).

**Research and Scholarship**

Kean’s commitment to research, scholarship, creative work and the innovative use of technology was expanded through its Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF), which develops partnerships between Kean faculty and undergraduate students, advises students interested in pursuing national fellowships, and hosts the University’s annual Research Days (Evidence Inventory, 191). Additional information on student and faculty engagement in research and scholarship is further detailed in Standards IV and V.

**Equity, Engagement and Justice**

Kean’s historic commitment to mutual respect, excellence, equity, civic engagement and social justice was advanced by a 2016 designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Kean has expanded its services for Latino students with SUPERA, which offers Spanish-speaking
students who are English Language Learners (ELLs), access to higher education; and Project Adelante, a pre-college program for high school students, designed to reduce the high school Latino dropout rate, increase their academic skills and encourage them to pursue higher education (Evidence Inventory, 250).

The University’s Diversity Council, managed by Kean’s Holocaust Resource Center, fosters the continued growth of active and compassionate individuals in order to reduce intolerance and harassment/intimidation, and promote social justice in a democratic society. Efforts include high school and middle school conferences and Common-Core aligned professional development opportunities for educators.

The Human Rights Institute, which was created to broaden the University’s longstanding efforts to promote awareness of human rights issues and violations around the globe, was the driving force in establishing a campus-wide Hunger Task Force, resulting in the opening of Cougar Pantry, the University’s on-campus food pantry serving Kean students (Evidence Inventory, 294).

In 2014, Kean joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, a nationwide coalition which encourages students to participate in the electoral process. In November 2019, Kean was honored as the public, four-year university with the most improved undergraduate voting rate from 16% to 46.1% and, in 2020, placed first in its conference in the New Jersey Ballot Bowl, sponsored by the New Jersey Secretary of State (Evidence Inventory, 416).

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was established in 2020 to lead and support a campuswide agenda that fosters the values and promotes the diversity of the Kean community. The Office establishes, implements and advances academic and administrative policies and practices that reflect Kean’s commitment to access and equity (Evidence Inventory, 202).

The Women and Gender Studies Program sponsors programming throughout the academic year to bring a voice and awareness to intersecting social identities, aligning with LatinX Heritage Month, Queer and Trans History Month, International Pronouns Day, Women Entrepreneur Week, and Women’s History Month (Evidence Inventory, 430).

Since 2013, Kean has hosted ReelAbilities: New Jersey Disabilities Film Festival, which amplifies the voices of the largest minority community in the United States – the disability community (Evidence Inventory, 431).

In recognition of the program's continued commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in the plays it presents, Premiere Stages at Kean received a 170% funding increase from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and a 9% increase from The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation for FY22. The company also received a new grant commitment from The Heyward Foundation. An example of this commitment is Premiere's 2020 production of Fannie Lou Hamer, Speak on It, which received national press and a commendation from Actors’ Equity Association. The production included a "get out the vote" campaign and talkbacks with community leaders about the sustaining power of Fannie Lou Hamer’s message of unity (Evidence Inventory, 432).

**Transitions and Challenges**
**Presidential Transition**

Dawood Farahi, Ph.D., announced his plans to step down from the University’s presidency on August 29, 2019. The University’s Board of Trustees immediately began a national search for his successor, led by a search committee comprised of a representative group of Kean community members, including trustees, faculty, alumni and students (Evidence Inventory, 286) and facilitated by the national search firm Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates (SPA).

At its May 11, 2020 meeting, the BOT announced its selection of Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., the former New Jersey Commissioner of Education, as the first Black president and 18th leader of Kean University. On July 1, 2020, President Repollet, a Kean alumnus and former member of the BOT, assumed this position.

**COVID-19**

By this time, the University was four months into the global COVID-19 pandemic, with all employees, faculty and students working and studying remotely through the remainder of the 2020 Spring and Summer terms. The State of New Jersey-mandated transition to remote learning, which began on March 18, impacted University operations for the duration of 2020.

The State gave approval for all institutions of higher education to return to in-person instruction on August 19, 2020. Kean began the Fall 2020 semester with all courses starting remotely for three weeks and then face-to-face or hybrid instruction thereafter for approximately 20 percent of courses. Spring 2021 followed the same model, with all classes remote for the first month and the same percentage of in-person or hybrid courses to follow. The remainder of the courses continued remotely. In addition, the Spring 2021 academic calendar was modified to eliminate the week-long Spring break. Full on-campus learning resumed in the Fall 2021 semester.

The University’s response to the pandemic is ongoing and continuous; it benefits from a strong partnership with Union County that provides COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites on campus for county residents and the entire Kean University community of students, employees and faculty. In addition, Kean independently established a federally certified diagnostic lab to process COVID-19 tests (Evidence Inventory, 414). Moving forward, the pandemic continues to play a role in all planning decisions the University is making, both in the short and long term.

**Beyond 2020**

A thorough assessment of Vision 2020 – its successes, shortfalls and transitional goals that remained meaningful in moving the University forward – was produced by the UPC in Academic Year (AY) 2018-2019 (Evidence Inventory, 435) and posted on the UPC webpage after a summary was shared with the University community at the BOT Public Meeting in May 2019 (Evidence Inventory, 99) so that relevant unmet goals could inform the development of the current Strategic Plan, *Beyond 2020: Kean University Strategic Plan for 2020-2025* (Evidence Inventory, 122, 97).

In the creation of *Beyond 2020: Kean University Strategic Plan for 2020-2025*, input was sought from all internal constituencies, as well as alumni, donors and community partners, by members of the UPC who served as liaisons to respective constituencies. The UPC provided direction in
solidifying the vision, goals and objectives of the next strategic plan (Evidence Inventory, 100) with the Kean University community fully engaged in the process by identifying priorities, submitting suggestions and feedback through in-person meetings, a plenary communitywide meeting during January 2020 Professional Development Days (Evidence Inventory, 106, 436) and a dedicated web portal.

The current Strategic Plan, Beyond 2020, Kean University Strategic Plan for 2020 - 2025, was approved by the BOT on December 5, 2020 and builds on the Vision 2020 strategic plan that preceded it (Evidence Inventory, 97).

As a former governing member of the BOT, President Repollet is uniquely positioned to lead Kean through an unprecedented period of transition. He has worked closely with the University community to remain focused on advancing toward the goals of the University’s new Strategic Plan, which will guide the University through 2025.

**Goals**

On December 5, 2020, the University’s BOT formally adopted Beyond 2020: Kean University Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, outlining the following goals:

**GOAL 1:** To position Kean University as an academic focal point of ongoing and transformational post-secondary educational opportunities that prepare students to meet the current and future challenges of our world

**GOAL 2:** To prepare students for an adaptable 21st-century workforce in which the jobs of the future do not exist today

**GOAL 3:** To create a transformative student-centered university culture focused on student success from first encounter through graduation and beyond

**GOAL 4:** To position Kean University as a cultural, economic and educational epicenter and resource for the entire community

**GOAL 5:** To establish Kean University as a national center of excellence in human rights and civic engagement that builds upon our institutional commitment to equity, inclusivity and social justice and models for our students their role as contributing citizens of the world

**GOAL 6:** To secure a financially sustainable university that can successfully face the challenges of the future (Evidence Inventory, 97).

These goals remain true to Kean’s mission, are student-centric, and support the University’s commitment to scholarly inquiry and creative activity by providing students with the support they need to experience academic success and achieve their dreams.

**Student Success and Retention**
At his first Opening Day address, President Repollet announced the elevation of the Office of Student Success and Retention to a stand-alone division committed to addressing the academic and co-curricular needs of students through advisement, targeted programs and outreach that connect students to a network of resources to promote academic and social success with the ultimate goal of a timely graduation (Evidence Inventory, 116).

For students seeking non-traditional learning opportunities, Kean’s School of Online Learning offers 12 undergraduate degree programs, four master’s programs, and five certification programs designed for students who require more flexibility than traditional academic programs offer (Evidence Inventory, 253).

**Research and Scholarship and Service**

Kean has taken an important step in this direction with the establishment of a new John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research that focuses on research and practical, achievable solutions that will improve the lives of people living in urban communities. The Institute builds on the University’s commitment to scholarship and community service, as the University works toward designation as New Jersey’s first public urban research institute (Evidence Inventory, 295) and Carnegie R2 classification.

**Authentic work experience**

During the recent production of the critically-acclaimed “Year One,” by Erik Gernand, Kean Theatre Conservatory students and alumni worked as understudies, staff and crew, enabling them to earn credits toward their membership in Actors’ Equity Association, the union that represents theatre actors and stage managers. Kean is only one of a handful of colleges in the country that offers this benefit to undergraduate students (Evidence Inventory, 406).

Leveraging its partnership with Union County, the University was able to provide students with internship, research and job opportunities through its One-Stop COVID-19 Pandemic Response, which included testing, vaccinations and a federally-certified Covid processing lab on campus (Evidence Inventory, 414).

**Partnerships**

Building on the University’s High School Partnerships, the new Kean Scholar Academy offers qualified high school students the opportunity to earn college credits and participate in pre-college mentorships, internships and other enrichment activities that support their academic journey toward college. By the time they graduate high school, students may earn up to 12-15 college credits in their selected major and be well on their way to a successful college career (Evidence Inventory, 295).

**Publicizing Mission and Goals**

To ensure that the entire Kean community is familiar with the University’s mission and goals, they are given prominence on Kean’s website, in regular meetings of the BOT, University Senate, employee unions and student government. Additionally, the University’s progress
against goals is highlighted in the President's annual Opening Day Address and the Kean University Foundation’s Annual Report.

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Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Standard Statement

Standard: Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies and represent itself truthfully.

Satisfactorily Met the Standard and Criteria

A review of the nine criteria established by Middle States as measures of Standard II compliance indicates that the University satisfactorily meets these criteria, and the narrative that follows will highlight evidence to document how Kean meets this Standard.

Ethics Code

Kean University operates with the utmost ethics and integrity in all of its endeavors, and adheres to a strict code of conduct that applies in all of its dealings – with students, faculty and staff, vendors, and governmental and non-governmental partners.

As a public university in the State of New Jersey, Kean University is governed by the ethics policies and procedures set forth in the State’s Uniform Ethics Code (Evidence Inventory, 296) and the Plain Language Guide to New Jersey’s Executive Branch Ethics Standards (Evidence Inventory, 297). The Kean University Supplemental Ethics Code (Evidence Inventory, 13) supplements the Uniform Ethics Code for all Kean employees and addresses issues that are unique to Kean. The Plain Language Guide to Ethical Business Conduct (Evidence Inventory, 298) outlines appropriate and ethical business practices for dealing with vendors of the University. In addition, each Kean University trustee, officer and employee, must complete and sign the Disclosure of Outside Activities (Evidence Inventory, 11). This form must be signed by a supervisor as well.

These policies and required documents are shared with the appropriate parties in various ways: as part of the Office of Human Resources onboarding process for any new hire at Kean University; in the procurement process; and through regular emails (Evidence Inventory, 433) from Kean University’s Ethics Office and the Ethics Liaison Officer (ELO).

The information, and links to all required documents, are also contained on the Ethics Office webpage on the Kean University website.

Ethics Liaison Officer

The Ethics Liaison Officer oversees Ethics Training for State Officers (full-time faculty and staff) or Special State Officers (part-time employees, academic specialists and adjuncts). The Full Ethics Training (Evidence Inventory, 300) is a 45-minute video that, upon conclusion of viewing, produces a receipt to the ELO. This full training must be completed every three years by all
full-time faculty and staff. In the years between the three years, there is an Ethics Brief Training that requires the participation of Kean employees as a refresher. This also generates a receipt that is sent to the ELO. The ELO keeps a spreadsheet of all completed trainings and brief trainings, and when each employee is due to take the full training. Special State Officers (part-time employees and academic specialists) must take the Brief Training. Adjunct faculty must read an Ethics Brochure (Evidence Inventory, 301) every year and send proof of having read it to the ELO.

The ELO also receives ethics complaints (Evidence Inventory, 11) and takes part in disciplinary investigations, hearings and actions (Evidence Inventory, 9). In addition, the ELO administers the Request for Approval for Attendance at Event Form (Evidence Inventory, 271), the Supervisory Conflicts of Interest Certification Form (Evidence Inventory, 49), the Financial Conflicts of Interest Form (Evidence Inventory, 299), and other ethics forms.

As the University continues to provide opportunities to educate our faculty and staff about ethics, Kean is exploring modules that engage personnel from an inclusion and equity perspective. Kean is currently in the process of identifying costs for a particular educational module from a provider.

**Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action**

Kean University is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) employer and follows fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline and separation of employees. The Office of Human Resources recruits, develops and retains a high-performing diverse workforce and fosters a healthy, safe and productive work environment for students, employees and the public in order to maximize intellectual, cultural and personal/professional growth for all.

Since January 1, 2021, Human Resources records show more than 50 percent of the faculty and staff hired are people of color, an increase of more than five percent as compared to fall 2020 (Evidence Inventory, 438, 161), and in 2021, over 50 tenure-track faculty were hired. A comparable number of tenure-track positions are expected to be filled in the next academic year, bringing Kean closer to the number of tenure-track faculty-student ratio at our peer institutions.

**Employee Handbook**

The Employee Handbook (Evidence Inventory, 235) sets forth the specific hiring processes for four categories of employees:

- **Unclassified Personnel** – managerial and non-teaching professional staff positions that require a bachelor’s degree and/or a specified amount of experience as indicated by the appropriate State of New Jersey generic job specification.
- **Unclassified Faculty Personnel** – full-time teaching professionals who provide 32 weeks of instruction from September 1 to June 30.
Classified Personnel – employees who are hired in competitive and non-competitive titles according to New Jersey Civil Service Commission Merit System Practices and in accordance with N.J.S.A. Title 4A of the New Jersey Administrative Code.

Hourly and Contract Personnel – adjunct faculty, academic specialists and student employees are employed on a part-time, intermittent basis.

For faculty, non-teaching professional staff and managerial employees, the process includes:

- Advertising the position both internally (on request) and externally
- Forming a Search Committee, a diverse, representative group selected from full-time faculty and professional and managerial employees at Kean, following Search Committee Guidelines (Evidence Inventory, 292)
  - The Office of Affirmative Action (AA) facilitates workshops and presentations for search committee members to eliminate bias and encourage the committee to consider and interview a highly diverse pool of applicants. AA also encourages diversity in the formation of each search committee.
- Reviewing Applicants, organized and monitored by AA
- Interviews, also monitored by the AA
- Applicant Selection and Notification, overseen by HR, which also determines the salary and starting date

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission Merit System Practices under Title 4A govern the process for Classified Employees, as well as laws pertaining to EEO.

Grievances, Discrimination and Bias Complaints

Kean has significant policies in place to address complaints or grievances raised by students, faculty or staff (Evidence Inventory, 417). The University works to address grievances promptly, appropriately, equitably and in compliance with all policies and stakeholder contracts. Kean’s policies and procedures are applied fairly and impartially, including in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline and separation of employees. Violations of the State Policy are adjudicated through student conduct or AA programs. Students are notified annually of the Student Code of Conduct and that notification outlines how they may access the Code on the University website (Evidence Inventory, 207). Alleged violations of Title IX are adjudicated through AA Programs and the Title IX Coordinator.

AA is committed to providing fair and equitable treatment for all members of the campus community, inclusive of all students, faculty and staff, and works to ensure that they are protected from all forms of discrimination, harassment and gender-based discrimination. Kean follows the State of New Jersey Model Procedures for Processing Internal Complaints Alleging Discrimination in the Workplace and the Kean University Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures (Title IX) regarding the reporting, investigating and remediating claims of discrimination/harassment. The University supports the belief that community members should demonstrate respect and appreciation for all those within it. Additionally, although Kean strives to foster a climate of respect among students, faculty, staff and administration from all walks of life, particularly in ways that embrace our institutional priority for equity, the University recognizes that instances of bias can still occur. Violations of either policy may be adjudicated through the Kean student conduct process or by AA.
Individuals across campus are required to complete Affirmative Action and Title IX training and reporting processes, and a bias response policy and reporting mechanism is currently in development at Kean University. AA and the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) are working with Public Safety to ensure that the policy coincides with guidelines for law enforcement. Reporting and documentation related to bias is needed to capture concerns around privilege and power dynamics and develop interventions that would further promote safety for all. This reporting and response policy will provide an opportunity for assessment of our campus culture with the option of anonymous reporting.

Academic and Intellectual Freedom

Kean University supports and encourages academic and intellectual freedom, the cornerstone of academic life. In addition, the University protects intellectual property rights. Faculty have the academic freedom to create courses, course content and programs. The mechanisms for creation and approval of these courses are outlined in the University Curriculum Committee Manual (Evidence Inventory, 208). Respect for academic freedom, intellectual freedom and respect for intellectual property is demonstrated in the labor contracts between Kean and its faculty and its intellectual property rights policies (Evidence Inventory, 210, 211, 212, 213). Academic freedom, intellectual freedom and freedom of expression are articulated in the Free Speech and Dissent Policy (Evidence Inventory, 204). The Dissent and Demonstration Guidelines and Distribution of Literature Policy are easily accessed on the Kean website (Evidence Inventory, 205, 206).

Intellectual property rights are vital to innovation and evolution of our society, academia and global markets. Kean has a commitment to integrity and protecting intellectual property rights. This allows students, faculty, staff and business incubators working at Kean the security and knowledge that their creative works, scholarship and innovations will be protected and celebrated. This culture of respect for intellectual property rights permeates the classroom and community. In order to continue to support these efforts, Kean has considered developing an Intellectual Property Sub-Committee as part of the University Senate, which creates an intellectual property process that is more accessible. To further support and ensure the academic freedom of faculty, Kean is considering the adoption of a form to report academic freedom concerns. This is particularly important as Kean transitions out of a strained climate for faculty with the previous leadership and develops a new level of trust and adherence to our institutional policies with President Repollet.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Kean has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the most ethnically diverse universities in the northern United States (Evidence Inventory, 214). It is also designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education. The University’s leadership, faculty, staff and students see Kean’s diversity as one of its greatest strengths. Multiculturalism, intersectionality and diversity of ideas and perspectives are supported and elevated in a variety of ways.
Equity and inclusion are a top priority for President Repollet. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), an integral program established in October 2020, follows the Association of American Colleges and Universities “Making Excellence Inclusive” model and framework. Currently the office is assessing and collaborating with campus offices and academic areas in developing and facilitating new inclusion initiatives (Evidence Inventory, 202).

Although Kean has a racially-diverse student body, Kean’s faculty composition does not reflect this diversity. This discrepancy has been identified as a priority for the University moving forward. Institutional data shows our current faculty makeup is 16.7% Asian, 7.9% Black, 7% Hispanic, and 67.2% White (Evidence Inventory, 306). The President’s Equity in Action Postdoctoral Fellowship initiative is one of several initial steps toward recruiting and retaining racially diverse faculty at Kean. This initiative is intended to diversify Kean’s faculty, while also providing support to post-docs, which includes balanced teaching schedules, mentorship and professional development. This empowers post-docs to be able to pursue a tenure-track position at Kean or elsewhere.

Kean continues to explore ways to support faculty in equitable and inclusive teaching and learning practice. The University recently created and filled a position for a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Academic Affairs Program Director. This position will work with faculty across the college in developing antiracist and equitable pedagogical practice and ensure the development of a curriculum that is inclusive. In this charge, Kean is exploring the development of campuswide education efforts that could be administered virtually through companies such as DiversityEdu, EverFy, and Vector Solutions. DEI also offers workshop sessions that explore self-reflection and pedagogy development (Evidence Inventory, 343).

Kean students, too, have taken an active role in Kean’s DEI efforts, actively forming a diverse coalition of groups, consisting of 44 cultural organizations. These student-led cultural organizations provided over 540 cultural events throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, including workshops, performances and heritage recognitions.

Campus Climate

DEI has initiated a campus climate survey, facilitated by Rankin and Associates, to provide the institution with the data necessary to assess and act upon inclusion and climate needs, while also providing a benchmark for assessing progress. A marketing plan is being developed to ensure widespread and active participation from students, staff, faculty and campus board structures. Town Hall events with President Repollet, where students are encouraged to share questions and concerns, are already being offered, and the Weekly President’s Message to the University community frequently focuses on the importance of an equitable university that is fully committed to anti-racism efforts (Evidence Inventory, 444).

Culture of Respect

In early 2021, Kean joined 20 colleges and universities from across North America in NASPA’s Culture of Respect Collective, a program that takes a proactive approach to addressing sexual violence on college campuses (Evidence Inventory, 302). Participating institutions are provided with the tools, resources and programs to support this work. To implement this effort, a campus leadership team was established to coordinate responsibilities, an assessment was completed,
and personnel from NASPA worked with the campus team to facilitate the process of creating an action plan. The action plan, now in process, will be submitted for review in December 2021.

**Campus Pride**

Kean is also specifically committing to its LGBTQ+ population, to ensure that the institution’s policies, practices, and efforts at inclusion align with those outlined in the “Campus Pride Index” (Evidence Inventory, 309). The current committee, represented by campus administrators, faculty and students has assessed the current campus climate for the LGBTQ+ community and assigned areas of focus to specific committee members. Committee members have subsequently identified objectives outlined in the Campus Pride Index where Kean can improve, advancing these efforts.

**Religious Tolerance**

In recognition of the diversity in religious faiths practiced at Kean, an Interfaith Council has been established to support students across religious groups and practices. The Council will utilize the Interfaith Youth Core, Interfaith Campus Inventory to assess the Kean community in relation to inclusivity of different faiths (Evidence Inventory, 310).

**Heritage Months**

To further contribute to celebrating the unique diversity of our campus, DEI has collaborated with the campus community in facilitating heritage month celebrations, along with coordinating programming efforts with performing arts groups on campus to recognize and celebrate significant days throughout the year, including: Women’s History Month, Asian Pacific Islander Month, Queer History Month, and Indigenous Peoples Month. (Evidence Inventory, 440)

With respect to the specific lines of inquiry pursued for this Standard, the University has made progress in implementing its fifth strategic plan goal: to establish Kean as a national center of excellence in human rights and civic engagement that builds upon our institutional commitment to equity, inclusivity and social justice and models for our students their role as contributing citizens of the world.

**Contracts and Commitments**

To effectively serve the needs of our student population, Kean must ensure financial equitable access for its students. This involves promoting affordability and accessibility, and helping students understand the funding sources and options available to them, the value received for cost, and the methods for making informed decisions about incurring debt.

Kean’s Admissions Office prioritizes transparency with programs offered, how to apply and deadlines. Maintaining honesty and truthfulness in its recruiting and admissions practices are paramount. All materials, events, information sessions and site visits have consistent messaging around four main pillars: affordability, accessibility, academic excellence and diversity. Overall, the Office of Admissions hosted roughly 260 on-campus events in 2019, including info sessions, instant decision days, and open houses for prospective students. Kean estimates up to 7,000 students visit Kean annually, and when counting families, that number increases to 20,500.
Kean is a member in good standing with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and is governed by the organization’s guiding principles for truthfulness and transparency as identified in the Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (Evidence Inventory, 344).

**Financing Your Kean Degree**

Kean offers a “Financing Your Kean Degree” workshop five times each year that is open to all prospective students (including transfers). The program includes assistance for freshmen, transfer students and graduate students with the financial aid process, navigating student accounting requirements and scholarship applications. Specialized programs are in place for incoming students, such as PASSPORT, EOF (open to transfer as well), SUPERA, and the Entry Program into College (EPIC) program for students aged 22 and over, offering specifically tailored pathways for students with unique needs (transfer, first-generation, immigrant, low-income and Spanish-speaking populations) to navigate the college environment (Evidence Inventory, 248).

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

Kean prioritizes award notifications to students applying for financial aid early in the application process so students can plan accordingly. The Financial Aid and Scholarship Services offices also provide students who have not yet completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with a Net Price Calculator to provide greater transparency for students and families as they consider their college options. This message is communicated in print and electronic marketing materials designed by the Enrollment Services Marketing team. WKU students also receive clear communications outlining tuition costs. Prospective students are assigned a designated financial aid counselor to assist them through the financial aid application process and with any other cost-related questions they have. The Financial Aid and Scholarship Services webpages are designed to be informative, containing links and resources to assist students in making decisions regarding the various awards (Evidence Inventory, 303). FAFSA completion workshops are offered annually to encourage early filing, and descriptive award letter packets containing next steps for new students with an accompanying video award letter link are sent by text to new students.

**Scholarships**

Kean offers a number of need-based merit scholarships, such as the Centennial Fund and Garden State Equity Scholarships, designed to act as last dollar awards to supplement federal and state grants, thus minimizing the need for students to borrow large loan amounts. In recognition of the challenges precipitated by the pandemic and the high cost of federal and private loans, Kean has not increased tuition rates for the last two years, while simultaneously expanding scholarship awards (Evidence Inventory, 326).

**Community College Pathways**

Recognizing the importance of creating a pathway towards baccalaureate degree completion for students not initially accepted at Kean, the University implemented the Community College
Pathways agreement in 2021. This allows these students to complete an associate’s degree at a partnering community college, which then guarantees acceptance by Kean to continue their education. Additionally, Kean students can take classes at satellite locations (Kean Ocean and Skylands) or online (Kean Online), which increases accessibility for students who wish to stay closer to home. Kean is now test-optional, allowing for increased accessibility for communities who have often been marginalized by standardized tests.

The Division of Student Success and Retention

The Division of Student Success and Retention (DSSR) is a newly formed Division, created to provide opportunities for underrepresented students to access, persist and graduate from Kean University. Using a student-centered approach, DSSR is dedicated to transforming students’ lives by providing comprehensive services, opportunities and support to assist with their educational journey. DSSR believes in each student’s right to be successful. Utilizing data-driven research and high-impact higher educational practices, DSSR motivates students to persist to graduation, promotes learning and provides safe spaces for students to learn and grow (Evidence Inventory, 304).

University Relations

University Relations (UR) is committed to developing practices that openly communicate with the members of the Kean community and its stakeholders to support the work of the institution. UR coordinates the promotion of the University, its people and its programs through a variety of tools, including news releases, videos and photographs posted to the Kean website and on Kean’s social media channels, and distributed to the media. UR also produces recruitment videos, photographs and brochures for external advertising and outreach. UR updates all materials throughout each academic year to ensure messaging points are accurate and data points are consistent with the latest priorities of the President and BOT, as well as information supplied by Kean’s Institutional Research division, among other units. The University prioritizes using Kean students, not actors, in its multimedia productions and photo displays to showcase the diverse community on our campus. All stories and news releases produced by University Relations are fact checked by a team of writers and editors to ensure accuracy before distribution. Each academic brochure is reviewed for accuracy annually in coordination with the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

R2 Research Designation

Kean is evolving toward a research R2 designated institution and an epicenter for continuous improvement. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) works with faculty to support submission of proposals for external funding for research, including student involvement. The total grant funding received for fiscal year (FY) 2021 was $5,311,779. This amount does not include funds received from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act from the U.S. Department of Treasury. Fifty-two proposals were submitted during fiscal year 2021 (FY21) of which 39 proposals were funded, representing an extraordinary 75% success rate compared to the previous year’s success rate of 51% (Evidence Inventory, 437).
As the University progresses toward this designation and enhances its focus on research, UR has enhanced its promotion of the institution with a primary focus on delivering accurate, timely information to all audiences. By producing engaging content and delivering it via the web, social media and external media promotion, the University is raising awareness of Kean, its people and programs to support enrollment strategies and advance other important goals as outlined in the strategic plan. Additionally, the President communicates weekly with the Kean community through Kean News Weekly. Updates on critical department initiatives, accomplishments and inclusion efforts are provided to the campus community (Evidence Inventory, 439).

Kean University has served as a COVID-19 testing site for Union County and a site for the administration of COVID-19 vaccinations this year. These efforts have been communicated out to local communities to support the health and well-being of those in this state. Through committing to transparent PR communications, Kean raises awareness of our institution’s efforts, enhances our admissions, and positions Kean as an institution dedicated to supporting the public good.

Bargaining Units and Policy Development

The relationship between the bargaining units and the previous administration was strained, and although the University was honoring labor contracts, the spirit of collaboration and common purpose needed improvement. Since July 2020, President Repollet has met regularly with labor leaders on campus. A newfound sense of collaboration and respect has been cultivated. Multiple agreements regarding promotion and professional development have been renegotiated. The spirit of collaboration is increasing and is clearly a priority for the new administration.

Prior to the tenure of President Repollet, there were a number of “verbal” policies, at times existing without rationale and undocumented. Thus, over this period of change, the new leadership has expressed the need for an increased focus on policy documentation, development and refinement. As an institution, Kean is currently assessing new standards and policies, ensuring that they align with the ethics of the University to successfully engage in improved documentation and disclosure.

Recommendations

Kean is strengthened by policies that are intentional and well-crafted but often decentralized. To address this issue, Kean is implementing an intranet to facilitate internal communication. The development of this form of communication would facilitate timely distribution of information and serve as a resource repository for reference. It would also be used to communicate emerging policies that are developed to support the direction in which Kean is moving. Additionally, the creation of a communication plan for students, faculty and staff through the development of a University Intranet that all campuses have access to and where departmental and institutional forms are kept would create convenience, clarity and accessibility for our community. The evolution of technology provides opportunities for identifying platforms that can best compile grievance issues such as grades or affirmative action and provides us with improved data collection. Additionally, it provides opportunities for communicating equity and inclusion so that they may be visibly infused across all areas of our institutions.
Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Standard Statement

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Satisfactorily Met the Standard and Criteria

A review of the eight criteria established by Middle States as measures of Standard III compliance indicates that the University satisfactorily meets these criteria. The narrative that follows will highlight evidence to document how the University meets this standard.

A New Vision

Under the leadership of a new President, Dr. Lamont Repollet, the University is working toward being recognized as a premier urban research institution, an established regional and cultural center, a leader in the advancement of human rights, and an institution in pursuit of R2 status (Evidence Inventory, 97). Kean is proud to be ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* among the best colleges fostering social mobility. Kean also graduates students with less debt than the national average, is among the top five most diverse schools in the nation, and is a Hispanic-Serving Institution which recognizes the demographic changes that have been taking place in New Jersey (Evidence Inventory, 213).

Three Pillars

Dr. Repollet’s three pillars – safety, academic excellence and a commitment to equity in all that we do – guide the student learning experience. The safety pillar embraces all the actions and policies the University has adopted to keep the campus community safe during the pandemic. Bold decisions to require the entire campus community to be vaccinated and masked has resulted in our classes and activities proceeding in what might be characterized “as typical.” The President has affirmed our commitment to academic excellence by establishing the Division of Student Success and Retention, whose mission recognizes that every student should have an expectation of success and the support necessary to realize this expectation. While Kean has long been recognized for academic excellence, the resources being made available by President Repollet to grow programs and hire faculty have ushered in a “new energy” on campus. The dialogue and collaboration between the faculty and the administration led by the President has changed not only the morale and climate, but has fostered a new level of trust and cooperation that is important to the President accomplishing the goals in *Beyond 2020*. The commitment to equity, the final pillar, has led to the creation of several important initiatives. In a little more than a year and a half, the President has created an Equity in Action
Postdoctoral Fellowship to increase research and an Office of Governmental Affairs to increase collaboration with municipalities, towns, cities, state agencies and the federal government, recognizing Kean’s role as a leader in New Jersey. The creation of the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research, a “think tank” that brings together 32 mayors from across the state, recognizes the role of the University as an agent for change in a state that is becoming more and more diverse. Our campus community led by President Repollet not only reflects this diversity, we embrace it as we continue to shape the workforce and leaders of this state, country and global community.

Culture of Success

Given all of these initiatives and the strategic goals developed in the Beyond 2020 plan, the University’s success is tied to its ability to provide a high-quality educational program that seeks to promote a culture of student success from the beginnings of an undergraduate degree through graduate study. Courses and programs are routinely assessed internally as part of an ongoing assessment system and externally by various outside accrediting agencies by content area (Evidence Inventory, 114). Main campus facilities are world class and are constantly being updated and improved (Evidence Inventory, 251, 252, 254).

Programmatic Offerings, Curriculum Processes and Systematic Assessment

Kean University is dedicated to academic excellence and provides rigorous, coherent learning experiences to prepare its diverse student population for the future, via degree programs at the bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral levels, certificates of training, and student engagement activities to meet the employment and leadership needs of the 21st century global market. Programs and courses of study are coherent, rigorous and evaluated systematically.

Programs

As of AY 2019-2020, Kean University offers 50 undergraduate degree programs, 44 graduate degrees (36 Master, 7 Doctoral, 1 Master Diploma) through the Nathan Weiss Graduate College, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Education, the College of Business and Public Administration, the College of Science, Mathematics and Technology, Michael Graves College, and the New Jersey Center For Science, Technology and Mathematics (Evidence Inventory, 195, 194). A list of all programs offered by the University can be found in the Kean University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs (Evidence Inventory, 217, 220).

Accreditation of 61 of Kean University’s undergraduate and graduate programs by national and international external professional associations (Evidence Inventory, 114) indicates that Kean University’s academic offerings meet professional standards that supplement MSCHE requirements. These accreditations may also impact program length to ensure profession-specific learning is accomplished. Data indicating enrollment by college and major at Kean University for Fall 2019, Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 can be found in the Data Book provided by the Office of Institutional Research (Evidence Inventory, 195, 194, 192).

Faculty
Program faculty within a discipline create new courses and design new programs based on needs assessments of the community, the profession and the students. New courses and course revisions are authored by faculty and submitted to the faculty of the school/department/program curriculum committee and then reviewed by the faculty of the entire school/department/program. Following this collaborative review and approval, each course outline document is submitted for review and approval by the appropriate college curriculum committee. Once the approved document reaches the University Senate, one of the repositories for University curricula, the Senate sends the new or revised outline to the appropriate College Dean for approval (Evidence Inventory, 208).

Developing and maintaining a highly qualified faculty means that procedures for both hiring and faculty evaluation are highly selective and implemented systematically. To ensure that all faculty are qualified to deliver instruction, new full-time faculty are recruited through a rigorous search process which includes input from current faculty and academic leaders and verification of credentials through HR. Once hired, new full-time faculty participate in a comprehensive orientation reflecting the culture of the organization, the needs of our students, resources available at the University and the importance of ongoing assessment of teaching and curricula. A reappointment process that faculty undergo each year emphasizes the importance of scholarship, teaching effectiveness and service.

**Reappointment**

For new tenure-track faculty, the process requires a reappointment review every year for the first six years of employment, during which performance is monitored with regard to teaching effectiveness, research and service to the department/school/program, college, University and community.

The departmental Appointment, Retention, Tenure and Promotion (ARTP) Committee reviews each tenure-track faculty member based on the criteria of teaching effectiveness, service and scholarship. After being reviewed by the ARTP Committee, the candidate’s application is then reviewed by the College Retention and Tenure (RT) Committee. The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs reviews and makes reappointment recommendations to the President. Once tenure is awarded, review of faculty for reappointment then occurs every five years through a Career Development Self-Assessment, known historically as the A-328 process (Evidence Inventory, 44).

Service is expected of all full-time faculty. Service may focus on the academic program or be provided in furtherance of the school, the college and/or the university. Service is documented in an annual faculty activity report (currently being converted to the Interfolio platform), the annual or biannual evaluation of lecturers, the annual evaluation of tenure-track faculty, and the A328 process for tenured faculty.

Scholarly and/or creative work is expected of all tenured and tenure-track faculty. Scholarly and creative works are documented in an annual faculty activity report. Procedures for Tenure-track and Tenured Faculty, Lecturer Review, and Adjunct Review can be found in the Evidence Inventory (Evidence Inventory, 25, 26, 27, 28).
Assessment

Both faculty and staff needs are reviewed every year, with priorities for hiring designated and search processes initiated. Enrollments over the past five years, projected enrollments, number of full-time and part-time faculty, primary and secondary areas of expertise needed, and a narrative that addresses how the position contributes to the overall mission and strategic plan of the program and University are created at the local school/department/program level. These requests are subsequently reviewed and prioritized by each College Dean and submitted to the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for additional review and prioritization; the University President provides final approval.

A parallel process exists for requesting staff positions. All current non-faculty positions at the University have a generic job description provided by the State of New Jersey. These generic job descriptions provide the University with general guidelines regarding responsibilities for each individual position as well as the qualifications (degrees necessary, years of experience, etc.) that are acceptable to require for each. Further, these documents guide the determination of a new position title or when filling a vacancy as the responsibilities of a position may have changed over time. Vacant and new positions are listed and reviewed in a new Workday platform; completion of the hiring process includes verification of credentials by the Office of Human Resources (Evidence Inventory, 6).

Professional Development

Monthly faculty meetings of programs and schools, and semester meetings of College faculty encourage cross-fertilization of new teaching pedagogies and technologies. Basic training in technology (Blackboard LMS) is required of all faculty and is offered by the School of Online Education. Faculty can acquire knowledge of more advanced Blackboard technological functionalities or learn other available technologies through workshops and online tutorials provided by the Nancy Thompson Learning Commons (NTLC). Since February 2020, 95 workshops have been offered with 1,624 faculty participating and acquiring additional Blackboard skills in creating tests and assignments, a grade center, and utilizing rubrics (Evidence Inventory, 274, 275).

At the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, a considerate subset of faculty had never taught online or used the Blackboard tool. There was a two-week period in mid-March when most faculty had to select some tool for teaching online and learn how to create meetings, hold office hours, etc. Blackboard was only one of several tools that faculty used including Google Classroom and Zoom, among others, to complete the Spring 2020 semester. During Summer 2020, the University developed a required series of training events for faculty to become proficient in Blackboard, then required all Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 courses to be both planned and taught using Blackboard. While not all faculty felt Blackboard is the best tool, the University’s work to develop a systematic training program in Blackboard and to establish standards for the remote delivery of courses is laudable and enabled Kean to offer a full complement of courses during the uncertainty of the pandemic with a degree of success (Evidence Inventory, 81).
Kean University’s President Repollet has made a commitment to establish a Teaching and Learning Center to provide faculty with opportunities to improve their pedagogical practices. During Spring 2021, a proposal for a more ambitious Professional Development Center was drafted, incorporating best practices from peer and R2 institutions. This proposed Center can be key to Kean’s pursuit of becoming an R2 University and can help to bring faculty from different colleges together to discuss ways in which faculty collaboration can take place and how such collaboration can enrich teaching and learning on campus (Evidence Inventory, 164).

Kean University provides professional support to its faculty through release time and funding small research grants through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP). These include the Faculty Seed Grant, Untenured Faculty Research Initiative (UFRI), Released Time for Research & Creative Works (RTR), Students Partnering with Faculty (SpF), and Research or Travel Support. A recent addition to the internal awards, made available in 2021, is the Summer Research Fellowship Program to all full-time faculty. Annual opportunities to apply for sabbatical leave offer tenured faculty the opportunity to focus on scholarly pursuits, professional growth and innovation for a single semester or entire academic year (Evidence Inventory, 21).

Locating Information and Materials

Kean University’s website contains comprehensive information about all programs of study, courses and degree requirements. An Online Catalog for Undergraduate and Graduate programs, archived by year, contains all course descriptions and degree requirements as well as graduation requirements per program and general University guidelines (Evidence Inventory, 217, 220). Each program’s landing page on the website includes a synopsis of the program, as well as links to curriculum sheets and four-year plans.

Curriculum Sheets

Curriculum Sheets are easy to comprehend, one-page listings of requirements for each degree. All guides are standardized in their design and include the title of the degree program, college, school, degree code and total credits required for completion. The sheets include all required courses with general education requirements on the left side and major requirements and electives on the right side. Additional notes clarify grade requirements, prerequisites and other program-specific information. Four-year plans are designed to visually organize the courses and credits to be taken in eight semesters that would lead to timely graduation. By indicating which courses need to be taken in what order, students see how they can stay on track with prerequisites and can complete their courses in the appropriate time frame.

KeanWISE

The interface to the KeanWISE registration portal, called Student Planning, is available so that students can see all degree requirements and course plans recommended by their advisor; a visual progress bar displays progress toward degree completion. Student Planning helps advisors and students keep track of requirements, and the use of this tool leads to the timely completion of degrees.
120 Credits

In 2019, to comply with New Jersey law, most undergraduate programs at Kean were revised to require a total of 120 credits to complete degree requirements. Under the NJ State Administrative Code, Title 9A, a "semester credit hour" is defined as "150 minutes of academic work each week for 15 weeks in one semester, which is typically accomplished by 50 minutes of face-to-face class activity each week complemented by at least 100 minutes each week of laboratory or outside assignments (or the equivalent thereof for semesters of different length), but may also be accomplished through an equivalent amount of academic work as established by an institution, which may include additional class time, laboratory work, internships, practical studio work, and other forms of academic work" (Evidence Inventory, 328).

While the number of credits were reduced, each program was reorganized to insure that all necessary topics and training to meet program accreditation requirements were still maintained. The proposed changes did not affect program content or established learning outcomes. No changes were made to graduate programs and exempted undergraduate programs as a result of this law.

Learning Opportunities and Resources

Hands-on learning opportunities, student life engagement, international travel and resources are available to students to support the academic program and achieve planned outcomes. Experiential learning opportunities, including career-relevant internships, research activities, and global education, provide students with authentic learning experiences that enrich the program of study and enhance a student’s career readiness.

Research

Engaging in research helps with student retention and builds a cadre of students who see the value of a systematic inquiry process. Research opportunities are available to students beginning in their first year through the Freshman Research Initiative, which introduces students to faculty-mentored research early in their academic careers as a way of deepening their learning, developing critical thinking and innovation skills, and contributing to students’ future success at Kean and beyond. The initiative is part of a new Center for Undergraduate Research, a "go-to" center where students throughout their academic journey at Kean can learn how to take part in research, creative projects and other academic opportunities. Independent study courses provide a more traditional opportunity for students to work with faculty on a student-directed and faculty supervised project. In addition, there are grant-supported programs such as McNair Scholars, Students Partnering with Faculty (SpF) and the Summer Research Fellowship (Evidence Inventory, 191, 161).

Internships

Working collaboratively with academic programs to ensure that these experiences support the goals of the academic program, Kean’s Office of Career Services offers internships and experiential learning opportunities. Professional partnerships with industry offer students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and learn new skills beyond what they learn in the
classroom or laboratory. An Online Employment and Internship Portal lists internship opportunities in every academic major; academic credit is available for some internships and some internships are paid.

Students' academic progress is supported by participating in an internship: the retention/graduation rate for the University for Fall 2020 was 74.1%, whereas the retention/graduation rate for students with academic credit internships is 93.4% by comparison (Evidence Inventory, 116). The average undergraduate GPA for the University was 3.1 in Fall 2020, as compared to 3.5 for students with internships during this same period.

At present the data available in this summary chart does not necessarily include individual program or college internships that may be using a different tracking platform. For example, Health Professions is currently using a system called EXXAT. This data may not be reflected in the Career Services Internship Report. The College of Education and its program track internships currently via a program called Chalk and Wire. This clinical internship I and II data is not reflected in the Career Services Internship Report.

**International Travel**

The Center for International Studies offers both short-term and semester-long study abroad opportunities, exposing students to different perspectives and preparing students to compete in a global marketplace after graduation. Travelearn is Kean's short-term study abroad program, which offers the opportunity to combine academic studies with short-term travel to various destinations, typically not offered through the regular study abroad program. These programs usually consist of lectures and excursions related to a particular topic. Travelearn programs are led by faculty, who are experts in the respective program's field of study. Kean University's campus in Wenzhou, China provides an opportunity for student exchange, for a semester or for an entire academic year, further enriching participants' studies (Evidence Inventory, 188).

**Support Services**

While the University works hard to make sure that program offerings, faculty and resources are first rate to provide an excellent learning experience for students, it also recognizes the need to provide high quality support services for students in order for them to be successful.

**Learning Commons**

Support services that are routinely available, including tutoring, writing assistance, public speaking assistance and research support, are offered at the Nancy Thompson Learning Commons (NTLC) (Evidence Inventory, 107).

Online resources are also available and include video, instructional information, technical support, workshops, digital databases, open educational resources, peer reviewed journals, research guides and e-books. A 24/7 online chat service offers support around the clock. Faculty input is provided by the elected University Senate NTLC Committee so that academic
support continually evolves to meet students’ current needs. During the pandemic, all of the above listed support services were provided online.

**Counseling Center**

Given the level of stress that students encountered at home with parents losing jobs and students taking on more work hours to help support their families, the Counseling Center (Evidence Inventory, 329) worked to provide the necessary emotional support for students. Though faculty were teaching online, office hours for student support were still maintained and faculty referred students to the Counseling Center when they felt students needed more emotional support. University leadership understands that academic success depends on students’ emotional well-being.

**Center for Advising, Persistence and Success**

For students, a recent innovation at the University is the development of the Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS) (Evidence Inventory, 115) which provides professional advising services for students, along with support services to address Student Retention. Kean’s team provides culturally responsive academic advising, evidenced-based programming, educational planning and positive academic transitions for matriculated and undeclared freshman, sophomore and transfer students. The creation of this Center represents a commitment on the part of the University to address retention and graduation rates that are strikingly below the national public university average, despite all of the excellent academic and student life programming provided. The national public university four-year graduation rate is 60.4% while Kean’s four-year rate is 21.4%. At six years, Kean’s graduation rate improves to 46.6%. The national public university six-year graduation rate is 61%.

**General Education**

Kean University's General Education (GE) Program is a component of all undergraduate degree programs offered at the University (Evidence Inventory, 158). The GE Program’s curriculum is implemented and assessed through the School of General Studies. Through the GE Program, students learn to integrate knowledge and methods to address historical and contemporary questions and develop habits of mind, including proficiency in communication in both oral (Evidence Inventory, 157) and written forms (Evidence Inventory, 155), quantitative literacy (Evidence Inventory, 150), critical thinking (Evidence Inventory, 154), and information and technology literacies (Evidence Inventory, 151). In addition to cultivating critical skills, the GE curriculum exposes students to a variety of disciplines, including the social sciences, humanities, natural science and mathematics. For students who have yet to decide on a career path, this exposure provides the opportunity for exploration and self-discovery.

The GE Program draws students into new areas of intellectual experience through the Student Learning Outcome (SLO): Transdisciplinarity (Evidence Inventory, 149). This SLO is consistent with the University's mission and Student Learning Outcome (KU4) to advance students’ knowledge in the traditional disciplines and general education, and enhance their skills in
professional areas. The Transdisciplinarity SLO is a component of a number of GE Distribution Courses in the areas of Humanities, Social Sciences and Science and Math.

Specific courses where transdisciplinarity is assessed and the relevant evidence can be found in Assessing Key Student Learning Outcomes in the GE Curriculum, which follows at the end of this chapter (Evidence Inventory, 159).

**Equity, Diversity and Multicultural Awareness**

The University’s general studies program expands students’ cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity in various ways. Diversity is a student learning outcome currently defined as “A commitment to promote inclusivity in a diverse world” (Evidence Inventory, 202). This GE SLO aligns with the University student learning outcomes numbers one and three, to: Think critically, creatively and globally (KU SLO 1) and Serve as active and contributing members of their communities (KU SLO 3). It also contributes to the University’s mission as outlined in the strategic plan (Evidence Inventory, 97).

The student learning outcome Diversity is assessed in a number of General Education Foundation and Distribution courses, including the required one-credit foundation course, Transition to Kean (GE1000). In the course, there is the common assignment, the Cultural Diversity Assignment, used in all sections. Sociology 1000 and World Literature ENG 2403 also focus on diversity in their curricula, and capstone courses assess Diversity on a rotating basis. In Fall 2021, to bolster the sense of community in the classroom and across the First-Year student population, and to align with the University’s emphasis on diversity and inclusion Strategic Plan, Goal 5 (Evidence Inventory, 97), a Common Read text will be integrated into the Transition to Kean course. The Common Read will reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) topics and enrich teaching and learning around the student learning outcome of Diversity. General Education assessments of the learning outcome Diversity use the Diversity rubric as the assessment tool, which is based upon the Diversity Value Rubric developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) (Evidence Inventory, 336).

**Thinking Critically and Creatively**

The Kean University General Education Program is structured into two major components which consist of Foundation Requirements (13 credits) and Disciplinary/ Interdisciplinary Distribution Requirements (typically 28 – 29 credits for B.A. degree programs and 19 credits for B.S., B.M., BFA and BID degrees). Through the coursework for these foundation and distribution requirements (Evidence Inventory, 158), students in all majors have common educational experiences and opportunities to acquire and develop the skills, habits of mind and values associated with a broad liberal arts and sciences education to support students in their pursuit of an academic major and career.

The GE Program prepares students to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field through the Student Learning Outcome: Critical Thinking. This SLO was developed and implemented for students to gain the ability to utilize reflective analysis to draw informed conclusions. The Critical Thinking SLO (Evidence Inventory, 154) is consistent with the
University’s mission and Student Learning Outcome (KU1) to think critically, creatively and globally.

The Critical Thinking SLO is a component of a number of GE Distribution Courses in the areas of Humanities, Social Sciences and Science and Math. These courses include Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Philosophy and Critical Thinking.

**Worldliness, Literacy Enhancement and Cultural Sensitivity**

The University’s general studies curriculum is designed so that students acquire and demonstrate oral and written communication skills.

The Communication Literacies: Speech and Writing GE SLO is consistent with the University’s mission and student learning outcome KU SLO 4 – Advance knowledge in the traditional disciplines and enhance skills in professional areas. Communication literacy, for Kean University, is defined as “the ability to speak and write effectively to convey and make an evidence-based argument.” As such, this SLO is divided into two separate measures, speech and writing, that have separate rubrics, one for oral communication and one for written communication. Two introductory-level foundation requirements, Speech Communication (COMM1402) and College Composition (ENG1030) address each of these areas, respectively, on an annual basis.

The Quantitative Literacy GE SLO is consistent with the University’s mission and Student Learning Outcome KU SLO 4 – Advance knowledge in the traditional disciplines and enhance their skills in professional areas. Quantitative literacy instruction is an essential element of the General Education program: all students must take a General Education math course to fulfill a foundation requirement and the General Education curriculum stipulates that students have at least one lab science course.

The Critical Thinking SLO is consistent with the University’s mission and the University’s student learning outcome (KU1) to think critically, creatively and globally. General Education distribution courses that focus on and assess Critical Thinking include Introduction to Sociology and Introduction to Philosophy.

Kean University’s general studies curriculum develops students’ skills in the areas of technological competency and information literacy in various courses such as Research and Technology (GE 202X) and Transfer Transitions (GE 3000). The General Education student learning outcome Information and Technology Literacy is defined as “The ability to utilize information and communications technology critically and effectively in a rapidly changing world.” This General Education SLO is aligned with the University’s mission and the University student learning outcomes KU SLO 2 – Adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments and KU SLO 4 – Advance their knowledge in the traditional disciplines and enhance their skills in professional areas.

**Accountability, Community Responsibility, Service and Integrity**

The University’s general education program incorporates the study of values, ethics and diverse perspectives in a variety of courses. For example, Research and Technology (GE 202X) and
Transfer Transitions (GE 3000) develop students’ research skills and assess the student learning outcome of Ethical Judgment and Integrity. This SLO, Ethical Judgment and Integrity, is defined as “the ability to draw reasonable conclusions from ethical questions to guide personal conduct.”

Research and Technology (GE 202X) is a required foundation course and has sections dedicated to the various Colleges; it addresses ethical judgment and integrity as part of its curriculum. Ethical Judgment and Integrity has been assessed in this course using a certificate training through the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Assessment data in that area demonstrated that we might further challenge students with this learning outcome and a signature assignment was developed in place of the NIH certificate as an assessment tool in this course.

This signature assignment was then coupled with the CITI Training in Research and Technology to address ethical issues in research from various perspectives. The one-credit course GE 3000, Transfer Transitions, also focuses on the learning outcome of Ethical Judgment and Integrity and students in GE 3000 also participate in the CITI Training in order to successfully complete that course.

**Growing the Research Enterprise**

The mission of Kean University’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) is to grow the research enterprise throughout the University with an emphasis on faculty-student research. ORSP offers internal funding opportunities for faculty/student research; funding is also available through external funding entities (Evidence Inventory, 176, 161).

Kean University’s ORSP also supports several Research Institutes and Centers that foster research collaboration, advance knowledge, address social issues and provide various services to the larger community (Evidence Inventory, 191, 161). Examples include the Center for Cybersecurity (College of Business and Public Management); the Child Care and Development Center – Learning Lab (College of Education); the Liberty Hall Academic Center and Special Collections Research Library and Archives (College of Liberal Arts); the Food Scraps Composting Laboratory (College of Science, Mathematics and Technology); the Institute for Life Science Entrepreneurship (New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics); the Kean Community Cares Occupational Therapy Clinic (Nathan Weiss Graduate College); and the WKU Interactive Learning Immersive Virtual Reality Institute (Wenzhou-Kean University).

The majority of graduate programs include research through supporting curriculum and required independent research projects at the masters or doctoral level. Through the public-serving clinics of Kean University, graduate students in relevant programs are provided authentic opportunities for research and scholarship. Services provided to the community also reflect the presidential priority of diversity, equity and inclusion in everything the University does. The value-added benefits of what the University brings to the community via varied partnerships reflects the University’s long history of service back to Kean’s founding as a teacher training institution in 1855.
Graduate Assistantships are offered competitively (Evidence Inventory, 258, 260, 262), further promoting student-faculty research collaboration within and across disciplines.

Curriculum Review & Approval

Detailed curriculum review and approval processes for new and revised academic programs are prescribed in the University Curriculum Manual of the University Senate (Evidence Inventory, 103) which details the thorough, multi-level review process at the school/department/program, the College and the University levels. The University Curriculum Committee, composed of elected faculty from across the University, reviews and approves curricula for all new and revised programs, program options, certificate programs, academic minors, conversions of program options to degrees and conversions of degree designations. Proposed new programs must also undergo review by the Academic Issues Committee (AIC) of the New Jersey President’s Council (Evidence Inventory, 208) for consideration, new program proposals include detailed descriptions of the evaluation of curricular design, student achievement, program success and stakeholder satisfaction. The AIC process requires feedback from academic leaders at other institutions in the state. Once a new program has received approval from the AIC, final approval of new programs rests with the Board of Trustees of the University to ensure resource support (Evidence Inventory, 66).

The University also requires that course outlines be updated every three years to ensure that information is current, adequate resources identified, and linkages to internships and field experiences reflect the most current thinking. Systematic assessment of course design as well as instruction, provides the impetus for faculty to address ongoing course and program improvement and teaching effectiveness. Course syllabi are updated every semester (Evidence Inventory, 47). Instruction in all courses is assessed every semester using an instrument (SIR II) originally developed by ETS and currently delivered electronically through Kean’s Office of Accreditation and Assessment on the CampusLabs platform (Evidence Inventory, 132). This instrument is used to obtain student perspectives on the course, goals, assignment, and instruction. The use of the CampusLabs platform provides timely feedback to each instructor via a faculty dashboard and an administrator link provides reports to the College Dean, the Executive Director or Chairperson of the School/Department, and the Program Coordinator.

Continuous Course and Program Assessment

Kean University’s Office of Accreditation and Assessment provides leadership for the planning and implementation of student learning outcomes assessment, annual assessment plans and reports, academic program review, University assessment and assessment-related training, and the development and refinement of assessment tools (Evidence Inventory, 1092, 1093, 1094). This process is discussed in great detail in Standard VII.

Reflections on Standard III, Kean’s Strategic Plan, and Recommendations

The self-study process to investigate Standard III brought faculty, staff, and students from across the University together to determine what programs and services are offered for students, what policies and practices are in place to foster a “world class education” and how effective Kean is at implementation. The evidence provided shows a wide range of demanding
programs dedicated to excellence in instruction and academic support services necessary to assure its socially, linguistically and culturally diverse students the means to reach their full potential, including students from academically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with special needs, and adults including veterans returning or entering higher education.

The general education program is well conceived and student learning objectives are well suited to developing students who can be successful in the global marketplace; strong programs are offered across all colleges and divisions.

Based on the 8 criteria established by Middle States to evaluate Standard III, Kean meets these criteria, though our graduation and retention rates fall significantly below expectation. The University's Assessment System continues to grow and evolve, and the need to track various measures of University effectiveness has resulted in the adoption of several new data management systems. Familiarizing faculty and staff with the new systems and working toward building interfaces across these programs is a priority for the University.
Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Standard Statement

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience and fosters student success.

Satisfactorily Met the Standard and Criteria

A review of the six criteria established by Middle States as measures of Standard IV compliance indicates that the University satisfactorily meets these criteria, and the narrative that follows will highlight evidence to document how Kean meets this standard.

Policies, Processes and Programs

Admissions

Kean consists of faculty, staff, administrators and students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The institution maintains dynamic, interactive and updated online information for prospective, transfer, matriculated, non-credit and other interested students. Admission requirements are available to all prospective students through the University website and prospective students may apply using the University’s internal online application or the CommonApp, a multi-institutional college admission application.

Upon acceptance, all students receive access to the Kean email system, powered by Google, and Kean Web Information System Express (KeanWISE), which enables students to select and register for courses, view grades and access their financial account. KeanWISE also allows students to access their curriculum map and credit evaluation for their current, or a proposed, academic program.

Once enrolled, each student also has access to the Ellucian CRM Advise Student Experience platform (Evidence Inventory, 429) that gives them access to their student success support team members, which includes their academic advisor, financial aid counselor, special program advisor and athletic advisor, where applicable. Since launching in May 2020, the online platform gives students direct access to contact any of their support team members to ask questions or seek assistance.

Transfer Credits

Kean allows students to transfer credits earned at other accredited institutions following admission acceptance and transfer credit evaluation. Since Fall 2008, transfer students who
earned an Associates of Arts or an Associates of Science degree in 2005, or later, may transfer up to 66 credits to a comparable major, in accordance with New Jersey’s Lampitt Law (Evidence Inventory, 308), a comprehensive statewide transfer agreement designed to ease the transfer process from a community college to a public four-year institution. The legislation requires that a maximum of 92 credits, including a maximum of 66 lower-division credits, whether taken at a two-year or four-year college, are transferable.

Students who enroll as freshmen at Kean may also take courses at two-year or four-year colleges with approval from their current academic programs. However, all students, regardless of major, must take at least 32 credits plus at least 50% of their academic major credits at Kean in order to receive a bachelor’s degree from Kean University.

Articulation agreements with various New Jersey two-year institutions further ease and facilitate the process of college credit transfer. Programs such as the Pathway to Kean program (Evidence Inventory, 307), provide a joint admission option for students who do not currently meet the freshman admission criteria to earn a four-year college degree from Kean University. By beginning their first two years at their local community college, the Pathway to Kean program allows students to transfer into Kean as provisional juniors to complete their bachelor’s degree while also taking advantage of other program benefits. These benefits include an application fee waiver, fully transferable credits from the lower-tuition community college and unlimited support and services from Kean offices and personnel.

**Experiential Learning Opportunities**

Kean provides many opportunities for experiential learning and some academic programs require some form of experiential learning as a graduation requirement. The name for the experiential learning is rooted in the specific discipline and might be referred to as an internship, a study abroad experience, a practicum, a field experience/placement or a clinical rotation.

**Internships**

As a part of a major curriculum overhaul during the 2018-2019 academic year, each academic major was tasked with creating an option for students to participate in an internship experience within their respective field of study. As a result, Kean has vastly expanded its internship options over the past two years (Evidence Inventory, 371).

**Research**

Through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), Kean supports faculty and student research by providing a variety of seed grants and internal research funding, as well as opportunities to showcase and publish research.

Several different research awards to faculty and students are administered by ORSP yearly, including Faculty Seed Grant, 3-Minute Pitch Program, Untenured Faculty Research Initiative, Released Time for Research and Creative Works, Students Partnering with Faculty Summer Research Program, and research and travel support (Evidence Inventory, 305). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new Faculty Seed Grant for COVID-19 Research Projects was
established in 2020. These grants facilitate support for equipment purchases, release time from teaching, faculty and student stipends, and travel and conference expenses.

The Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF) (Evidence Inventory, 330) develops, supports and celebrates faculty-mentored student research and creative projects with the overall aim of enhancing the undergraduate education experience and preparing students for careers in all areas. CURF provides centralized resources, programs and support for undergraduate students, starting in their freshman year, to engage in faculty-mentored research projects and provides services for highly motivated students interested in fellowships and post-baccalaureate study. Students earn a modest stipend for the successful completion of each year’s research project.

Since 2009, Kean Research Days (Evidence Inventory, 191), a two-day event where faculty and students participate in oral or poster presentations of their research, has steadily grown. Although held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Research Days in 2020 and 2021 yielded more than 1,400 presentations in poster or video format by both undergraduate and graduate students.

Global Education

Through the Center for International Studies, Kean supports study abroad opportunities, Travelearn and semester abroad experiences at Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) while also hosting international students and scholars. Cooperative agreements with overseas universities and institutions expand opportunities for faculty and students from either institution to live, work, conduct research or study abroad while fostering a sense of community and sharing of knowledge for the greater good.

Kean University currently has six active cooperative agreements with overseas institutions. Our partnership agreement with EAE Business School in Spain, HOF University in Germany and ESC PAU Business School in France gives Kean University students in the Global Business program an opportunity to visit our partners institutions and participate in an international consulting internship abroad (Global Practica Program) for 3-4 weeks over the summer. In exchange, we welcome their students at Kean University for a semester of study abroad.

Our newer partnership with Soongsil University in South Korea also gives our students the opportunity to study Global Citizenry abroad and participate in international internships at non-profit organizations abroad. Kean University also has active partnership agreements with multiple study abroad providers to give students varied opportunities to study and internship abroad.

Travelearn enables students to pursue a degree while visiting and learning about a new part of the world by combining academic studies with short-term travel to various destinations. Travelearn programs typically consist of lectures and excursions related to a particular topic and are led by faculty members who are experts in the respective program’s field of study.

Kean students also have a unique opportunity to study abroad at the Wenzhou-Kean University campus for up to a full year. Simultaneously, international students from WKU have the
opportunity to study at the campus in Union. In Fall 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, 186 Chinese students were studying at Kean USA. This international exposure prepares both groups of students to work within a global community while facilitating cross-cultural exchanges.

**Practicums, Field Experiences and Clinical Rotations**

Many Nathan Weiss Graduate College (NWGC) academic departments require practicums, field experiences and clinical experiences for academic credit. The departments have a combination of on-site clinical supervisors or University faculty/staff who supervise students using evaluation criteria widely accepted within the discipline. To provide these opportunities, some programs, such as Speech-Language Pathology, Psychological Services and Occupational Therapy, offer clinics on campus that serve community residents for free or at reduced rates. The Department of Occupational Therapy coordinates a half-semester service-learning requirement in which students, under supervision, provide services to residents in the community at sites such as senior centers, Recovery High (substance abuse), Bridgeway (mental illness) and Project Opportunity (brain injury). Additionally, many College of Education (COE) students, based on their major, are required to pass student teaching assignments in schools, under supervision of Kean faculty and staff with input from cooperating teachers and school districts.

**Competency-Based Assessment**

All first-time full-time Kean students are placed into the appropriate level of reading, math and writing courses through the use of multiple measures including SAT, high school GPA and high school transcript evaluations. All reading, math and writing courses give students a diagnostic test in the first week of the semester in order to ensure proper placement.

Kean offers non-credit developmental courses in math, reading and writing to improve the skills of entering students whose academic record and diagnostics indicate a need for additional work prior to starting for-credit college-level courses. A new credit-bearing English composition course, ENG 1025, was created to provide students with additional support with college writing. ENG 1025 is designed as a preparatory course for College Composition, offering an introduction to academic expository writing and the writing, reading and critical thinking processes used across the college curriculum.

**Alternative Learning Approaches**

Alternative learning approaches include simulation/clinical skills labs, typically connected to a course, and the Interprofessional Grand Rounds. Interprofessional Grand Rounds provides the opportunity for a student or professor from one of the NWGC departments to present a detailed case study, allowing for participants to evaluate the case from an interdisciplinary perspective and offer intervention strategies. Attendance is optional, and no credit is given. It is not a department requirement but provides a platform for alternative learning.

**Student Information and Records Maintenance and Release**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain rights, privileges and protections relative to individually identifiable student education records.
maintained by the institution. Students are notified of their FERPA rights at least once per year by email and through the University catalog. This notification permits the release of directory information without prior written consent of the student. FERPA rights are also shared online on the Office of the Registrar webpage (Evidence Inventory, 83).

When prospective students apply to Kean, they entrust a great deal of personal information to the Admissions staff. This information is processed and stored in Slate, an online student recruitment and admissions portal (prior to 2021, Kean used Ellucian CRM Recruit for the same purpose). An active member of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), Kean abides by the NACAC Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission and operates within the guiding principles of transparency, professionalism and confidentiality.

Financial Aid

If the prospective student’s application has met the admissions criteria and has earned acceptance into the University, the Office of Financial Aid staff will determine the appropriate financial aid package to support matriculation. This package is based on financial need as reflected in an estimated family contribution (EFC) on the student’s completed FAFSA and, additionally, may include merit-based scholarships/grants. Members of the Office of Financial Aid follow standards of confidentiality as promulgated in the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) code. The Office of Financial Aid utilizes Ellucian Colleague, an online student information system to keep student information protected while allowing the appropriate staff permission to access the necessary information. Colleague allows for seamless communication within University departments, providing only the appropriate personal information needed along the way. All staff must have clearance to access student records in Colleague and related federal websites. Student workers must sign a code of confidentiality before they begin working each year and they have limited access to computer applications.

Registrar

The Office of the Registrar provides many services that include registration, course scheduling, academic record maintenance and degree conferrals. The Office of the Registrar utilizes a system of operations known as the One Stop Service Center (One Stop) (Evidence Inventory, 261) to provide quick access to physical and digital resources, various forms and policies. This ranges from student educational records release and change of Social Security number to independent study and thesis approvals. Whether students visit One Stop in person or virtually using QLs, an online queuing system that allows students to wait in a virtual line rather than a physical line when seeking assistance from One Stop, the University strictly adheres to FERPA guidelines to protect personal information.

Permissions are granted to Kean staff for access to student records via role-based security classes. These are determined by individual job responsibilities and specific departments’ needs. There are different security classes and access for specific roles at the University including, but not limited to, vice presidents, deans and directors. The University Registrar conducts FERPA training for departments when needed and requested. The Registrar for WKU also trains staff on FERPA standards.
Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs provides resources related to policies and procedures for the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information and records, including Academic Integrity Policy, Academic Amnesty, Affirmative Action Policy, Registration Policies, New Student Attendance Policies, FERPA (Access to Education Records) Policies, Course Audit, Leave of Absence, Problem Solving Procedures, and Uniform Ethics Code. A full list of resources are published online within the policies section of the Kean website (Evidence Inventory, 206).

Allegations of sexual assault, misconduct and violence are addressed through the following policies, which are available online and distributed annually through the Campus Security and Fire Safety Report: Sexual Assault, Misconduct and Violence: Policy, Prevention and Resources; Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), Section 304; Sexual Assault Victim’s Bill of Rights; Sexual Harassment Policy; and Sexual Misconduct Policy (Evidence Inventory, 206).

Ethical Standards and Ethos of Service

At Kean, there are a variety of offices and departments that work together to ensure a seamless experience for applicants, students, alumni, faculty and staff. While roles and specificities may differ, their commitment to providing a world-class experience, built on a foundation of ethical standards and clear policies, is universally aligned, practiced and demonstrated in a variety of ways.

Student Code of Conduct

Kean is committed to providing a campus environment where students can grow intellectually and develop as people. The Kean community depends on shared values and principles. The Student Code of Conduct (Evidence Inventory, 207) is a guide to our community values. These core values include integrity, community, fairness, respect and responsibility. Students and visitors are expected to uphold and abide by the standards of conduct that form the basis of the student code. Violations of the code may be received from individuals, police reports or incident reports referred through another department within the University using an online reporting form (Evidence Inventory, 347) Incident reports, student conduct records and supporting documentation is stored in Maxient, an online centralized reporting and record keeping platform for student behavior records. Determination of a violation is made only after a complete investigation of the complaint. A student conduct conference or a student conduct hearing may be held to determine if a violation of community standards occurred. The Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct works closely with the Residential Student Services Judicial System, Greek Senate Judicial Board, Office of the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Office of Affirmative Action, the Department of Athletics and Recreation and the Department of Public Safety and Police. All communications within the Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct are subject to FERPA.

Academic Affairs
The Office of Academic Affairs is central to the success of Kean’s programs, promoting high academic standards for faculty and students, and administering the resources, policies and plans that sustain them. Academic Affairs encompasses all of the academic components of what is a comprehensive, diverse and growing state university. The Office of Academic Affairs website contains a procedural handbook for Academic Objectives and Administrative Procedures (Evidence Inventory, 16) that was created to provide “a consistent and cogent document to ensure the delivery of efficient world-class academic services and opportunities to Kean students. These procedures are to be firmly and equitably implemented to achieve the stated objectives for the benefit of Kean University students and the University, with clarity and efficient allocation of University resources.”

Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness ensures that Kean maintains its high standards and works toward fulfilling its mission in serving both students and faculty through annual and multi-year assessments of programs supporting the student experience.

Student Handbooks

Many academic departments have student handbooks that clearly state how students are expected to abide by the discipline’s code of ethics, which are developed or informed by professional associations relevant to the academic discipline or profession. Examples can be found within the School of Nursing RN to BSN Student Handbook (Evidence Inventory, 410), the American Occupational Therapy Association’s Code of Ethics (Evidence Inventory, 346) followed within the Department of Occupational Therapy, the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (Evidence Inventory, 409) adhered to by the Department of Graduate Social Work, the National Education Association Code of Ethics (Evidence Inventory, 408) followed by all College of Education programs and the American Institute of Architects’ Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (Evidence Inventory, 407) practiced within the School of Public Architecture. When present, these codes of ethics are available through the academic department or school’s webpage.

Athletics and Recreation

The Kean Department of Athletics and Recreation follows a code of ethics for players and coaches. All student-athletes must complete a series of compliance documents in order to be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics (Evidence Inventory, 427). As a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III member institution, Kean complies with all applicable rules and regulations of the NCAA in the conduct of its intercollegiate athletics program. Members of the Athletics department staff, student-athletes and college officials associated with Kean Athletics all share in the responsibility of awareness of the governing NCAA Division III legislation (Evidence Inventory, 428) and adherence to it, in compliance with the Principle of Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct within the NCAA’s Principles for the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics (Evidence Inventory, 346).

Consumer Information
Kean clearly communicates accurate and comprehensive information regarding expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment and refunds through a number of different mechanisms.

**Tuition and Fees**

Information about expenses, such as tuition and fees, are posted online for students and their families and shared through both email and postal mail (Evidence Inventory, 363). Further, a sample tuition bill is generated through the Office of Student Accounting and sent to new students in June, prior to the generation of the actual bill. Once actual bills are determined, notifications are sent to all registered students on an ongoing basis.

**Financial Aid**

Financial aid information is communicated through many different outlets. Both emails and postcards are sent to remind students to apply for financial aid using the FAFSA form. Information is also provided on the awarding process, the types of financial aid available, the rights and responsibilities associated with financial aid receipt, award packages, additional documentation to provide, disclosure statements and financial aid updates. Award letters are mailed to new students and email notification is sent to returning students. New students are also sent email information to access a personalized video award letter.

In addition to electronic and mail notification, financial aid information is also distributed through person-to-person interaction. Professional staff provide in-person information on expenses, financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, repayment and refunds. Interactive events include: FAFSA Workshops, University Open Houses, Financing your Kean Degree events, Family Day, Retention Day, New Student Orientation, EOF sessions, PASSPORT sessions, Accepted Student Day, SUPERA sessions, plus information sessions through Admissions, support service offices, academic departments and other office initiatives. In-person information sessions are conducted at all campus locations, including WKU, when relevant to international students. While outreach to students about these events is ongoing, the events are also listed on the University’s admissions and financial aid webpages (Evidence Inventory, 255). Finally, students can schedule online appointments 24/7 to meet with a financial aid advisor.

An additional information source for Kean students is the robust information and url references for resources on the comprehensive kean.edu website and social media pages where the office posts relevant financial aid information and videos. This includes resources on grants, scholarships, loans, repayment and refunds.

**Institutional Research**

The Office of Institutional Research website includes a variety of reports on its public webpage, http://ir.kean.edu. Information about tuition, fees and financial aid, gleaned from the reports filed through the Kean Office of Institutional Research, can also be found on external websites.

**Ethical Policies and Process to Admit**
Through the Office of Admissions, Kean attracts prospective students through a series of events throughout the year. These include: Open Houses, Campus Tours, Information Days/Nights, and Student For a Day events. These opportunities are marketed through targeted emails, NJ Transit advertisements, school counselors and teachers, friends and relatives, online advertisements, the University website, postcards and direct mailings, social media (and at times, boosted social media posts) and radio advertisements.

Students who choose to apply as incoming freshman, transfer, graduate or online students must submit an application based on the criteria listed on the Kean Admissions website. Information provided on our Enrollment Services website is based on the NACAC’s Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission. In summary, students are provided information on application instructions and deadlines, financial aid and scholarships, how to visit Kean, and next steps for accepted students.

Once Enrollment Services has finalized the incoming class for the upcoming semester, newly accepted students are informed in two ways: (1) acceptance packets and (2) phone calls from admissions counselors, faculty or both. Acceptance packets are sent out to freshmen, transfer, graduate and online students. Each packet includes five steps in order for accepted students to complete their enrollment. Instructions are also available online (Evidence Inventory, 246).

After students receive their acceptance packet, Enrollment Services provides each accepted student with a two-part Accepted Student Survey, which determines whether the accepted student will enroll or defer admissions for one semester. The survey also collects information about recruitment event participation and queries students how Kean can improve the application process.

Students who are accepted into support programs such as EOF, PASSPORT or SUPERA show promise of being successful at the University, with the benefit of additional academic support. Admission counselors direct these students to the respective program websites to learn more about their designated program, eligibility guidelines, how to enroll, and program-specific events and/or information sessions that are held throughout the academic year.

Admission counselors and faculty also make congratulatory phone calls to freshmen students upon acceptance. Faculty are given a “Welcome Calls” script. In the case that an admissions counselor or faculty member is unsuccessful in reaching the accepted student by phone, an email is deployed. Admission counselors are scripted to encourage newly accepted students to attend Accepted Student Day/Night sessions. Each spring, these sessions provide an opportunity for accepted students to meet their future classmates, learn more about their majors and academic requirements from respective college deans and faculty, and to begin to envision life as a Kean student. As part of the University’s safety protocols amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Accepted Student Day for Fall 2020 freshmen was hosted online using Zoom in Spring 2020 with a socially distant outdoor event in Spring 2021 for Fall 2021 freshmen.

Newly accepted students are also invited to participate in Dinner with Deans. Due to COVID-19 restrictions for on-campus events, in Spring 2020, Kean transitioned this event into a virtual dinner table around the tri-state area where Kean provided families with pizza and a safe environment to engage the deans.
Counselors also encourage newly accepted students to visit the Accepted Student section of the webpage (Evidence Inventory, 411) to guide them through the enrollment process, including tips on how to maximize their financial aid at the University. Faculty congratulate them on their new acceptance and refer them to the Office of Admissions if they have any questions. Once the admissions counselor and/or faculty member have spoken to the accepted student, an email outlining the important aspects of their discussion follows. This email provides information encouraging students to visit the accepted student section of the website and adhere to the financial aid deadline to complete the FAFSA and the tuition deposit deadline to secure their place at Kean.

**Ethical Policies and Process to Retain**

After students are enrolled within Kean University, there are many policies and procedures in place to help retain and facilitate the success of our students, including but not limited to:

**Division of Student Success and Retention**

The Division of Student Success and Retention's mission is to provide leadership for the University's retention efforts by engaging at-risk students and teaching them the skills and dispositions needed for success through a series of programs, including but not limited to:

**Step-it-Up Academic Coaches**

The Step-it-Up Program (SIU) is an academic intervention program designed to assist students struggling academically to improve their chances of persistence and graduation from Kean University. The program utilizes graduate students in the counselor education program to mentor these students, under faculty supervision, while gaining practicum or internship experience. SIU is a highly successful program which also offers a suite of workshops to the entire college population, along with those who may be at academic risk. Academic Coaches adhere to the standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), as practiced by the Department of Counselor Education faculty members (Evidence Inventory, 325).

**First-Generation Mentors**

The First-Generation Mentoring program pairs first-generation students with alumni mentors. The alumni mentors provide an additional layer of support for their first-generation student mentees, not only during their transition to college, but also in their professional life after Kean. The program provides a series of on-campus programs for mentors and mentees as well as additional opportunities for one-on-one engagement. First generation students are identified via a College Student Inventory (CSI), a non-cognitive assessment that determines a student's motivations and receptivity to support services, that is completed at orientation. The only qualification to be part of this program is to identify as a first-generation college student, which is defined as a student for whom “neither parent(s)/guardian(s)” have attended college. For mentors, the Kean Foundation distributes marketing material to Kean alumni who have graduated within the last 20 years to invite them to become a mentor. Once students and
mentors have been identified, each is provided a training and an orientation prior to the start of the semester. Mentors are trained to adhere to the Kean Policies. Each mentor signs an agreement to maintain confidentiality unless there are extenuating circumstances in which they should contact the managing assistant director (Evidence Inventory, 325).

**Supplemental Instruction (SI)**
The SI program at Kean University began as a pilot initiative through the newly formed Office of Student Success and Retention in Fall 2018 to fill a gap in academic support services offered by the University. The initial pilot supported just one course, General Chemistry 1, as it yielded the highest distribution of D and F final grades and withdrawal rate across all introductory courses at the University for four consecutive academic years. Based on the overwhelming success of the pilot semester – 36% average course grade increase for SI participants and the lowest withdrawal rate for the course in five years – the SI program at Kean expanded in Spring 2019 to include two additional courses, General Chemistry 2 and Introduction to Computer Science, with a combined staff of 12 SI student leaders.

In Fall 2019, Kean was awarded two grants to fund the further expansion of the SI program. The first, a $1.7 million National Science Foundation (NSF) grant managed by the computer science program faculty, provides funding to support the integration of SI within the first four courses in the computer science major sequence. The second, a $1.5 million U.S. Department of Education Title III Strengthening Institutions grant managed by the Office of Student Success with a sole focus on SI expansion, provides funding to support the integration of SI within additional identified courses in math, chemistry and accounting over the next five years (Evidence Inventory, 370).

As of the Fall 2020 semester, this program consists of 45 SI student leaders, faculty and two professional staff. SI student leaders assist course instructors and support student learning. Two full-time staff members have been certified as SI supervisors through the International Center for Supplemental Instruction at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In addition, six of the current SI student leaders have obtained an elevated SI team leader credited internship and assist with the daily operations of the program in addition to their regular responsibilities (Evidence Inventory, 325).

**Back on Track (BoT)**

In response to the struggles Kean students have faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kean BoT program, funded by the CARES Act, was established in Summer 2020. Eligible students, those who did not successfully complete a required course during Spring 2020, are given the opportunity to get “back on track” toward timely graduation by retaking or enrolling in a credit-bearing undergraduate course required by their major with the assistance of a tuition grant and personalized support in the form of academic coaching, referrals to University resources, and group workshop participation. While this program is voluntary, 183 students participated in BoT during its pilot semester. Overall, 69.3% of the participants successfully completed the course, with a grade of C or above, for which they had BoT program support during Summer 2020, and 78% maintained good academic standing, > 2.0 cumulative GPA, for the Fall 2020 semester.
Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS)

The Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS) was developed in the 2020 academic year to enhance the overall institutional outcomes of persistence, retention and timely graduation from Kean University. With the creation of CAPS, Kean University has shifted from a decentralized advising model, where respective academic areas determined their academic advising approach, to structured academic advising, where practices and student advising experiences are more standardized.

With the exception of some specialized academic and support programs at the University, the staff at CAPS serve as the primary advisors for all intended, matriculated and undecided undergraduate freshmen, sophomore and transfer students enrolled at the Union campus and online. Juniors and seniors receive advising primarily from their faculty advisors. CAPS staff includes one assistant vice president, one director, four associate directors and five academic advisors.

During the academic year, CAPS offers 12-hours of academic advising and support, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The hours of operation provide opportunities for students to receive support services based on the growing needs as well as growing number of non-traditional experiences Kean University students encounter, including but not limited to students working full-time and taking care of family.

CAPS provides holistic, student-centered, culturally responsive, evidenced-based academic advising; evidenced-based academic programming; educational planning; checklist review; early alert management and review; degree audit review; enrolled not registered (ENR) outreach; and registration assistance to Kean students (Evidence Inventory, 115). These services assist to ensure students have positive academic experiences as well as assist students in having a successful academic journey.

Ellucian CRM Advise

Ellucian CRM Advise (Advise) allows faculty, staff and administrators to holistically support students, resulting in enhanced team integration from enrollment through graduation. (Evidence Inventory, 325). Advise is used to identify student risk level and prioritize early alerts; automate targeted communication plans using live data (e.g., GPA, course registration, program participation, academic early alerts and registration holds), and support all retention programming. The platform effectively provides a dashboard-like dataset and experience for student program providers that help to manage and direct retention efforts across the campus community. Advise was introduced to Kean University in Fall 2019.

Advise facilitates a collaborative, coherent and transparent dialogue between faculty and counselors to support positive student outcomes through consistent communication and early intervention. Several departments, including the Office of Student Success and Retention, Academic Affairs, Career Services, Exceptional Educational Opportunities, the Learning Commons, Veteran Student Services, Institutional Effectiveness, and the Office of Computer and Informations Services, use Advise. Through its continued implementation, Kean students
are better supported and able to accomplish a monumental milestone in their lives and become proud Kean University alumni.

Through the Advise Faculty Experience, faculty members are able to navigate their course rosters quickly, raising alerts for students. It is important to note that at Kean, retention consists of both proactive and reactive initiatives. Alerts are designed with intervention in mind and create awareness when a student demonstrates progress within their specific course. Faculty who raise alerts within the Advise Faculty Experience trigger a series of communications. For example, when a faculty member raises an alert recommending a student veteran to tutoring, writing or public speaking services support, the student automatically receives communication about these academic support services and how to make an appointment. The system also raises alerts for the Learning Commons. These staff members monitor and manage the student's receptivity and actions based on the initial and follow-up communications (e.g., emails, texts, phone calls). It is helpful to note that these alerts are recorded on the students' record on Advise, allowing those responsible for supporting the student's progress to also be aware of referrals.

The Advise Student Experience allows students to access their personal success teams, composed of academic advisors and support staff at the University, including financial aid counselors, career counselors, athletics coaches, academic coaches and representatives from support service areas, as well as raise their own alerts to access resources and help them feel connected. These alerts are based on a curated list of frequently asked questions regarding support services at Kean. Similar to faculty-raised alerts, student-raised alerts are visible on the student's record, allowing for all parties involved in the success of the student to be aware of the raised alert and provide appropriate action. For example, if a student from Kean Ocean raises an alert about one of the many services offered through the Learning Commons, they will receive an automated communication regarding services and their engagement with the center is tracked through the advisor dashboard.

All faculty advisors and members of the student's success team have access to the advisee's dashboard and a student record through the Advisor Experience. The success team members are able to view all students on their caseload, organized by open alerts and student success score. The student success score is a quick-glance indication of the student's progress toward graduation. Data that helps determine the success score is established based on national trends and averages provided by Ellucian. From the advisor dashboard, a user can explore a specific student record including open alerts; student academic progress including courses completed and final grades; student involvement including clubs and activities; and other need-to-know data helpful when supporting the student.

In addition to the three dashboards mentioned above, the system also serves as a data-mining resource for student support. To support students, the department or division tracks student progress from point of entry to Kean through graduation. Through our LMS synchronization, Kean views dynamic data for student performance in the classroom for instructors who use the Blackboard gradebook. Furthermore, the student success score is coded as red, yellow or green, so members of the student's success team can efficiently capture how a student is progressing at a given moment based on their score.
Nancy Thompson Learning Commons

The Nancy Thompson Learning Commons (NTLC) offers many services that are designed to meet the academic and information needs of the Kean community. Its mission is to provide an integrated information delivery and learning support system that directly assists students with academic learning, completion of research, and creative and scholarly activities. Learning Commons services include research, tutoring, writing, reading and speaking support. All of these services are provided in-person and online to accommodate the diverse needs of the Kean community. Services provided to graduate and undergraduate students at Kean’s main campus in Union, N.J. are also provided to students at Kean Ocean; although, in some instances, resources are available in a remote setting as opposed to face-to-face.

Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs adheres to a series of policies to help protect the safety of Kean students. For the purpose of this section, we will focus on the ethical policies and processes to retain and facilitate the success of students at the University:

Community Standards and Student Conduct/Student Code of Conduct

Students have rights afforded to them by bills or laws such as the Civil Rights Act and Higher Education Act. Under Kean’s Student Code of Conduct, students are afforded the right to due process and are protected from arbitrary or capricious decision making. Under the code (Evidence Inventory, 207), students are insured that the University complies with the many policies that dictate protection from bullying, intimidation, harassment and sexual assault, e.g. the right to have institutions follow their own rules.

Kean Counseling Center (KCC)

As licensed clinicians, each KCC counselor follows the ethical codes of their professional association and the guidelines of state and federal authorities. Clinicians also engage in frequent professional development workshops to refresh and update their knowledge of this information as a part of the renewal of their licenses. Students are provided with information on What To Expect on the KCC webpage (Evidence Inventory, 329).

Office of Accessibility Services (OAS)

OAS staff follow the ethical codes and guidelines of professional associations and the guidelines of state and federal agencies and authorities. The OAS manager also engages in ongoing professional development training and the information is distributed to OAS staff.

Alcohol and Other Drug Services (AOD)

As a licensed clinician, the AOD coordinator follows the ethical codes of their professional association, as well as Kean University’s Drug and Alcohol Policy and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Task Force (AToD) Policy, state and federal authorities (Evidence Inventory, 426).
The AOD coordinator also engages in frequent professional development workshops to refresh and update their knowledge of this information as a part of the renewal of their license.

**Student Health Services (SHS)**

The medical staff at SHS, including medical doctors (MDs), nurse practitioners (NPs) and registered nurses (RNs), follow the ethical codes of their professional organizations and licensing boards, along with those of state and federal authorities, including the Patients Privacy Rights Policy. (Evidence Inventory, 412) To meet licensing requirements, all providers are required to complete continuing education specific to their area of expertise. All documentation and telehealth platforms are HIPAA compliant. All non-medical staff attend confidentiality training and sign a confidentiality agreement.

**Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) Student Support Services**

In addition to students at Kean USA, students at Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) experience an inclusive community that supports student learning and success. An introduction to these services, and access and contact information are available to students on the WKU website in the Student Service Guidance Chart (Evidence Inventory, 418). Following the same assessment reporting process as Kean USA, support units apply assessment-informed insights to progressively improve structures and processes that maximize student success.

**The English Language Center**

The mission of ELC is to “foster an English learning environment and facilitate students’ study of English as a tool for their academic studies.” To this end, a number of programs have been adopted under the ELC including the Pre-University Intensive English Program (PIEP), Learning and Immersion Enrichment Program (LIEP) and Year-1 English Program (ESL). The PIEP and LIEP are short-term, early semester intensive programs that prepare students for the regularized ESL. Annually, the ESL program is assessed to determine the success of the English language program for WKU freshmen. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the ESL assessment report’s clearly defined learning expectations were adopted for effective writing and revision, evaluative and analytical writing and proficiency in academic English (Evidence Inventory, 420). The ELC also organizes competitions, such as video-making competitions, to make practicing English fun. They also participate in public speaking and debate competitions.

**Writing and Revision**

With the application of rubrics-based collation and interpretation of assessment data, some critical amendments were made to further improve the ESL program. The Writing and Revision program staff sequences assignments to enable students to perform better with cumulative knowledge from past assignments. The Evaluative & Analytical Writing program staff separated writing from analytical rubrics in order to ascertain relative progress of the two expectations. This was essential to the design and delivery of distinct instructions that target the two areas. The Proficiency with Academic English program staff set realistic expectations for the argument component of the proficiency rubric. In short, the English language program for WKU freshmen
uses assessment data to continuously improve curriculum and instruction to the benefit of students.

**Student Academic Services Support Center**

The Student Academic Services Support Center (SASSC) hosts a number of programs to support students at various risk levels, as determined by the outcomes of WKU’s Early Alert System. SASSC combines academic tutoring with supplemental instruction programs for select at-risk students while developing pervasive intervention programs for probationary students. With outcomes based on the number of students who go through these intervention systems and who are able to transition to successful academic paths, these programs are assessed annually to ascertain areas of program success and areas of improvement.

**Student Affairs**

From the provision of psychological guidance and counseling services, to the establishment of a well-maintained living and learning environment and the application of a Student Code of Conduct, the Office of Student Affairs sponsors a number of programs to ensure student success at WKU. For example, there were a number of events geared towards students' career success. The Student Career Development Center (SCDC) organized two Career & Internship Fairs. In addition, they held an entrepreneurship competition at the student-run cafe, The Social Dog Cup, with the winners managing the cafe for the year. The SCDC, in partnership with WKU Center for International Studies, worked closely with Kean USA to launch a virtual internship exchange. Twenty-one WKU students participated, the majority receiving academic credit. The outcomes of these programs and policies are assessed in the context of the offices’ annual assessment reports. Insights drawn from these assessments are applied to make programmatic improvements.

**Library and Information Services Center**

The Library and Information Services Center (IT) follow requisite programs and policies to ensure the success of WKU students. The library provides training to students to enable them to make full use of resources, including databases and research support systems. Through annual assessment reports, the library applies indirect measures of assessment (e.g., surveys, focus groups) to ascertain the training and resource needs of students in order to respond accordingly to popular demands and expectations of students. In addition, IT supports technology and network-related needs of students 24 hours a day. To keep WKU students abreast with constantly evolving technological systems, IT has been pursuing a comprehensive assessment and evaluation agenda over the years. The IT combines direct and indirect measures of assessment to facilitate the application of assessment data to the improvement of technological services at WKU (Evidence Inventory, 434).

**Athletics, Student Life and Other Extracurricular Activity Policies, Guidelines and Practices**
Kean University has established a set of policies, guidelines and practices that are supportive of the academic programs of the University and ensures that our student leaders and student athletes are held to the same standards as the administrative programs at the institution.

To support the student experience and student success, Kean University has established the following criteria in order for students to be eligible to hold leadership positions and serve in leadership roles in student groups and organizations. These criteria must be met at the time of application to become a student leader and must be upheld throughout a student leader's entire term of office.

Each student leader must have completed a minimum of 12 credits at Kean and be fully matriculated (some exceptions apply for student government positions dedicated to new students), must have a minimum of a 2.50 cumulative GPA, and must be free of probation with restrictions in residence, universitywide disciplinary probation or higher-level disciplinary sanctions with restrictions, suspension or dismissal.

These standards are meant to be the minimum requirements. Organizational requirements that exceed these standards shall remain in force. Student GPAs are confirmed at the end of each semester to ensure compliance with these regulations.

**Student Government**

Additionally, Kean University supports two student governments: Student Organization of Kean University, representing the full-time undergraduate student body, and the Graduate and Part-time Student Council (GPSC), representing the part-time undergraduate and graduate student government. Each board promotes leadership and student engagement and consists of an executive board and senate, or council, that is composed of representatives by academic year and campus location. A vice president position on the executive board and several senate positions are dedicated to students enrolled in courses at Kean Ocean. These student government boards represent the students of Kean University by encouraging student feedback and acting as the voice for student needs. In addition, these boards host various events on and off campus that contribute to social, academic, cultural and professional growth.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Kean University is committed to providing a campus environment that is conducive to academic inquiry in the University tradition. Kean is a metropolitan, comprehensive, teaching university that exists to foster inquiry and public discourse. It is also a community. At Kean, students are expected to abide by certain standards of conduct that form the basis of the Student Code of Conduct (Code) (Evidence Inventory, 207) and ensure that their guests and visitors do the same. These standards are embodied within a set of core values that include integrity, fairness, respect, community, and responsibility. When students fail to adhere to the community standards, appropriate proceedings may be initiated under the Code to address the failure and its consequences.

**Greek Life**
Greek Life at Kean University empowers members of the Greek-letter organizations to promote and preserve the ideals of scholarship, service leadership, campus involvement and brotherhood/sisterhood. Membership in Greek organizations promotes personal development and a strong sense of identity with the institution, as well as post-graduate association. Greek chapters enhance the quality of life for students on and off campus by providing a range of opportunities for meaningful individual involvement and growth.

Center for Leadership and Service

In order to manage the quality of our student organizations, the Center for Leadership and Service coordinates the process of student group recognition on all Kean campuses. These student groups include honor societies, recognized student groups, fraternities, sororities and student governments. Each organization must have a full-time faculty or staff member that serves as an advisor, a guiding document that outlines the structure, mission, membership criteria and other guidelines that govern the organization and at least ten active Kean student members. Each executive board member must also complete an annual training that includes sessions on risk management, the Code of Conduct, incident reporting, conflict resolution, event planning and policies and organizational development, which includes recruitment, membership retention and goal settings.

Residential Student Services

The Office of Residential Student Services (RSS) staff believes that every experience in a student's life can be educational. A student's education at the University is not limited to an expansion of his or her academic knowledge, but includes the development of a moral and ethical code that allows the student to function properly in society. Furthermore, a student's education includes an awareness of responsibility to others, their status as a member of a social group, and how to live within the rules necessary for proper functioning of that and other groups in society. The policies listed here are written as prohibitions; that is, they are stated as behavior that is prohibited in all residence halls, buildings and grounds. These policies are enforced through the Office of Residential Student Services and can be found in the Resident Student Handbook on the RSS web page (Evidence Inventory, 401).

Student Athletes

Student athletes are required to follow the eligibility requirements of the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC). These guidelines stipulate that student athletes must meet minimum credit load and cumulative GPA requirements for NCAA eligibility and participation, which are defined as having a full-time course load of at least 12 credits per semester and maintaining a minimum cumulative GPA of 1.6 for freshmen, 1.8 for sophomores, and 2.0 for juniors, seniors and graduate students.

Kean holds its student athletes to a higher standard and requires a minimum 2.0 GPA for all athletes. To ensure compliance with this academic standard, study halls are conducted on a team-by-team basis. Coaches convey the requirements, hours and rules concerning study halls to all team members.
Financial Aid

In order to continue to receive financial aid, all students must adhere to the Kean University Academic Progress Policy (Evidence Inventory, 278). The policy conforms to federal regulations and state regulations that govern financial aid programs and requires all financial aid recipients to be in good academic standing and to be making academic progression toward a degree in a reasonable amount of time before the financial aid office disburses any federal funds for the subsequent semester. Satisfactory academic progress is monitored at the end of each Fall, Spring and Summer semesters. Students are required to meet both the qualitative and quantitative components of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) (Evidence Inventory, 278). Good academic standing of maintaining a 2.0 GPA for undergraduates and 3.0 GPA for graduate students fulfills the qualitative component and academic progression that marks their pace to completion by monitoring credit hours attempted and completed to fulfill the quantitative component.

Maximum Time Frame

Students must complete their degree in 150 percent of the time frame published in the University Catalog (Evidence Inventory, 278). The maximum time frame for an undergraduate degree is measured by the average number of credit hours required to complete a degree multiplied by 150 percent. This is the maximum number of credit hours a student can attempt and maintain satisfactory academic progress. Advance standing hours applied toward the student’s degree program (e.g., transfer and AP) count in the maximum time frame.

Students may continue to receive financial aid if their total attempted credit hours do not exceed 150 percent of the credits needed to complete their program of study. In the example provided above, the program of study requires 124 credits for completion; a student may attempt 186 credits.

Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services

Students who have learning or other disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Students with documented disabilities and functional limitations are held to the same academic expectations and standards as other students. If the student has self-identified with the Office of Counseling and Accessibility Services and is receiving appropriate accommodations, the student should be able to maintain satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes (Evidence Inventory, 278).

Scholarships

Through the Kean University Foundation, Kean offers academic merit scholarships (Evidence Inventory, 402). These awards are given based on alternate indicators including but not limited to courses taken, academic rigor, class rank with a primary focus on high school (unweighted) GPA. Only recent high school graduates primarily admitted as full-time freshmen are eligible.
These scholarships are renewable for up to four years (8 semesters) of consecutive undergraduate study when a cumulative 3.0 GPA is maintained through continuous full-time enrollment. In order to fulfill the requirements of their degree while remaining eligible for these scholarships, recipients should be aware of the many options available, including taking classes during summer and winter sessions. There are seven named levels of merit scholarships and recognition that range from $500 to full-in-state tuition.

Kean does not use third-party providers to deliver support for student services.

**Assessment of Programs Supporting the Student Experience**

As an institution, Kean receives ongoing assessment guidance from several areas including but not limited to the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs, University Relations, Office of the Registrar, and Office of Institutional Effectiveness. As academic and administrative units gather data, they then work with these units to incorporate this data into the planning and implementation of student programs and services to support the student experience. For more information on the process for assessing programs in support of the student experience, please see Standard VI.

Through these areas, the Kean community also has access to Anthology (formerly Campus Labs) software including Baseline, Engage and Chalk & Wire as well as access to data through Ellucian CRM Advise. In addition to working with these internal units for support, Kean belongs to the education advisory board, student affairs and advancement forums. This membership provides us with access to discounted National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) membership and a global community of student affairs professionals and newly discovered best practices.

**College Student Inventory**

Within the University, the student experience and programming starts prior to students attending their first class. As part of New Student Orientation, students complete the College Student Inventory (CSI). This non-cognitive assessment helps the institution better understand a student's motivations and receptivity to support services at Kean (Evidence Inventory, 349). Based on this assessment data of a student's past experiences, initiatives are designed and communications are tailored to particular student populations who benefit from support.

**Cougar Climb**

Furthermore, students also engage with the Cougar Climb co-curricular guided pathway. The Cougar Climb steers students through a well-balanced education experience that includes the following categories: student success; career development; health and wellness; social engagement and civic engagement. The University creates programming that emphasizes each of these areas and requires that freshmen participate (Evidence Inventory, 325).

The assessment of the Cougar Climb, along with other programming, occurs through Engage, where the University has cultivated a database of student involvement that links engagement with existing student data, including participation in programs, clubs and organizations'
elections. Students can assess their co-curricular transcript of involvement, including Pathways progress, and have the opportunity to further develop as leaders through overseeing facets of their organizations. Likewise, the University can track the progress of students’ Pathways through Engage, a system that tracks student involvement. A final tool used to assess the impact of the Cougar Climb is Ellucian CRM Advise. Through a series of queries, support staff can determine a student’s academic performance as it relates to their engagement with the pathway. For example, in 2020, we learned that Kean retained more than 85% of students who were in the top 200 of completers of the Cougar Climb; whereas, those who were in the bottom 200 were slower to register. As of May 2020, only 35% of these students had registered for the Fall 2020 term. This data reinforced what Kean already knows; the earlier students engage, the more likely they are to be retained (Evidence Inventory, 325).

**Surveys**

The University also assesses student experiences through surveys that measure learning outcomes and satisfaction (Evidence Inventory, 400). Areas assessed include but are not limited to volunteer opportunities, student-interest, Title IX, safety, health and wellness services, computer labs, dining, programs, and the program-creation process for student groups. Students who attend Student Government programs and activities also receive an assessment that measures the program’s impact. This determines satisfaction per program and also assists in capturing meta-data related to overall satisfaction.

**Self-Assessment Process**

The working group, consisting of students, faculty, staff and administrators from across the campus community and career lifespan, representing entry-level through upper-level administration, met in collaborative virtual locations (i.e., Google Meet, Zoom), due to COVID-19 restrictions, on a monthly basis to discuss, reflect and collectively contribute to this process. Kean used shared Google folders to compile relevant information to support the drafting of the Self-Study report. These folders were contributed to and managed by all group members. Based on the diverse representation across campus, individual roles and responsibilities included gathering qualitative and quantitative data that supported the respective LOI. In each meeting thereafter, the working groups discussed additional data that was needed and responded to pending questions. To capture all of this data in an organized way, all members had access to amend the working draft and contribute to the shared folders.

As meetings progressed, members remained abreast of developments through follow-up communications and meeting notes that were accessible within the shared Google folders. Additionally, all meetings were scheduled well in advance, with a list of meeting dates and times for each semester. This resulted in transparency and comprehensiveness among members.

A cooperative team dynamic was evident during the creation of the initial draft and subsequent revisions. Since the process was open from the beginning, members were all informed and well versed in each of the indicators. Small groups took the lead on each indicator, based on their expertise, and synthesized the data and narrative information to accurately represent the student experience at Kean.
In support of this working group, the co-chairs attended regularly scheduled steering committee meetings to report progress and receive feedback for continuous growth and progress; consulted with the assigned advisory team members, as well as the evidence inventory committee members, to seek feedback and provide a progress summary report at the Kean Board of Trustees meeting in March 2021.

**Recommendations for Continuous Improvement**

As a student-centered institution, each of the 10 Strategic Plan Goals from the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan contributed to the success of Kean’s students. Listed below are goals from the 2013-2020 strategic plan with relevant examples that highlight how the University has made progress in working toward or achieving these respective goals.

1. **Goal 1: Expand and Strengthen Academic Initiatives**
   a. Back on Track
   b. Step-it-Up
   c. Supplemental Instruction
   d. Tutoring, Writing, Public Speaking Services
   e. International Student Services (Study Abroad and TravelLearn)
   f. Career Services (Internships, Career Exploration and Advising)

2. **Goal 2: Attract and Retain Students**
   a. New Student Orientation
   b. Congratulatory phone calls
   c. Back on Track
   d. Step-it-Up
   e. First-Generation Scholars Mentor Program
   f. Ellucian CRM Advise
   g. Special Programs (EOF, PASSPORT, SUPERA, English Language Learners)

3. **Goal 5: Cultivate Partnerships**
   a. First-Generation Scholars Mentor Program
   b. Center for Leadership and Service
   c. New Student Orientation
   d. Career Services (Internships)
   e. Experiential Learning

4. **Goal 7: Strengthen Financial Infrastructure**
   a. EOF
   b. Financial Aid
   c. Student Accounting
   d. Office of Student Success and Retention

5. **Goal 10: Strengthen Security and Promote Public Health**
   a. Student Health Services
      i. Accessibility Services
      ii. Health Services
      iii. Counseling Center
   b. Collaboration with Union County on COVID-19
      i. Testing site
      ii. Vaccine site
Food distribution site

Strengths, Aspirations and Forward Thinking Recommendations

As Kean progresses in the Beyond 2020 Strategic Plan, Standard 4 aligns closely with Goal 3 of the Plan: *To create a transformative student-centered university culture focused on student success from first encounter through graduation and beyond.*

When the University transitioned to fully-remote learning on March 16, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the campus community came together to make sure that the student experience was not compromised. Immediately, teams pushed to reimagine their programs and initiatives for accessibility in the online environment. Kean University continued to offer regular programming and support services to students that were accessible and data-driven. For example, the Cougar Climb is a pathway program designed to support students on their pathway toward graduation. As to not disturb a student's progress on the Cougar Climb, the Center for Leadership and Service communicated directly with students regarding adjustments to offered programs. Based on attendance and student feedback, the team managing the Cougar Climb continued to adjust what and how they offered opportunities for students to complete this pathway. This scenario is not an anomaly. Since March 2020, faculty, staff and administrators at Kean have pursued a better understanding of patterns related to students in the online environment, more specifically trends related to the pandemic. Based on this data, the University continues to assess and reimagine for continuous improvement.

Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, the Office of Student Success and Retention was elevated to a division to include special programs such as EOF, PASSPORT, SUPERA, Student Veterans and the new Center for Advising, Persistence and Success, ensuring all students have access to the necessary support services to guide them on their pathway toward graduation.

Currently Underway

1. Further integrate diversity, equity and inclusion more transparently throughout all student support programs and experiences in partnership of the newly established DEI Office
2. Continue to align assessment processes through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research and the Office of Accreditation and Assessment for consistent baseline data as the University seeks continuous improvement and institutional forward thinking, with a specific focus on training more faculty, staff and administrators on assessment practices
3. Continue programs that were established to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic, including Back on Track, and further expand programs such as Supplemental Instruction to support student success beyond the pandemic.

Future Recommendations

4. Establish greater consistency in communicating services available to students across all instructional sites and locations. For example, not much information is readily available regarding what services are accessible to students at Kean Ocean versus Kean Skylands, etc.
5. Implement additional programming to support financial literacy for Kean students and their families that will encourage informed decision-making to support long-term social mobility for students and their families.
Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Standard Statement

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution’s students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution’s mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Kean has established and sustained a culture of assessment through the development and implementation of annual assessment of academic programs. Building on a suggestion from the Periodic Review Report in 2017, Kean has continued systemic academic program review. Kean continues to actively adopt and use best practices, tools and methods in assessment such as a newly adopted Assessment Management System supported by Watermark.

Satisfactorily Met the Standard and Criteria

A review of the five criteria established by Middle States as measures of Standard V compliance indicates that the University satisfactorily meets these criteria, and the narrative that follows will highlight evidence to document how the Kean meets this Standard.

Kean University’s Educational Goals

Kean University’s educational goals are organized in a tiered structure with the mission statement serving as an overarching umbrella (Evidence Inventory, 1), organizing and driving the University’s Strategic Plan (Evidence Inventory, 97) and all sub-levels of Student Level Outcomes (SLOs) (Figure 1). Kean’s four universitywide SLOs (Evidence Inventory, 311), derived from the Mission Statement, are: think critically, creatively and globally (SLO 1), adapt to changing social, economic and technological environments (SLO 2), serve as active and contributing members of their communities (SLO 3) and advance their knowledge in the traditional disciplines and enhance their skills in professional areas (SLO 4).
The sub-levels to the KU SLOs include college level SLOs (Evidence Inventory, 312), program level SLOs (PSLOs) (Evidence Inventory, 312), and SLOs of individual courses (CSLOs). The PSLOs are developed by faculty in the discipline, using national norms and standards, and aim to build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills. The PSLOs are reevaluated using a standardized rubric (Evidence Inventory, 313) every five years as a part of the program review cycle engaging faculty and students in the programs. CSLOs are aligned with PSLOs through program curriculum mapping (Evidence Inventory, 324), which are also reviewed in the program review cycles.

**Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

The assessment process identifies changes or actions that programs take for continuous improvement. Individual programs align their PSLOs with the University and College SLOs using a program SLO alignment template developed by the OAA (Evidence Inventory, 323). The program SLOs are routinely reevaluated and realigned with University and GE SLOs during each program's review, engaging students and faculty in the program. An example of such a program review is included in Evidence Inventory (Evidence Inventory, 322), where pages 8-12 list the PSLO alignments. Revision of PSLOs is guided by such factors as assessment data collected through annual program assessment, University strategic planning updates, external standard changes and career outlooks.

Aligned with the University and GE SLOs on critical thinking and enhancing professional skills, research and inquiry-based educational experiences are emphasized across disciplines and are incorporated in and outside of the classroom through instruction methods such as experiential learning, practicums, internship support, student research support through internal grants, publishing student research, and universitywide initiatives, including Research First Initiative, Freshman First Initiative and Research Days activities. All programs require students to take a 2000 level Research and Technology course early in their educational experience to build foundational research skills. Individual programs offer higher-level inquiry-based research courses and a final capstone course to reinforce the skills and prepare students for the specific professions.
An example of how educational effectiveness assessment has been used to improve program offerings at Kean is provided by the Supplemental Program (SI). After determining that campus-wide student success and retention was adversely impacted by student performance in select first year courses, the SI program was piloted in 2018 with CHEM 1083 Chemistry I, with students receiving one hour of weekly, out-of-class enrichment. Based on the initial success, CHEM 1084 Chemistry II was added the following semester. At this time, SI has been expanded to include several other areas, and 53% of all enrolled students at Kean are in SI-supported courses (Evidence Inventory, 321). In spring 2021, those students made almost 6,000 visits to SI sessions. Students who participate in SI see an average 30% increase in their course grade, when compared to students who did not participate. The use of SI, prompted by assessment and data review, has significantly improved student course outcomes for participating students (Evidence Inventory, 321).

Institutional Support for Assessment

Kean’s Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) utilizes Google Shared Drives for data management, providing access to both program and yearly assessment reports. These reports are maintained in the designated Google Share Drive folders and accessible by the public on the Kean OAA website (Evidence Inventory, 320). OAA offers a variety of other Assessment Products for Academic Assessment through a public link on its website (Evidence Inventory, 319), which includes program SLOs, GE Assessment Rubrics and assessment reports, and administrative unit assessment reports, among others. Course Evaluations represent another assessment system that is utilized across the University. All courses are evaluated every semester using the online instrument by Campuslabs after Fall 2019 and SIRII instrument originally developed by ETS before Fall 2019. The results are shared with faculty and academic leaders to enrich the student learning experience. Starting spring 2021, the OAA administers an exit survey to all graduates that seeks feedback on their learning experiences (Evidence Inventory, 318). The results from these are shared with various stakeholders to enrich student learning and experience.

During 2020-2021, OAA evaluated Assessment Management Software systems that could be fully integrated with other Learning Management Software; Watermark was selected as the provider. A pilot program with Watermark is underway in AY 2021-2022, and is anticipated to replace the Google Shared Drive system by AY 2022-2023.

Specific disciplines may use additional assessment systems as well. For example, many of the Health Science programs in Nathan Weiss Graduate College and the School of Health and Human Performance are migrating to EXXAT software, which will house student data, such as location sites for clinical internship, assessment data and curriculum mapping. The College of Education currently utilizes the Chalk & Wire software platform for student assessment, allowing faculty and department heads to evaluate student learning outcomes and mastery at the program level. Other forms of direct measure for assessment of academic programs include certification or licensure exams and clinical skills assessments through clinical internships of clinical programs (PT, OT, AT, Speech, etc.) as well as comprehensive exams (Evidence Inventory, 189, 190).
In addition to meeting Kean’s assessment and program review criteria, 62 programs engage in external accreditation, certification or endorsement, fully supported by Kean’s administration. A complete list of Kean’s external accrediting agencies is included in evidence inventory (Evidence Inventory, 317).

**Assessment of Meaningful Curricular Goals**

Curricular goals are reflected in the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at different levels. Based upon the mission and goals of each academic program, program-specific SLOs (PSLOs) (Evidence Inventory, 312) reflect specific criteria relevant to their course of study. PSLOs vary by discipline and use national norms and standards to offer quality academic programs. A number of Kean’s programs are accredited by external national organizations, ensuring educational and professional standards that are nationally recognized (Evidence Inventory, 317). Each academic program performs a yearly assessment of student progress in achieving PSLOs; outcomes are measured against defined goals using yearly program generated data (Evidence Inventory, 80). Every program produces a Five-Year Program Review tracking results of the yearly program assessment goals (Evidence Inventory, 77).

SLOs of individual courses (CSLOs) are aligned with PSLOs through curriculum mapping (Evidence Inventory, 324) and are driven by the content of the disciplines for students to gain in-depth knowledge and practical skill sets in the disciplinary tracts. The CSLOs are clearly stated on each course syllabus (Evidence Inventory, 316) and assessed through assignments, projects, examinations and other methods as determined by program faculty. Courses which are foundational to the General Education curriculum are assessed using rubrics that have been standardized by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) (Evidence Inventory, 149-157). During the pandemic, Kean adopted standardized course modules on the Blackboard system. Each course clearly designates its corresponding CSLOs to individual units, readings, assignments and other instructional components (Evidence Inventory, 315). This also provided for consistency across Kean Online degree courses and the standard curricular programs offered through hybrid and face-to-face instruction.

Assessment results are tabulated, reported, and summarized during the programs’ annual assessment exercise and five-year program review. An Annual Dean’s Report provides college-level summaries (Evidence Inventory, 127). The Office of Academic Affairs then summarizes all Deans’ reports in an Annual Division Assessment Results and Recommendations Report for consideration alongside other Division Reports during the University Planning Council’s annual “closing the loop” exercise.

**Consistency with the Institutional Mission**

Kean prepares students in a manner consistent with its mission to offer quality academic programs to provide the foundation of knowledge and skills that encourages, advises and prepares students, when appropriate, to further their education in post-baccalaureate programs and graduate school. Furthermore, students regularly work with faculty and staff to engage in research and learning that inspires and enhances their education readiness. The University
is committed to providing affordable, accessible, world-class educational opportunities that prepare students to think and respond critically and creatively in a rapidly-changing world, and serve as active and contributing members of their communities.

**Physical Plant**

Kean’s main campus hosts state-of-the-art academic facilities that support student academics and research activities including the East Campus, the New Jersey Center for Science and Technology Building, the Green Lane Academic Building, the North Avenue Academic Building, the Liberty Hall Academic Center, Hynes Hall for the College of Business and Public Management and the George Hennings Hall Research extension for The Dorothy and George Hennings College of Science, Mathematics and Technology. The shared Gateway Building for Kean Ocean on the Ocean County College campus in Toms River offers baccalaureate degree completion program. Students enrolled at Kean have the same access and experiences including opportunities to study abroad, as do those studying at Kean’s main campus.

Kean Skylands sits on 40 acres of protected land in Jefferson Township located in western Morris County, New Jersey. It is conveniently located near County College of Morris, Sussex County Community College, and Passaic County Community College, helping area residents make a smooth transition toward earning their bachelor’s degrees.

The campus is like no other in New Jersey. The University renovated a 30,000-square-foot former abbey to serve as the campus’ main building. The Lodge now includes nine classrooms, a gym, 24 residential rooms, and flexible space for events. The Cabin, the campus’ newest building, is nestled among the trees and lends impressive views of the area with its floor to ceiling windows. The Cabin has three levels of classroom space and an open observation deck crowning the building. Workers also built an elevated, three-level skywalk which includes two outdoor classrooms and event space to facilitate programming (Evidence Inventory, 252).

Wenzhou-Kean University, Kean’s additional instructional location in Wenzhou, China, provides instruction in new facilities that are cutting edge. The exchange of Kean USA and Wenzhou Kean students provides opportunities to students to further prepare for professions of the future.

**Curricular, Co-Curricular and Experiential Learning**

The University supports efforts to achieve post-graduation employment and successful careers through curriculum, co-curricular and experiential learning, and student support services. The GE curriculum (Evidence Inventory, 158) builds foundational skills in English language reading and writing, effective public speaking, humanities, social science, natural science, math and research technologies. GE courses are followed by a discipline-specific curriculum that offers knowledge and builds skill sets that support specific career needs and meet national standards. Many programs are accredited by external national organizations (Evidence Inventory, 317). The curriculum culminates in a capstone course that reviews and synthesizes the student learning outcomes of transdisciplinary, critical thinking, quantitative literacies, communication literacies, information and technology literacy, active citizenship, ethical judgement and integrity and diversity. These are outcomes that prepare students for success in a chosen career path.
Co-curricular and experiential learning opportunities range from internships, conferences, and guest speakers, to exhibitions in galleries, to field trips, the Distinguished Lecture Series, and research and service learning programs that are detailed in LOI 2.

**Study Abroad**

Kean students have several study-abroad options, including a semester studying architecture in Rome and participating in week or month-long traveleums around the world. In addition, Kean USA students can spend a semester at Wenzhou-Kean and experience an immersive Chinese cultural experience with the American academic program that mirrors those offered in New Jersey. These opportunities expand students’ appreciation of diversity and help prepare students for the global job market.

**Support Services**

Support Services range from initial orientation tools to career placement. The Division of Student Support and Retention (OSSR) created Cougar Climb in 2019, a co-curricular path introduced during New Student Orientation, designed to promote active student engagement with the ultimate goal of timely graduation and a successful career. Program assessment (Evidence Inventory, 325) indicates that the 200 participants of the Cougar Climb First Year Experience had both a higher student success score, and significant improvement in their recent term GPA; 43.8% earned between 3.51-4.0 GPA (Evidence Inventory, 325).

**Career Services**

The University’s Career Services Center offers students support with job exploration, resume writing and mock interviews, both during their time at Kean and after graduation. Career Services staff partner with faculty throughout the University to advance job readiness skills as well as experiential learning opportunities. In addition, Career Services connects students, employers and alumni through an automated employment and internship portal, information recruiting sessions and job fairs. In AY 2019-2020 Career Services assisted or presented to over 3,000 students and launched academic internship courses in automated portals (Evidence Inventory, 372).

**Experiential Learning**

The University supports efforts to prepare students for a meaningful life. Examples include:

- **Transition to Kean** is offered to both incoming freshmen (GE 1000) and transfer students (GE 3000). These one-credit courses provide a cohort community for students, along with an orientation to the Kean community, both academic and co-curricular. All students become familiar with the Kean campus experience, academic advising, time management, problem solving and support services, while students in GE 3000 are exposed to the research process.

- **Center for Leadership and Service (CLS)** creates an inclusive campus environment that serves the educational mission of the University by supporting student leadership,
encouraging active citizenship and fostering and celebrating individual and community involvement (Evidence Inventory, 373). In AY 2019-2020, 163 student groups offered 1,772 events, engaging 7,750 volunteers in 54,300 service hours and enabled 107 students to participate in leadership programs.

Research

Students at Kean are also encouraged to explore research experiences as part of their undergraduate work and in exploration of future opportunities. The Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF) offers opportunities for students to engage in research through its Freshman Research Initiative (FRI) and Research Recruits Program (RRP), as well as assisting students with securing external fellowship and research opportunities. The FRI is a six-week research or creative experience working with a Kean faculty mentor. Participation in the FRI provides first-year students access to both faculty and experienced student mentors and starts them on a pathway to future research opportunities. Students who are past their first year have the opportunity to participate in RRP, a two-semester undergraduate research or creative experience with a Kean faculty member. Both FRI and RRP identify students early, and CURF then follows up by matching students to national fellowship opportunities, helping them prepare a strong application package, and supporting them through the interview process. CURF collaborates with academic departments and administrative offices to build a strong professional team of faculty mentors and trainers (Evidence Inventory, 330).

Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation

Federal programs in support of undergraduate research achievement include the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program. LSAMP at Kean University provides support services at all levels to help students interested in STEM-related fields attain academic success as undergraduates, graduate students and professionals. The program offers students stipends to support their hands-on research and access to a national community for conferences and networking, internships and support in applying to graduate school (Evidence Inventory, 374).

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program

Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education’s Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair Scholars Program) (Evidence Inventory, 375) works to increase the number of graduate degrees, including doctoral level, attained by students who are first generation and income eligible, or members of groups that are underrepresented in graduate programs. They do this through mentoring, career advising, GRE preparation and more. At Kean, in the past academic year, the program has supported 18 students, with 11 students attending graduate school.

Nathan Weiss Graduate College

Finally, the Nathan Weiss Graduate College (NWGC) provides educational opportunities in 25 disciplines for an enrollment of 2,405 (Fall 2020) graduate students looking to further their education and careers (Evidence Inventory, 376). NWGC’s affordable, accessible, high-quality
programs accommodate full-time and part-time students who wish to earn doctoral degrees, master's degrees, professional diplomas and certificates. Many programs hold national accreditation (Evidence Inventory, 317).

Sustained Assessment and Communication of Student Achievement

Kean University conducts annual assessment of academic programs, led by designated assessment coordinators in each academic program in collaboration with Kean’s Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA). Program reviews are conducted every five years, engaging faculty, students and alumni for a comprehensive assessment. Both annual program assessment and program review results are communicated to stakeholders through direct sharing of reports and providing access to program assessment data.

See Standard I for additional information regarding the assessment workflow.

Systems that Sustain Assessment of Student Achievement

Five units work together to support and sustain the assessment of student achievement, detailed below: Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA), Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE), University Senate Assessment Committee, University Planning Council (UPC), and the Division of Academic Affairs.

Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA)

OAA provides leadership for the planning and implementation of academic program review, student learning outcomes assessment, University assessment and assessment-related training. Specifically, OAA:

- Convenes assessment coordinators from individual academic programs, and oversees and coordinates the annual assessment and five-year program review schedules.
- Oversees the accreditation of the University and its programs by state and other accreditation agencies.
- Coordinates administrative unit assessments with IE.
- Maintains assessment products including academic program SLOs, college SLOs and their alignments with University SLOs, academic assessment reports, GE assessment rubrics and reports and, in coordination with IE, administrative unit assessment reports.
- Utilizes Anthology (formerly Campus Labs) to conduct campuswide course student evaluations of instruction and creates evaluation reports.
- Coordinates with the University Senate’s Assessment Committee to conduct training to establish a culture of assessment on campus across units.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE)

IE supports Kean University’s mission, goals and institutional priorities through the implementation of evaluation and improvement initiatives that foster a timelier, measurable and systematic assessment process. IE supports Kean University’s administrative units in fostering consistent outcomes assessment practices and continuous improvement through
evidence-based decision-making.

See Standard VI for more information on the administrative assessment process.

**University Senate Assessment Committee**

This committee oversees matters related to student-learning outcomes and program (institutional) effectiveness. The goal of this committee is to monitor protocols for informing the University community about the assessment process and feedback and linking recommendations from the program review cycle and the OAA to policies and procedures at the departmental level. It also organizes assessment training sessions with the OAA to establish a culture of assessment on campus.

**University Planning Council**

In addition to its primary task of writing, implementing and assessing the University strategic plan, the University Planning Council (UPC) creates linkage between assessment activities and resource allocation. Annually, the UPC reviews Annual Assessment Results and Recommendations Reports submitted by each Division and which summarize assessment findings and requests for funds from all units and programs within the division. Funding requests are prioritized and funding recommendations are included in an annual report to the President.

See Standard I for more information on UPC.

**The Division of Academic Affairs**

This Division is central to the success of academic and academic support programs, promoting high academic standards for faculty and students, and administering the resources, policies and plans that sustain them. Academic Affairs encompasses all of the academic components of what is now a comprehensive, diverse and growing state university.

The coordination of these units to sustain assessment of student achievement is illustrated in Figure 3.
Figure 3. Flowchart of Student Achievement and Input of Assessment Units.

**Systems that Communicate the Results of Student Achievement Assessment to Stakeholders**

The results of student achievement assessment are communicated to stakeholders by the Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA), the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (SVPAA), the University Planning Council (UPC) and the Office of University Relations (UR).

**Assessment and Improvement of Student Learning**

Academic programs annually assess the extent to which students are meeting the SLOs. Assessment data is used to improve educational effectiveness at different levels in the annual Closing the Loop process (Figure. 4). Data helps faculty directly involved in assessment adjust instructional methods to improve student learning (a), improve pedagogy and curriculum (b), and inform program revisions and identify support services (c). Assessment data from individual programs shapes the recommendations from College Deans for professional development activities (d) and future resource allocation decisions (e). Academic Affairs coordinates these assessment results and recommendations.
In the UPC’s annual Closing the Loop activity, results from Academic Affairs are shared with other divisions to identify priorities and action items for Student Support Services (e, with Student Affairs), planning and budgeting for programs and services (e, with Administration and Finance), informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs (f, with University Relations), improving key indicators of student success, such as retention and graduation (g, with Student Success and Retention and Enrollment Services).

See Standard VI for additional information on UPC’s Closing the Loop Prioritization process.

An Example Examination of the Closing the Loop cycle of 2018-2019

In this self-study, the completed Closing the Loop cycle of 2018-2019 is used to illustrate the use of assessment data in the process to improve educational effectiveness in the individual categories.

Assist Students in Improving Their Learning

Areas of improvement vary by program. For example, informed by assessment results, Master of Public Administration faculty collaborated with the Writing Center to improve students’ writing skills (Evidence Inventory, 378). The BS Accounting assessment suggested faculty give more examples of “journalize and post adjusting entries” and explain ethical situations (Evidence Inventory, 379). The BS Biology assessment exercise suggested providing faculty with tools to promote student understanding of real-world applications of biology and improve skills related to quantitative analysis and writing (Evidence Inventory, 380). The need to better prepare new students for advanced coursework was identified across disciplines. In response, the First-Year Seminar was established in 2020 (Evidence Inventory 381) and has expanded to include the Common Read in Fall 2021, to support students in acquiring the in-depth reading skills that are
required for college-level work.

**Improve Pedagogy and Curriculum**

Following the annual assessment, the Master of Public Administration faculty discussed providing more global components in the curriculum to enhance students’ global awareness (Evidence Inventory, 378). The BS/BA Chemistry program assessment suggested the systematic introduction of technical writing in lower-level courses (Evidence Inventory, 382). GE assessment of the critical thinking SLO prompted the program to consider moving Research and Technology to a 1000-level course (Evidence Inventory, 383). At the college level, College of Business and Public Management increased research coursework and started a project-based curriculum update (Evidence Inventory, 384); CLA identified communication and composition programs for improvement (Evidence Inventory, 385); College of Natural, Applied and Health Sciences (CNAHS), now The Dorothy and George Hennings College of Science, Mathematics and Technology (CSMT) stressed applied research (Evidence Inventory, 386); the Nathan Weiss Graduate College (NWGC) discussed changes in pedagogical approaches within programs (Evidence Inventory, 387). Expansion of practicum courses and student internships were indicated in the assessment data for many programs (Evidence Inventory, 381).

A selected summary table (Table 2) illustrates examples of changes implemented as a result of assessment and program review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Actions resulting from Program Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Business and Public Administration</td>
<td>MA Public Administration</td>
<td>Collaborated with the Writing Center to improve student writing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BS Accounting</td>
<td>Provided additional examples of adjusting entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennings College of Science, Mathematics and Technology</td>
<td>BS Biology</td>
<td>Increased quantitative analysis and writing activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BS Physical Ed (Teacher Certification)</td>
<td><strong>PED 2810 Lesson Planning</strong> developed to provide students with education on planning, for success on the edTPA planning section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selected courses in: Chem/CS/Hist/Math</td>
<td>Addition of Supplemental Instruction (SI) to improve student success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education</td>
<td>BS Physical Ed (Teacher Certification)</td>
<td><strong>PED 2810 Lesson Planning</strong> developed to provide students with education on planning, for success on the edTPA planning section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(all)</td>
<td>Enhancement of Career Services to provide more internships and experiential learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.* Examples of selected actions for program improvement.
Review and Revise Academic Programs and Support Services

During the last Closing the Loop cycle, some programs revised their PSLOs to meet changing standards. CBPM updated all its programs (Evidence Inventory, 384). The NJCSTM revised SLOs to ensure alignment with core STEM competencies and New Jersey Department of Education requirements (Evidence Inventory, 388). Commonalities identified included a need to support student internships and experiential learning. An example of a universitywide action is the enhancement of the University Career Services Office to increase internship opportunities and develop co-curricular experience for all Kean students (Evidence Inventory, 381).

Five Year External Review Process

In addition to annual assessment activities, faculty and students in each academic program engage in a self-study process for a more comprehensive evaluation to identify the program’s relevance and areas for improvement once every five years. Five programs were randomly selected from the pool of recently completed program reviews to further study the use of assessment results in this self-study. These programs include the BS Accounting of CBPM, BA Art Education of COE, BA Biology of CNAHS, BA Psychology of CLA, and MA Communication Studies of CLA (Evidence Inventory, 391-395).

Program review reports followed a standard template and addressed assessment results in four of the sections: 1. Program strengths identified and described; 2. Program areas of improvement identified and described; 3. Needs specifically identified for resource allocation; 4. Recommendations for allocations to improve teaching-learning process. All five programs submitted in-depth data collection and tracked SLOs to determine how the strengths/limitations of the program impacted students. A strategic pathway was created to improve the effectiveness of student learning. The allocation recommendations submitted by the programs highlighted different categories addressed above, including: a. changes to the current curriculum for improved teaching-learning enhancements (i.e., replace old curriculum with current material, create honor tracks for exceptional students), b. modifications to the external environments (i.e., more labs, computers, furniture), and c. additional staffing and faculty resources (Evidence Inventory, 77).

General Education Assessment

In addition, the University has established eight General Education (GE) SLOs (Evidence Inventory, 159) which elaborate on the University SLOs and aim to build a strong foundation of skills at the institution level. These GE SLOs are:

1. Transdisciplinary: The ability to integrate knowledge and methods from different fields to address historical or contemporary questions.
2. Critical Thinking: The ability to utilize reflective analysis to draw informed conclusions.
3. Quantitative Literacy: The ability to utilize numerical data accurately and effectively to address real world problems.
4. Communication Literacies: The ability to speak and write effectively to convey and make an evidence-based argument.
5. Information and Technology Literacy: The ability to utilize information and communications technology critically and effectively in a rapidly changing world.
6. **Active Citizenship**: A commitment to lifelong civic engagement at a local, national and/or global level.

7. **Ethical Judgment and Integrity**: The ability to draw reasonable conclusions from ethical questions to guide personal conduct.

8. **Diversity**: A commitment to promote inclusivity in a diverse world.

GE courses supporting the attainment of these SLOs include foundation courses and distribution courses (Evidence Inventory, 158). Foundation courses include English Composition, Mathematics, Public Speaking, Research and Technology and focus on building quantitative, communication, information and technology literacies (GE SLO 3, 4, 5). Distribution courses are in Humanities, Social Science, Science and Mathematics and stress the GE SLOs on transdisciplinary, active citizenship, diversity, ethical judgement and integrity (GE SLO 1, 6, 7, 8).

To achieve the University and GE SLO on critical thinking, research and inquiry-based educational experiences are emphasized at both the GE and program levels across disciplines. All programs require students to take a Research and Technology course early in their educational careers. Critical thinking (GE SLO 2) is introduced at the GE foundations and distribution courses, reinforced through specific major concentration courses, and mastered with a GE Capstone requirement during the senior year. The School of General Studies Curriculum Map (Evidence Inventory, 421) serves as a template and illustrates how the SLOs are introduced and reinforced, and assessment evidence is collected and mastery demonstrated throughout the curriculum. A series of standard GE Assessment Rubrics (Evidence Inventory, 149-157) are used for systematic assessment of these SLOs throughout the curriculum.

**Assessment and Improvement of Institutional Effectiveness**

**Plan, Conduct and Support a Range of Professional Development Activities**

Using recommendations from the UPC Closing the Loop assessment exercise, Academic Affairs organizes annual faculty Professional Development Days that include workshops on pedagogy, assessment and retention. Colleges plan and conduct professional development activities in support of the needs identified in their assessment. For example, the College of Liberal Arts created a new lab to provide training in digital humanities, offering professional development in the use of digital methods in the humanities (Evidence Inventory, 385). It also developed support materials and workshops for adjunct faculty. NWGC identified a need to provide mentoring sessions to adjunct faculty (Evidence Inventory, 387).

**Plan and Budget for the Provision of Academic Programs and Services**

Staff and resource needs are identified for individual programs during the annual assessment process. General resource needs are also identified for all colleges. For example, program assessment findings for the NJCSTM identified a need for the hiring of new faculty and staff, as well as program space and research support for its new MS Genetic Counseling program (Evidence Inventory, 388). CNAHS identified a need to acquire equipment and hire additional research faculty in Biology, Computer Science and Mathematics for research expansion (Evidence Inventory, 386). Academic Affairs prepares its resource request with a UPC template
for all divisions (Evidence Inventory, 389). All resource requests are reviewed by the UPC with a rubric (Evidence Inventory, 390), prioritized and reported to the President’s Office.

**Inform Appropriate Constituents about the Institution and its Programs**

Academic Affairs joins other divisions at the UPC Closing the Loop activity to incorporate assessment results in their programming. University Relations announces programs through Kean News and social media and works with the President’s Office to communicate with the University community through President Repollet’s weekly e-newsletter and Student Town Hall meetings, both new in AY 2020-2021. Enrollment Services organizes open house events and high school partnerships. Student Services informs student organizations.

**Improve Key Indicators of Student Success**

One of the actions taken to improve student retention and graduation rates was to strengthen academic advisement by centralizing academic and administrative units for collaborative work. A full-service One Stop Center was created at a central campus location, joining the School of General Studies faculty with an expanded Office of Student Success and Retention. The location enables offices from several divisions – Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Planning and Special Initiatives – to jointly serve the multifaceted needs of first-year students, undecided/undeclared students, students changing majors and those with academic difficulty (Evidence Inventory, 381).

**Implement Processes and Procedures to Improve Educational Programs and Services**

As the common need to enhance student research skills emerged from program assessment results, several universitywide initiatives were implemented. ORSP launched a Freshman Student Research Initiative to support first-year student research experiences. A faculty seed grant was established to involve more students in research activities. The University holds a Research Days event annually in spring, with students presenting their research to the community. The number of student participants has increased from 92 to 2026 since its launch in 2009 (2021 data) (Evidence Inventory, 191).

Collectively, the University uses assessment results for continuous improvement of educational effectiveness through the annual assessment and periodic program review activities initiated by programs and faculty and through the collective procedure of the annual UPC Closing the Loop activity involving all University divisions.

**Third Party Providers**

The University does engage with outside parties in providing educational services through transfer and articulation agreements with other institutions, additional instruction sites in Ocean County and at WKU in China. Where they exist, partnerships with other MSCHE universities ensure that all MSCHE standards are met.

Several Kean programs are offered in partnership with other institutions (Evidence Inventory, 397). These programs include:
● Clinical Laboratory Science, B.S.: Medical Laboratory Science Option (Rutgers: Medical Lab Sciences Courses, 45 credit)
● Medical Technology, B.S.: General Option – Senior year Clinical Preceptorship I and II, 30 credit: Jersey Shore University Hospital (Neptune), Monmouth Medical Center (Long Branch) or the Valley Hospital (Ridgewood)
● Health Information Management, B.S. (Rutgers: Academic Major 61 Credit)
● Psychology and Psychiatric Rehabilitation, B.S. (Rutgers: Psychiatric Rehabilitation Courses, 45 credit)

All of these partner institutions have secured or are currently seeking accreditation through their respective specialized agencies and/or Middle States.

Periodic Assessment of the Process

The Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) employs rubrics for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and assessment activities with a Program SLO quality check rubric (Evidence Inventory, 313) and an Assessment Plan and Report Quality Rubric (Evidence Inventory, 399). OAA has published Guidelines for Academic Program Reviews (Evidence Inventory, 77). Following the program review, the self-study team makes program recommendations. A college-led committee, composed of the Dean, all executive directors, two faculty members and one student, complete a report that consists of an evaluation of the findings, recommendations within the context of Kean University strategic plan and budget requests. The Provost/SVPAA reviews assessment reports from all Colleges and compiles an Academic Affairs division report. The UPC reviews all division reports to provide further recommendations to the President and program faculty.

See Standard VI for more information on UPC's Closing the Loop Prioritization process and the alignment of resource requests with assessment outcomes.

Strengths include improved procedures and a wealth of university data collected. Evidence demonstrates clearly defined educational goals aligned with the University’s mission and strategic plan to offer educational experiences through experiential learning opportunities, including career internships, research activities and global education opportunities; and to engage students through immersion of culturally rich and diverse communities, which enhances a student’s local and global awareness. Kean University provides an array of support programs to prepare students with a strong foundation of skills for post-graduation employment, meaningful lives consisting of community engagement and service, and, where appropriate, further education.

Assessment results are being used for continuous improvement of educational effectiveness. Examples include assisting students in improving their learning; improvements in pedagogy and curriculum; review and revision of academic programs and support services; support for a range of professional development activities; budgeting for the provision of academic programs and services; informing appropriate constituents about the institution and its programs; improvement in key indicators of student success, such as retention, graduation, transfer and placement rates; and implementation of other processes and procedures designed to improve educational programs and services.
Next Steps for Strategic Planning

Areas that can be strengthened were identified during this self-study, leading to recommendation on the consistency of assessment reports, continued development of a culture of assessment, and an evaluation of the assessment process itself.

As Kean continues the development of a culture of assessment, recommendations include: continued simplification of the data management system, supported in part by the campuswide adoption of Watermark™. Providing examples and training to strengthen program assessment data use and reports would engage the community and develop a shared understanding of program assessment. Workshops on the use of assessment data and information can be offered to normalize the discussion of assessment and continuous improvement. Assessment reports should be streamlined to include executive summaries available to the Kean community.

Finally, the assessment process itself must be evaluated, providing feedback to the University community as a whole and individual programs on the success and outcomes of the annual effort. One of the purposes of the adoption of the assessment management system is to be able to get a high (institutional) level view of the assessment results which will, in turn, lend opportunities to examine to what extent the assessment process is working. At the academic program and non-instructional (administrative) unit levels, program review covers evaluation of the assessment process as well.
Standard VI: Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement

Standard Statement

The institution’s planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Satisfactorily Met the Standard and Criteria

A review of the nine criteria established by Middle States as measures of Standard VI compliance indicates that the University satisfactorily meets these criteria, and the narrative that follows will highlight evidence to document how Kean meets this Standard.

Equity, Excellence and Evolution

Kean University, in its pursuit of excellence, equity, evolution and continuous improvement, utilizes clear processes to identify institutional objectives. These objectives must meet four standards to be (a) clearly stated, (b) assessed appropriately, (c) linked to mission and goals achievement, and (d) reflective of conclusions drawn from assessment results.

In line with the University Planning Council (UPC), presented in greater detail in support of Standard I, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and the Office of Accreditation and Assessment (OAA) manage regular comprehensive assessments of units, programs and divisions in pursuit of excellence, equity and institutional improvement.

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

IE supports Kean University’s mission, goals, and institutional priorities through the implementation of evaluation and improvement initiatives that foster a timely, measurable and systematic assessment processes. IE works with all administrative units to ensure that they are provided training and support to assess the work of their units more effectively. IE also contributes to identifying appropriate unit objectives that are aligned with the strategic plan, and to ensure a multi-faceted assessment plan with multiple measures to determine impact. IE further ensures assessment results are used for decision making and closing of the loop, with the goal of realizing continuous improvement in meeting and exceeding targets of institutional and unit objectives. IE ensures accountability from all administrative units through the tracking of assessment report submissions, training participation and communications (Evidence Inventory, 112).

Office of Accreditation and Assessment

OAA’s management of assessment, including its annual assessments and five-year cycle program reviews, are part of the documentation, communication and participation of units and divisions in processes linked to institutional improvement. Academic Program Review provides an opportunity for programs to identify areas of strength and address areas needing
improvement. The five-year program review process is also an important tool for documentation and communication (Evidence Inventory, 77, 76). At each level of academic review and non-academic unit review, recommendations are made to ensure the University preserves the strengths of programs and units and that areas needing improvement are addressed. These recommendations are made with oversight from program executive directors/chairs and Deans at the academic review level, and with oversight from managers, directors and vice presidents at the non-academic unit review level. The assessment processes at the institution and the feedback loops that result under the guidance and management of OAA are foundational to universitywide communication, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Collaboration

Collaboration plays a critical role at Kean University in ensuring that planning, resources and institutional improvements align to the University’s pursuit of excellence, equity, evolution and continuous improvement. Under the new administration, collaboration and shared leadership is strongly encouraged as is the breakdown of silos. As issues emerge, the President creates task forces, working groups and committees to make recommendations or to address and manage important issues that impact the Kean community. These task forces are made up of various personnel representing different areas across the organization. Examples of current task forces include the Learning Management System (LMS) Task Force (Evidence Inventory, 137), the Open Educational Resources (OER) Task force (Evidence Inventory, 134), the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Task Force (Evidence Inventory, 136), and the Hunger Task Force (Evidence Inventory, 135).

Task Forces

The LMS Task Force is charged with providing a thorough review of three LMS products (i.e., Blackboard Learn Ultra, Canvas and D2L/Brightspace), among other supporting technologies, with the culminating goal being to make compelling recommendations for adoption to the President. The OER Task force is another important group charged with the advanced and innovative task of supporting the Kean Community in its quest to reuse, revise, remix, redistribute and retain OER course materials that boost learning and access to high-quality and seminal resources at a low cost. The Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Task Force is charged with developing comprehensive methods to address the various alcohol and other drug issues that arise within the University community. A final example is the Hunger Task Force which is charged with developing, implementing and monitoring goals to achieve a hunger-free campus.

Working Groups

In addition to the President-created task forces, working groups and committees, the University and the President actively collaborate with students on institutional matters, understanding that student feedback is crucial to improved learning, student life experiences and institutional improvement. Kean excels in methods used to obtain student feedback to inform student betterment decisions. The Office of Student Government consists of two student governing bodies at Kean University through which the voices of the students are heard. These governing bodies include (a) Student Organization and (b) Graduate and Part-time Student Council (GPSC) (Evidence Inventory, 133). Student Organization consists of elected student leaders who are charged with representing the voice of the full-time, undergraduate student body. GPSC is composed of elected board officers who represent the concerns of the graduate and part-time undergraduate student body. Through continuous dialogue, active feedback and participation in the University community, these student groups ensure optimum student rights and an
environment where diversity and free expression thrive. An example includes the Student Town Hall meetings where students engage directly with the President, who responds and addresses current and pressing matters; the Student Town Hall webpage documents the issues raised and provides feedback to the entire community (Evidence Inventory, 131). In addition to these methods, student surveys and student focus groups are frequently used.

Course Evaluations

Kean also seeks student feedback to improve learning outcomes through student course evaluations. Course evaluations are questionnaires given to students to provide feedback for their professors, programs, departments, schools and colleges to improve the quality and effectiveness of instruction as well as student learning. Details of the course evaluation process can be referenced on the OAA webpage (Evidence Inventory, 132).

Organizational Approval Processes

With all the stakeholders and stakeholder groups collaborating at Kean University, organizational structure is of critical importance. Kean’s hierarchy, as shown in Kean’s Organizational Chart (Evidence Inventory, 163), is the structure that provides the chain of command and areas of responsibility within each division at Kean. Approval processes move from the requestor to the department head to the divisional vice president and to the divisional senior vice president. Many approval processes also require the approval of the Senior Vice President of Finance and/or the Budget Office for use of funds. Examples of the origin of requests include the Capital Project Budget Request Form (Evidence Inventory, 167), Budget Amendment Form (Evidence Inventory, 168), Travel Authorization Request Form (Evidence Inventory, 130), Check Request Form (Evidence Inventory, 118), and ID Card Funds Request Form. (Evidence Inventory, 129) In addition, and as standard practice, legal contracts are reviewed for compliance and approved for execution by the University Counsel.

Policies and Guidelines

Policies and guidelines also set the precedent for business operations and accountability. These can be evidenced in the institution’s Employee Handbook (Evidence Inventory, 223), Kean Adjunct Faculty Handbook (Evidence Inventory, 413), Student Employee Employment Guidelines (Evidence Inventory, 2), Procurement Policy Manual (Evidence Inventory, 165), Kean Credit Card Guidelines & Procedures (Evidence Inventory, 120), and Budget Amendment Guidelines (Evidence Inventory, 128).

Additional Stakeholders

Two other essential stakeholder groups of Kean’s organizational structure include the University Senate and its Board of Trustees, both of which collaborate directly with the University President on matters related to institutional improvements.

University Senate

The University Senate communicates recommendations to the President on such matters as faculty affairs, curriculum, instruction, student affairs, finances and other matters relevant to the welfare of the institution. The Senate acts as a dynamic advisory board, providing guidance on pertinent issues as they arise. Recommendations in the form of new institutional priorities and actionable items are made in pursuit of the values and goals of educational excellence, equity,
evolution and continuous improvement. University Senate meeting minutes, memberships, and committees can be referenced on the University Senate webpage (Evidence Inventory, 103).

**Board of Trustees**

The Kean University Board of Trustees (BOT) is the governing body of the University. It currently consists of 15 members appointed by the Governor of New Jersey, as well as a student trustee representative elected by the student body, and a University Senate representative elected by the members of the University Senate. Pursuant to the Higher Education Restructuring Act of 1994, the BOT has general supervision and oversight of the University. Board resolutions are informed by established bylaws, made in the interest of the public, and voted upon by the BOT. Each resolution is linked to a rationale for decision making, provides a clear line of responsibility to the President, and is appropriately documented through BOT meeting minutes. All meeting minutes and bylaws are published and can be referenced on the BOT webpage. (Evidence Inventory, 98)

Planning and collaboration at Kean ensures assessment processes focus on the pursuit of excellence, equity, evolution and continuous improvement, as assessment results are the main source of decision making and communication at Kean. Through universitywide collaboration, assessments of individual programs and units are collected by colleges and divisions. Summary reports of annual assessments and program reviews are reviewed by the UPC, and requests for resources, which emerge from the division reports, are considered at the annual “Closing of the Loop” meeting of the UPC. The UPC further prioritizes these requests and submits them to the President in a tabled report, who then reviews and presents recommendations to the BOT (Evidence Inventory, 121).

**Assessment**

The annual assessment cycle, spanning from September to June, consists of two main pillars of assessment: academic program review and administrative program review. These two pillars contribute to University goal setting and to continuous and cyclical feedback focused on student learning and institutional effectiveness. The assessment process requires that objectives and budget request items be linked to one of the goals outlined in the institutional strategic plan, with each link documented on the Assessment Report Template in two locations: (a) above the listed objective and (b) alongside the budget request line (Evidence Inventory, 125).

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), as exemplified by the General Education SLOs (Evidence Inventory, 159), are the most important factor guiding academic program review. Assessment coordinators for each program collect annual course assessment data from faculty members based on a master-plan cycle of the SLOs that are to be assessed at each phase of the cycle (Evidence Inventory, 80). Findings from these annual assessments are synthesized to support the completion of the five-year program review (Evidence Inventory, 77). The Administrative Program Review process is also an important source of data for making resource allocation decisions (Evidence Inventory, 76). At each level of this review process – and with oversight from managers, directors, and vice presidents – recommendations are made that ensure the University preserves the strengths of units and addresses their areas of improvement.
Retention and Persistence

Retention, persistence and time to graduation data are another critical part of the assessment processes at Kean University. These data are documented for each academic program in the Dean and College Annual Assessment Report and Recommendations (Evidence Inventory, 127) and are additionally reported in the Academic Affairs Division Assessment Report and Recommendations (Evidence Inventory, 126). The academic leadership – comprised of School and Department Executive Directors, College Deans, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs – prepare the annual assessment reports. Throughout this process, both annual and longer-term trends emerge and guide how resource requests are prioritized and how funds are allocated. Resource requests move up the chain of command, while attention to performance in need of improvement is directed down the chain of command by the academic leadership.

Resources Prioritization

The Resources Prioritization and Allocation for Funding Request form (Evidence Inventory, 389) was recently implemented for the 2021-2022 academic year, with the goal of prioritizing requests that further Kean University’s mission and strategic goals in alignment with academic plans, administrative units or College annual assessment reports or program reviews. As part of the ongoing assessment process, these requests are submitted to the UPC and scored using the Resources Prioritization and Allocation Rubric for Funding Requests (Evidence Inventory, 390). Funding requests are granted based on the rationale of the alignment to program/unit or College’s annual assessment or program review, student learning objectives, outcome measures and assessment data.

Closing the Loop

Annual and five-year assessments of individual programs and units are reviewed by Colleges and divisions for reflection and recommendations. Annual Division Assessment Reports and Recommendations (Evidence Inventory, 126) are submitted by the division vice presidents for review by the UPC. Requests for resources, which emerge from these reports, are considered at an annual “Closing of the Loop” meeting held by the UPC (Evidence Inventory, 104). The UPC prioritizes these requests using the Resource Prioritization and Allocation Rubric for Funding Requests (Evidence Inventory, 390) and submits them to the President, who then reviews and presents them as recommendations to the BOT.

This institution-wide “closing of the loop” meeting also serves to alert University leaders and upper management of the critical needs at the institution, from which new initiatives are born. For example, in Fall 2020, Kean reconfigured the Office of Student Success and Retention into a new division which boasts a newly funded Center for Advising, Persistence, and Success (CAPS) (Evidence Inventory, 115), which is open 12 hours per day to help students persist and succeed to degree completion. The new division works in tandem with the Division of Enrollment Management, which runs a One-Stop student assistance center in a space adjacent to CAPS. These two divisions work in concert with Academic Affairs and the Nancy Thompson Library Learning Commons to provide students with regular academic support targeted to their specific academic needs.

Although there are guidelines on preparing the annual assessment and program review reports, the submitted reports varied in terms of data formats, details and the organization of sections. When addressing the use of assessment data, some units or programs do not provide specific recommendations for budget allocations to resolve identified weaknesses, and some
others do not provide costs for some requested resources or identify how many faculty members were needed. While the current format is useful for individual programs for a self-study purpose, the format can be improved to allow for more efficient analysis, summary and review during the Closing the Loop process at multiple levels. Specific suggestions are to standardize data collection and data presentation to enable automated analysis, align PSLOs with KU SLOs and GE SLOs for data presentation and analysis and possibly create categories to uniformly group allocation requests across programs.

The primary goal of Kean’s assessment processes, from the local program or unit level to the institution wide “Closing of the Loop” meeting, is to ensure continual improvement in realizing the mission of Kean University (Evidence Inventory, 1) and its current strategic plan, goals and objectives (Evidence Inventory, 97). The students, faculty, staff and administrators who participate in the assessment processes have a direct impact in moving the institution toward continual improvement. The assessment cycle culminates in an annual “Closing of the Loop,” but it is the ongoing endeavor of planning, assessing, allocating resources and planning again that moves the institution towards meeting its goals.

**Finances**

Assessment processes at Kean University are directly linked to resource allocations. Kean aligns financial planning and budgeting with the institution’s mission and goals through strategic budgeting and through the UPC’s work in guiding the assessment processes of the University. In consultation with the President, funding amounts and initiatives are identified, with each initiative aligning to one or several goals found in the current Strategic Plan. The building of the annual budget and its processes are evidenced in the Budget Department Procedures Manual (Evidence Inventory, 187).

**Budget**

The annual budget process is months long, beginning in January each year and ending when the final budget is approved by the BOT in June. Throughout this process, reports are provided showing a multi-year history and current trends in spending by department. As a preliminary budget is created, the Budget Office intensively collaborates through planning discussions, meetings and reporting with all administrative and academic units. Additionally, an annual tuition hearing (Evidence Inventory, 334) is held that is open to the public for feedback. The preliminary budget is reviewed by the President, who incorporates institutional priorities and initiatives. The budget is then finalized by the Board Finance Committee and ultimately approved by the BOT.

Kean allocates funds for specific purposes and long-term planning that directly contribute to the achievement of objectives cited in the University’s Strategic Plan (Evidence Inventory, 97). In late 2019, the BOT authorized a total transfer of 30.1 million dollars from Kean’s Unrestricted Reserves to the Kean Foundation to fund student scholarships and research activities for years to come. The direction of the BOT was deliberate in aligning to Kean’s strategic goals as it related to the transfer of monies to the Kean Foundation that is dedicated to student learning and educational experiences to the following funds: Centennial Opportunity Fund (Evidence Inventory, 178), Climb Higher Fund (Evidence Inventory, 177), New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics Fund (Evidence Inventory, 179), Faculty/Student Research Fund (Evidence Inventory, 176) and Global Education Fund (Evidence Inventory, 180).

Kean has also prudently conventionalized, expanded and better defined the allocation of annual fund balances as referenced in “BOT Resolution – Amended Distribution of Annual Fund
Balance” (Evidence Inventory, 181). The guidelines, as originally set forth in December 2019 and amended in March 2021 by the BOT, authorize (a) that the Emergency Reserve be at least 5% of the annual budget; (b) that the University's Reserves include an amount equal to one year of debt service payment; (c) the creation of a Presidential Initiatives Fund with a starting balance of $2.5 million; (d) the creation of a Career Services and Student Retention and Development Fund with a starting balance of $2 million; and (e) that the University's Unrestricted E&G surplus not exceed 5% of the following year’s annual operating budget.

Outcomes-Based Funding

The State of New Jersey annually awards Kean University outcomes-based funding in recognition of its ability to help first generation and other needy students achieve their dream of earning a college degree. Kean allocates outcomes-based funds by the guidelines as originally set forth in May 2020 and amended in March 2021 by the BOT. These actions authorize that all outcomes-based funding be invested in both student scholarships and other key initiatives designed to support student services and retention as evidenced in “BOT Resolution – Amended Use of Outcomes-Based Funding” (Evidence Inventory, 182).

Student Fees

Kean has also apportioned revenues from its two mandatory student fees, namely the capital improvement fee and the university center fee, to be used distinctly for capital improvement projects and debt service payments as well as improvements to the University’s Miron Student Center. A breakdown of the usages, projections and planning of these revenues can be found in Kean’s annual analyses and can be referenced for 2020 and 2021 in the Analysis of Capital Improvement Fee vs. Expenses (Evidence Inventory, 183) and in the Analysis of University Center Fees vs. Expenses (Evidence Inventory, 184).

It is through its financial planning and funds allocation, led by the Division of Finance, that Kean University proudly maintains the lowest tuition and fees as a four-year public institution in the State of New Jersey, despite reduced state funding.

Division of Finance

The Division of Finance oversees the Budget Office. In spring 2021, the Division of Finance began exploring new finance and budget practices along with budgeting software that will allow for ease of analysis of the revenues and expenses associated with each program, major and College. This data will help to guide decisions on resource allocation and cost containment. Additionally, the institution will establish a process that systematically captures both R2 related activities as well as associated revenue and cost data to support the sustainability of the University’s R2 initiative. As of Spring 2021, the Division of Finance has also taken steps to incorporate a new Financial Planning and Analysis role, whose function is to bring clarity to the way funding is aligned to Kean’s priorities and to make recommendations resulting from its assessment processes.

Through strong fiscal planning, Kean continues to hold a strong financial net position and a consistent, healthy and increasing year-end surplus, despite reduced state appropriations as evidenced in the annual audited financial statements for FY 2018-2020 (Evidence Inventory, 141, 140, 139). The reference to Kean’s increases in net position can be found within the financial statements in the section titled “Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position.” Further evidence demonstrating Kean’s strong financial position can be found in Kean’s Standard & Poors’ (S&P) bond rating of “A-” with an outlook of “stable.” (Evidence
Inventory 172, 171). As stated in the S&P rating letter, Kean’s rating “reflects the university's continued strong operating margins and an enrollment profile that has remained fairly consistent for the rating, with no significant pressure, even in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.” With S&P’s rigorous standard to achieve a positive and stable outlook, it is relevant to compare Kean’s stable outlook with its peer institutions in New Jersey who have mainly received an outlook of “negative” as of April 2021, as evidenced in the New Jersey Public Institution Bond Ratings (Evidence Inventory, 166). IPEDS Financial Data from 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 further show that even over the years that state appropriations were declining, Kean’s net position, in contrast, was increasing.

Audit

The University also undergoes an annual independent audit which examines its financial viability and the University's financial statements, which according to the institution’s auditor are “presented fairly, in all material respects,” as cited on the “Independent Auditor’s Report” section of the Financial Statements (Evidence Inventory, 173, 174, 175). This classification is considered an “unqualified opinion,” which is the highest opinion the University can receive.

In both FY 2019 and FY 2020 the auditor’s report within the Financial Statements (Evidence Inventory, 173, 174, 175) did not include any findings or comments on internal control which would require follow up. The absence of current year audit findings demonstrates the University’s emphasis on addressing issues and following policies and procedures. Evidence of follow-up can be seen in the University’s “FY 2018 WISS Financial Statements Audit - Management's Responsibilities” (Evidence Inventory, 139) which includes a management response addressing one finding regarding internal control. The management response was followed through in the subsequent year resulting in this finding being removed from the “FY 2019 WISS Financial Statements Audit – Management's Responsibilities” (Evidence Inventory, 140).

Human Resources

Kean assesses the efficiency of its Human Resources (HR) unit through its hiring processes, staffing levels, the annual Faculty Position Request Process (Evidence Inventory, 160) and its efforts in professional development.

In Fall 2020, Kean employed 921 full-time faculty and staff and 971 adjunct faculty as detailed in the Institutional Research Fact Book for Fall 2020 (Evidence Inventory, 161). Needs for hired talent are continuously reviewed and assessed.

Academic Affairs

At the beginning of each academic year, each college is asked to identify positions that will be needed for the following academic year. A Rationale for Faculty Position Request (Evidence Inventory, 16) is required information that includes five-year enrollment trends, enrollment projections, number of full-time faculty within the program, number of adjuncts assigned to courses in the preceding two semesters, and any other relevant information such as accreditation requirements. These requests are synthesized and prioritized by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and submitted to the University President for consideration. The President then confers with the Senior Vice President for Finance, and subsequently identifies positions to be advertised. When faculty resign, retire or are not reappointed during the academic year, each college provides the same information in its request for a replacement
position. Under the new administration, colleges are preparing faculty staffing plans for any gaps in the 2021-2022 approved positions. This process can also be evidenced in the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs synthesized report “Faculty Position Requests, Analysis and Recommendations 2021-2022” (Evidence Inventory, 160) and in the Senior Vice President for Finance’s Memo to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs of approved faculty positions recommendations in 2021-2022 (Evidence Inventory, 162).

**Hiring Process**

HR also instituted a new hiring process/portal that utilizes a Human Resource Information System (HRIS), Workday™, that went live in January 2021. The integrated HRIS includes the modules Core Human Capital Management, an applicant tracking for recruitment and processing of new hires, payroll management, time and attendance, compensation, benefits and performance management. The system eliminates manual processes that previously existed within all areas of Human Resources. Within the recruiting module, the entire recruitment process has been automated from the beginning, when a request for a position is made, to the end, when an applicant is hired and onboarded within the system.

The hiring process starts when the request for a position, or Job requisition, is entered into the HRIS, replacing a paper form and routed virtually through an approval chain. The requisition is sent to the Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents for the respective requesting department, to the Budget Office for fund approval, and ultimately ends with the Senior Vice President for Finance to evaluate the position, the budget implications, and issuance of final approval. Once a position is approved, the job advertisement is posted on an enhanced job-posting site, where applicants can search open positions with key words and apply for the position directly from the posting. Additionally, the new posting site enables the University to share links for individual jobs and target the recruiting areas to specific demographics or publications. The University also partners with various job posting sites (e.g., Diverse Jobs.com, HigherEdJobs.com) to sweep and pull new postings, so the advertisements stay updated beyond an initial posting or single site, leading to larger pools of applicants and creating more opportunity to find skilled talent.

**Professional Development**

Kean has always maintained a focus on professional development for learning and awareness and invested twice a year in weeklong events, titled, “Professional Development Days,” with mandatory attendance requirements for faculty and staff (Evidence Inventory, 106). In Spring 2021, under the new President’s leadership, Kean formed a Professional Development Committee charged with identifying a new professional development program for the University. The committee identified that learning should be ongoing with continued access to resources throughout the year and not dedicated to bi-annual, stand-alone events. The committee was separated into two working groups, one to highlight faculty needs and the other for administrative staff needs. A Professional Development Center Proposal was submitted for review to create a Professional Development Center that would provide teaching innovation, development opportunities, a research and support center, employee education and a staff development center (Evidence Inventory, 164). Each faculty member would be required to attend 30 hours of professional development each year with 25% being asynchronous participation.

**Procurement**
Other processes that safeguard the financial position of the University include the procurement process for spend management as laid out in the Procurement Policy Manual (Evidence Inventory, 165), the Budget Amendment Form (Evidence Inventory, 168), the Capital Project Budget Request Form (Evidence Inventory, 167), and Kean’s travel procedures as described in the Travel Manual (Evidence Inventory, 19). These processes also include senior levels of approvals and sign off from the Budget Office to ensure availability of funds.

**Resource Allocation**

Annual assessment processes, program reviews and the faculty position-request process are all examples of how the University measures and assesses the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources that support Kean’s missions and goals while safeguarding financial stability within its funding approval processes. Other strategies used to ensure adequacy and efficiency include procedures employed by the Office of the Registrar, the Division of Academic Affairs, and the operations of Residential Student Services. Also relevant are the numerous industry leading software and system platforms used at Kean and the data they provide that allows for continual analysis and evaluations.

**Assessing Need**

Divisional reports that are part of the annual assessment cycle synthesize key findings from administrative unit reports and outcomes and include each Vice President’s recommendation for funding budget request line items that link to strategic plan goals (Evidence Inventory, 331). In the same way, each Dean’s college-level report synthesizes academic unit reports and outcomes and makes recommendations for funding. A direct link to funding requests and the strategic goals are documented in the Division Assessment Report and Recommendations Report Template (Evidence Inventory, 126) as well as in the Dean & College Level Assessment Report & Recommendations Report Template (Evidence Inventory, 127), with the college-level assessment reports being integrated into the divisional assessment report of the Division of Academic Affairs. All divisional reports – available on the OAA shared Google Drive and which can be accessed on the OAA webpage (Evidence Inventory, 320) – are then submitted to OAA and UPC who collaborate to review them ahead of the “Closing of the Loop” meeting. Requests for resources which emerge from these divisional reports are considered at the annual meeting. UPC prioritizes these requests by “priority ratings” and submits final recommendations to the President in the UPC Annual Assessment Results and Recommendations Report (Evidence Inventory, 121). Direct linkage to the University Strategic Plan goals is documented for each line item within this report.

As Kean University looks to continuously improve, a new rubric for evaluating resource requests was developed and pilot tested in 2020-2021 to provide more detailed direction and evaluation of how resource requests align with assessment data and strategic plan goals. This new document, titled Resource Prioritization and Allocation Rubric and Template for Funding Requests (Evidence Inventory, 126), provides details regarding the connection between requested resources and goals, outcomes assessment, innovation, diversity, and equity and inclusivity, among other areas. Division Vice Presidents will receive these completed templates with the unit’s Annual Assessment Report and will forward them on to UPC once the budget line items are recommended. UPC will also use the rubric as a scoring tool to ensure objectivity and consistency in the ranking process. This enhancement will be incorporated in the 2021-2022 assessment cycle for all units.
Space Utilization

Another important part of resource allocation is deciding how spaces at the University are utilized. The Office of the Registrar and the Division of Academic Affairs work together to provide a review of class offerings and analysis of operational efficiency by examining how courses are scheduled, faculty and adjuncts are assigned, low enrollment courses are canceled, and space is utilized. The University Course Scheduling Procedure, which is currently being evaluated to deliver further improvements, outlines these processes for the purpose of ensuring an effectual use of resources (Evidence Inventory, 138).

Additionally, the Office of the Registrar has begun to utilize EMS Software™. EMS is a scheduling software that assists in maximizing the use of academic space on campus. While there is no lack of classroom space at Kean, space could be used much more efficiently allowing room for more events to be scheduled on campus, the opportunity to build new laboratories and/or enhanced learning spaces, and planning for future growth in enrollment. EMS will also allow the Office of the Registrar to use course attributes, like course type, enrollment and instructional method, to program the software to optimize space utilization. This software is scheduled to be fully utilized in Spring 2022 to create the classroom assignments.

Space utilization is also a priority for the Office of Conference & Events Services, which provides an additional source of revenue by booking on-campus conferences, events and lodging to outside constituents. Additionally, residential room occupancy rates are reviewed to determine the adequacy of the number of our student residential units. Kean currently holds 2,024 rooms within student housing. Since Fall 2016, with the exception of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 year, room occupancy rates ranged from 87% to 94% (Evidence Inventory, 443).

Systems Software

Kean University has leveraged the power of technology through software platforms that facilitate decision making and resource allocation. These platforms also help streamline processes and reduce workloads for faculty and staff.

Ellucian CRM Advise is a platform that provides a consistent, cohesive, and personalized approach to each student’s success planning from first semester through graduation. This platform and its support of student success is discussed in greater detail in Standard IV.

Kean has also recently purchased Watermark, an Assessment Management System that launched in September 2021. Watermark will enrich assessment data collection processes and streamline the entire Annual Assessment cycle. Like CRM, Watermark facilitates the work of our most precious resource used to support out students: our faculty and staff.

In support of all of the aforementioned measures, purchasing guidelines (Evidence Inventory, 59) as documented in the Procurement Policy Manual (Evidence Inventory, 32) ensure the accountable use of University funds. Kean responsibility in spending and resource allocation is further evidenced by its ability to continuously expand and modernize its facilities and technological infrastructure, as explained in the section that follows.

Infrastructure

Evidence for world-class facilities and technologies includes the construction of new buildings and significant renovation and improvement projects at all Kean locations. Many colleges and universities have challenges in deferred maintenance, and Kean University has done exceptionally well in providing students and faculty a great learning environment and community.
experience with a well-maintained campus and the best technologies needed to operate efficiently.

Maintaining the campus at Kean University in Union is a continuous process. The Facilities and Campus Planning group uses a multi-angled approach to prevent, limit and resolve any issues that may arise. As an institution, Kean utilizes a work order system through the SchoolDude platform. This program allows facilities management to log all equipment and schedule preventive and routine maintenance. It also allows all end users at Kean to report different types of issues to facilities management. Issues could be related to anything on a campus, such as a trip hazard, cleaning and painting needs, temperature inconsistencies, damaged tree limbs, and so on. Over 20,000 requester-initiated and system scheduled work orders are reported each year.

The facilities and campus planning group also monitors and routinely inspects every building once per week. With about 24 academic buildings, this amounts to approximately five buildings per day. During these inspections, maintenance issues are noted, and work orders are created to address any observed and documented needs. These audits are done on a rotational basis, so that different staff members walk through each building in a different week. Having multiple staff members continuously inspect Kean buildings helps the institution stay ahead of potential mechanical problems and other facilities related issues (Evidence Inventory, 422).

**COVID-19**

One of the key indicators illustrating that the infrastructure at Kean University has been adequately maintained was in the Spring and Fall 2020 when classes turned to remote learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, Kean made timely best efforts to transition to remote learning and remote work. Given the challenges associated with the need for limited occupancy and safe social distancing, necessary large-scale adjustments were made expeditiously across the entire University. Not only were scheduled classes shifted to alternative modalities and locations, but air filters were upgraded, cleaning routines were adjusted, plexiglass barriers were installed, traffic flow was modified, and technology support from the Office of Computer and Information Services (OCIS) adaptively responded to increased needs. Had institutional facilities not been maintained appropriately, Kean University would not have been able to accommodate all COVID-19 related challenges at a moment’s notice. Technology was also a critical part of Kean’s infrastructure that made its wide-scale institutional response to the pandemic a success (Evidence Inventory, 425).

**Technology**

Kean’s computing and network infrastructure is constantly evaluated and updated in line with institutional requirements. Examples include recent investments in infrastructure that resulted in upgrading the campus WiFi technology to WiFi v6 across all academic buildings on the Union campus (Evidence Inventory, 423). These investments also led to roughly a dozen learning spaces being equipped with highly immersive technology that supports the University both from an in-person and remote-instruction perspective. Additional examples include maintaining a virtual lab infrastructure that allows students to access software programs that they would not readily have available to them off campus as well as transitioning to virtual contact centers to support students from an administrative perspective during highly remote times.
The institution maintains and supports its technological infrastructure in many ways. The most obvious is technical support for both in and out of classroom requirements. The University runs a service desk that operates Monday through Saturday and that responds to all technical issues both onsite and remotely. The institution also offers a 24-hour support service that focuses mainly on LMS related needs (Evidence Inventory, 424).

**Nancy Thompson Library Learning Commons (NTLC)**

The Nancy Thompson Library Learning Commons (NTLC) is a critical part of the fabric that is Kean University infrastructure, with the institutional and global Open Educational Resources (OER) initiative becoming an integral part of that very fabric. Kean created the NTLC by integrating library services, tutoring services, writing services, a public speaking lab and access to OER (Evidence Inventory, 107). This combination of services provides students with integrated learning and career development opportunities. Kean, with direct support and guidance from the NTLC, has also taken a lead in the OER initiative, which is rooted in social equity. OER provides students with a no-cost alternative to textbooks and course materials. To further its investment in and promotion of OER, Kean hosted its first annual OER conference in March 2021 (Evidence Inventory, 117).

**The Office of Facilities and Campus Planning**

The Office of Facilities and Campus Planning (FCP) plays a critical role in infrastructure sustainability. FCP continuously meets with other groups within the University to discuss existing performance, needs and future planning. Regular weekly meetings take place with Residential Student Services, Conference and Event Services and other groups. As projects are explored, all stakeholders are involved to ensure every perspective is considered. For example, electricians are often involved in the layout of furniture that requires electricity, and HVAC technicians provide insight on system operations and layouts. FCP also maintains a comprehensive building inventory spreadsheet for deferred maintenance which is updated bi-annually (Evidence Inventory, 142). This tool serves as an indicator for prioritizing necessary infrastructure projects. Additionally, FCP regularly collaborates with other divisions at the institution. EHS is often consulted on day-to-day incidents and proposed renovation projects. All projects and on-site deliveries are coordinated with Fire Safety and Campus Security. And OCIS network and desktop support are integral to all new construction, reconfigurations, renovations and relocations.

**The Office of Computer and Information Services**

The Office of Computer and Information Services (OCIS) works closely with FCP and with many other campus areas, including academic leadership. OCIS personnel serve on many different governance groups, such as the UPC and the University Senate. Currently, multiple representatives work on a task force with academic leadership to review and assess needs around learning technologies, and specifically LMS technologies. OCIS is committed to providing high-quality technology services to students, faculty and staff. With social equity in mind, the University and OCIS maintain a commitment to academic and economic accessibility to technological resources. Specifically, Kean University lends laptops to students as part of its focus on reducing the digital divide. During the COVID-19 pandemic, OCIS greatly increased the lending project so that students could successfully continue their studies remotely.
Sustainability

Considerations of sustainability and deferred maintenance at Kean are addressed through the Facilities Master Plan (Evidence Inventory, 148), deferred maintenance log and building analysis (Evidence Inventory, 142), energy efficiencies, environmental plans and the technological management of equipment and software. A deferred maintenance fund is preserved precisely for this purpose. FCP maintains the deferred maintenance log and building analysis as it reviews and prioritizes work based on the needs of the institution. This log is the basis for short- and long-term campus planning to ensure all physical structures are safe and maintained.

Facilities Master Plan

The Facilities Master Plan provides a comprehensive planning framework to guide future development and redevelopment at the University. The plan provides an analysis of existing conditions, a vision for development, as well as recommendations and guidelines to help Kean transition into a more unified and cohesive campus. The Facilities Master Plan also incorporates sustainable design standards (Evidence Inventory, 148).

Infrastructure Sustainability

FCP executes modifications, renovations or new buildings to sustain growth as well as education and enrollment needs for the University. In Spring 2021, FCP created a new scope of work to embark upon a new vision for 2030 (Evidence Inventory, 148) and is currently seeking proposals from architectural planning firms. The scope of work included a requirement for a five-year deferred maintenance planning schedule that allocates the funding needed each year.

A recent example demonstrating sustainable practices is in the FCP selection and installation of flooring products in both the Miron Student Center and in the Nancy Thompson Learning Commons. Choosing modern plank tiles with a prefinished surface offered a quicker installation time as well as a longer finish life, minimizing the times custodial staff must return to refinish and shine the floors.

Another planning consideration commonly used is in the selection of mechanical systems within buildings. Where possible, products and systems are kept consistent between buildings. This allows for efficient stocking and sourcing of parts and materials, and it allows our HVAC and plumbing staff members to efficiently learn and understand equipment across the entire campus. This practice is also utilized in our Fire Protection systems.

The FCP staff at Kean University incorporate the considerations of sustainable and low maintenance products in all product and process modifications made within the University. Current initiatives in energy efficiencies include the upgrading of lighting to LED bulbs. These bulbs use a fraction of the energy that standard fluorescent and incandescent bulbs require, produce greater light, and last significantly longer than a standard incandescent bulb. This initiative allows Kean to save on energy costs and resources as electricians spend less time on on-site visits to change bulbs that have burnt out.

Reducing Kean’s Carbon Footprint

A key aspect of Kean’s sustainability efforts is to reduce its carbon footprint. Kean’s plans and programs as it relates to climate and environmental health and safety can be evidenced in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (Evidence Inventory, 143), Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan (Evidence Inventory, 144), Spill Prevention and Control &
Countermeasure Plan (Evidence Inventory, 145), and the Respiratory Protection Program (Evidence Inventory, 146). These plans provide clear documentation, instructions and accountability for ensuring the protection of the atmosphere and environment.

**Food Scrap Composting Laboratory**

The Food Scrap Composting Laboratory (FSCL) reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and creates a nutrient-rich soil amendment for use on campus. Since 2010, Kean has recycled more than 579,540 pounds of food scraps and 145,000 pounds of scrap wood chips through composting. This has saved approximately $40,000 in landfill tipping fees and reduced carbon emissions at the institution by 62 MTCO2e (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent) over landilling the material. Food waste is collected from campus eateries and delivered to the greenhouse, where student workers support the composting process. It also includes wood shavings from local woodworking plants that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

Additionally, the FSCL laboratory is an integral part of the School of Environmental Science and Sustainability’s curriculum. This laboratory is visited regularly by science classes and its compost is used in research. Tours are offered to any interested group, including schools and colleges and state and local government.

In line with its environmental sustainability and recycling efforts, Kean has been awarded a $95,000 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection research grant for a project entitled, *An Institutional Wide Educational Campaign and Research to Promote Food Waste Recycling and Composting* that began in Fall 2021 (Evidence Inventory, 442). Kean has further adopted a single-stream recycling program, a system that has been shown to increase recycling rates by allowing consumers to comingle recyclables in the same container. In 2019, Kean collected approximately 960 tons of commingled recyclables, resulting in a savings of over $100,000 in landfill tipping fees and reduced our emissions by 2739 MTCO2e over landfilling the material.

**Shuttle Bus Transportation**

The State of New Jersey has leveraged proceeds from participation in the Regional GreenHouse Gas Initiative and the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust Fund to provide $100 million in grants to reduce emissions in various state sectors. In 2021, Kean University received $1,950,000 of grant funding to modernize the existing shuttle bus transportation system. The project includes seven Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) that will replace the gas-powered shuttle and transit fleet. Industry studies show that fuel mileage for ZEV buses bring a cost of $.28 per mile as opposed to $.55 per mile for diesel buses, nearly a 50% savings (Evidence Inventory, 441). Experience from organizations that operate both electric and gasoline-powered vehicles on the same routes achieve a 74% savings on maintenance costs over the life of the vehicles. This strategic project will have a lasting impact on the University, the local culture and atmosphere and long-term trends in greenhouse gas emissions.

**Snow Removal**

The University’s Snow Removal process exemplifies how advance planning balances financial impact with real-time operational needs. Weather prediction tools are utilized so that decisions can be made regarding timelines and approaches to snow removal, but the goal of pedestrian and vehicle safety remains paramount. Continuous monitoring of weather events and campus conditions permits changes in equipment deployment and priority areas.
**Technological Operations**

Kean’s efforts in sustainability and deferred maintenance can also be shown within our technological operations. When acquiring new equipment, extended warranties that will cover the useful life of equipment are often considered to limit exposure to future maintenance costs. Kean also uses standardized technology equipment where possible to reduce costs (i.e., workstation, network equipment, etc.). From a sustainability standpoint, Kean invested in power over ethernet (PoE) switching equipment that allows the University to be more efficient with its power consumption by powering devices such as desktop phones, network access points and some lighting systems on campus without the need for separate power feeds. This results in both operational and capital spending efficiencies. Lastly, the University has been transitioning many of its systems to cloud architecture, which limits the deferred maintenance exposure of costly hardware upgrades and/or repairs. An example of such would be the Workday™ HRIS implementation.

Deposits to the Deferred Maintenance Fund are in accordance with the financial management of year-end surpluses with an allocation of 25% as cited in the Board Resolution – Amended Distribution of Annual Fund Balance (Evidence Inventory, 181).

**Kean Skylands**

Kean Skylands serves as another instructional site and sits on 40 acres within an 1100-acre New Jersey State Park in Jefferson Township, New Jersey and is subject to environmental ordinances. Kean renovated an existing 30,000-square-foot former abbey to serve as the campus’ main building, the Lodge. The Lodge has nine classrooms, laboratory space, a gym, 24 residential rooms and flexible space for events. A second building, the Cabin, was constructed and is nestled among the trees and boasts impressive views of the park with its floor to ceiling windows. The Cabin has three levels of flexible classroom space and an open observation deck crowning the building. In addition, there is an elevated, three-level skywalk between the buildings that includes two outdoor classrooms and event space (Evidence Inventory, 252).

The Skylands site is intended to serve as an environmental education center for individuals of all ages in the surrounding community as well as offer Kean University courses: students can complete academic requirements for a Bachelor of Science degree in biology (environmental option), a Bachelor of Arts degree in criminal justice, a Bachelor of Science degree in management (general business option), and a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology.

**Continuous Improvement**

The Strategic Plan serves as the University roadmap, guiding the University’s general direction and providing actionable steps in accomplishing its goals. The UPC is responsible for assessing the accomplishments of each University strategic plan. A summary report for the Kean University 2013-2020 Strategic Plan was prepared from individual detailed reports of cumulative achievements for each of the goals. The current strategic plan, *Beyond 2020: the 2020-2025 Kean University Strategic Plan*, carries many initiatives begun under the last strategic plan into the future. Examples are provided across six categories: Assessment & Alignment, Planning, Financial Stability, Resource Allocation, Sustainability, and Adequacy.

**Assessment & Alignment**

Under the previous strategic plan, Kean University made great strides in cultivating a culture of assessment. The assessment processes became regularized and refined. The recent creation
of IE working in parallel with OAA, has provided focused guidance on the assessment of non-academic units that are vital to the institution. The planning and reporting templates outline implementation, milestones, measurements, results, outcomes, professional development needs and budget requests, which, when approved, identify specific actions to be undertaken by the unit and division.

**Planning**

Annual assessment plans guide annual actions taken by all units on campus; resource allocations are based largely on recommendations which emerge from the annual assessment results for all University divisions in which resource allocations are specifically aligned with goals of the University Strategic Plan.

The Facilities Master Plan provides the blueprint for the new construction of academic buildings, faculty housing and residential space, as well as the renovation of laboratories and leisure spaces, and the beautification of exterior spaces that are hallmarks of the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan. Similar plans to improve internet connectivity, implement technology upgrades and offer greater access to technology were realized under the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan.

**Financial Stability**

The strength of the current financial position of the University is a product of efforts previously undertaken under the 2013-2020 Strategic Plan. Fundraising accomplished by a new administrative structure of the Kean University Foundation secured Kean’s ability to increase support for students. As the cornerstone of the University budget, the Division of Enrollment Services sets ambitious enrollment goals so that tuition revenue remains sufficiently strong. The BOT maintains the University’s position by approving conservative tuition increases and new fee structures. Under the new administration and the current 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, the University will continue to strive to secure a financially stable University that can successfully face future challenges. Currently, the Division of Finance is creating more visibility and transparency within the budget process to provide better analyses of revenues and expenses generated by each unit, program, major and College that is systematic, reasonable, consistent and clear.

**Resource Allocation**

The first goal of Kean University’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is to steadily evolve to achieve R2 designation by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as a doctoral university with high research activity that is directed at solving the problems of the future. To that end, the Division of Finance is exploring new budget practices and budgeting software that will help provide better insight and prepare Kean to meet that goal and other strategic goals. Also of importance is that resources continue to be allocated as a function of the assessment cycle of current programs and that they also be dedicated to new strategic initiatives.

**Sustainability**

Kean maintains sustainability through ambitious recruitment goals that support needed tuition revenue, deferred maintenance plans for physical and technological infrastructures, enhanced energy efficiencies and thorough and strong financial management.
Adequacy

Adequacy of Kean’s physical infrastructure is measured through the physical conditions of its structures, environmental health and safety, classroom utilization, room occupancy and the revenues generated by the Office of Conference and Events Services. The technological infrastructure is measured by the ability to provide support and systems as well as ensuring that all faculty, staff and students have appropriate equipment, adequate connectivity and security in cyberspace. Kean measures the adequacy of human resources through metrics produced by the Office of Institutional Research, which allow the ability to balance the number of faculty, staff and students; the Office of Human Resources provides the necessary hiring support as needs are identified.

Chapter Summary

Kean utilizes multi-level assessments to ensure continuous improvement in achieving strategic goals and priorities. All academic and administrative units conduct annual assessments. Additionally, every five years, all units perform a thorough program review. Assessing the accomplishments of University’s strategic plan goals culminates at the end of the plan’s term and provides direction as the next strategic plan is crafted. The report is a collective enterprise of the UPC, where final accomplishments are aggregated and shared with the University community. This culmination, along with institutional planning at the onset, continuous collaboration with stakeholders and stakeholder groups, assessment processes, and sound finance and resource allocation practices, all contribute to Kean University’s pursuit of excellence, equity, evolution and continuous improvement.

The annual assessment, program review, and Closing of the Loop processes have been refined over time, as have their associated templates. Assessment coordinators have received standardized training and enhanced support from OAA. Also, IE has been created to address the unique needs in assessing administrative (non-academic) units. Even considering these advancements, Kean University looks to continuous improvement. A new rubric for evaluating resource requests that are included in annual assessment reports was developed and pilot tested in 2020-2021. In addition, Kean University explored and purchased the Watermark AMS to enrich assessment data collection processes and streamline the annual assessment cycle.

With all these improvements, Kean has managed to maintain a healthy annual surplus while supporting the University’s missions and goals. Evidence of Kean University’s annual year-end surpluses and reserves ensures that Kean has and maintains the financial resources for continuous improvement. As Kean is constantly growing and evolving, new programs and initiatives continue to emerge. The following outlines strengths, aspirations and forward-thinking recommendations for continuous improvement with an enhanced focus on excellence and equity, all of which emerged from the findings of the Standard VI Working Group and the contents of this chapter.

Key Highlights and Recommendations

Areas of Key Strengths
1. The Annual Assessment Cycle and Program Review for continuous improvement and alignment with meeting Strategic Plan goals.

2. Financial stability and consistent healthy year-end annual surpluses that afford growth and support of new initiatives.

3. Strategic resource allocation for long-term planning for a sustainable future.

4. Ability to maintain the lowest tuition and fees as a four-year public institution in the State of New Jersey despite reduced state funding.


6. Physical structures and a well-maintained and healthy campus environment.

7. Exemplary full-scale recycling program.

8. Implementation of many industry-leading information systems in higher education used to support the Kean community.

9. Focused organizational structure, inclusivity of the Kean community, and use of data analysis in impacting important decision-making.

Opportunities for improvement and innovation

1. To better describe the Annual Assessment Cycle and Program Review processes in writing as well as the process of how the Strategic Plans are created. While an Assessment Flow Chart and Templates exist, there is no document that provides a complete narrative of these important processes and the role of each unit, program, College and division, as well as the role of OAA, IE and UPC.

2. To better measure the adequacy of personnel staffing at both the administrative and academic levels.

3. OCIS is challenged by the ever-moving target in providing higher levels of technical support and quicker turnaround times to launch new technologies and technological initiatives that will meet a cohesive long-term plan.

4. Although Kean has a strong technological infrastructure that incorporates best practices, recent years show increasing demand and necessary spending on implementing new technologies and systems for enhanced automation of processes and reporting/data analysis capabilities. With this growth, higher levels of support and quicker turnaround times for new initiatives would be achieved with additional staffing.

Initial Strategies on Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Composition of a “Kean University Strategic Goals and Assessment Cycle” narrative.

2. Investment in a formal Workforce Analysis to ensure that Kean is “right-sized” and not understaffed or overstaffed where all departments and programs are concerned.

3. Creation of a long-term “Technology Strategic Plan” for direction and technological vision of the University that can be sustained by current staffing and support services.

Conclusion

Institutional decisions are finalized at the highest administrative levels, including through governing bodies, the President’s Office, senior administrative leadership and department
heads. The University continuously seeks out recommendations of the UPC, University Senate, ad hoc task forces, working groups and committees. Feedback from the Kean community along with data indicators are also utilized to make informed decisions. Guidelines and approval processes exist in documented policies and procedures to ensure responsibility and accountability.

**Standard VI Working Group**

The members of the Standard VI Working Group collaborated in an inclusive manner and followed a process that valued transparency. The Standard VI Working Group is a diverse group demonstrated by the positions and titles held by its members and the units and divisions they represent. The co-chairs comprise one member of the faculty and one University staff. Working group members include a representative of Kean Ocean, the Executive Director of School of Mathematical Sciences, the Vice Chancellor of Wenzhou-Kean University, faculty members of Nathan Weiss Graduate College, a professional services specialist, a technician, a representative from Kean Skylands, the Dean of College of Business and Public Management and a student representative. This mix fully reflects voices from faculty, staff and student constituencies. The structure of having multiple working groups with diverse membership well demonstrates the sound and functioning structure of this self-study.
Standard VII: Governance, Leadership and Administration

Standard Statement

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Satisfactorily Met the Standard and Criteria

A review of the five criteria established by Middle States as measures of Standard VII compliance indicates that the University satisfactorily meets these criteria, and the narrative that follows will highlight evidence to document how Kean meets this Standard.

Transition in Leadership

On May 11, 2020 following a comprehensive national search, President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., was selected as the 18th leader of Kean University by the Kean Board of Trustees. He succeeded Dawood Farahi, Ph.D., who served in the role from 2003-2020.

Dr. Repollet served two and a half years as the Commissioner of Education under New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy before becoming Kean's president. In his first year as president (2020-2021), he initiated a year of discovery, meeting with all major constituencies, clearly demonstrating a willingness to work collaboratively and focusing on the future direction for Kean University. Additionally, he initiated a transparent communications program with the campus community including weekly campuswide updates and student-focused question and answer Town Hall meetings. The weekly messages provide updates on pressing issues, information about upcoming events and initiatives, and congratulatory remarks on the achievements of employees and students alike.

Governing Body

Kean University, as a New Jersey public comprehensive University, is governed by an independent Board of Trustees (BOT), appointed by the New Jersey Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. The Higher Education Restructuring Act of 1994 replaced the former Board of Higher Education (BHE) and Department of Higher Education (DHE) to decentralize institutional governance, shifting responsibilities from the state to the individual colleges and universities. The BHE and DHE were replaced with a Commission on Higher Education, a Presidents’ Council, and Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, each with a clearly established structure and set of responsibilities.

The BOT recruits, employs and annually reviews the University President. The president serves as the University’s Chief Executive Officer and oversees all activities related to management of
the institution. The divisional structure of the University is clearly delineated on the University’s Organizational chart and includes seven senior vice presidents who have direct responsibility for the functional areas of University operation (Evidence Inventory, 163).

**Governance Structure**

The University’s governance structure engages several internal comprehensive committees, including the University Senate, a 30-member elected body of faculty, staff, librarians and administrators. The Senate is the principal agent for the formulation of Kean University policy (Evidence Inventory, 103). The Senate and its elected and appointed committees communicate recommendations to the President on such matters as faculty affairs, curriculum, instruction, student affairs, finances and other matters relevant to the welfare of Kean University. In addition, the University Planning Council (UPC) is responsible for writing, implementing and assessing the University’s strategic plan by establishing measurable goals, objectives and indicators of institutional effectiveness. The UPC is a broad-based governing body that draws its membership from appointed and elected constituencies throughout the campus. The UPC ensures that all major plans, decisions and initiatives are consistent with the mission of the institution and the current Strategic Plan (Evidence Inventory, 104). Student governance bodies include the Student Organization Executive Board as well as the Graduate and Part-time Student Council (Evidence Inventory, 133).

Kean University also adheres to collective bargaining agreements with unionized labor constituents represented by the Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT), Kean University Adjunct Faculty Federation (KUAFF), Communication Workers of America (CWA), and the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), the New Jersey State Policeman's Benevolent Association (NJSPBA), the New Jersey Law Enforcement Supervisors Association (NJLESA), and the New Jersey Superior Officers Law Enforcement Association (NJSOLEA).

In the spirit of shared governance, the members of the various committees of the University Senate, agencies and administration work together as active participants in the development of University policies and programs. The University’s Strategic Plan is one example of broad campus input and shared decisionmaking leading to consensus on future direction and new initiatives, with emphasis on supporting and amplifying diversity in the workforce. Campus constituents embrace the shared benefits and responsibilities guiding the University on its path to excellence.

**Board of Trustees (BOT)**

The Higher Education Restructuring Act of 1994 empowers the BOT to be responsible for the governance of their institutions. Kean’s BOT is charged with responsibility for and oversight of the University’s mission. Board members are appointed for a term of six years. Currently, there are 15 appointed members of the board and two student trustees, annually elected by the student body.

Steven Fastook was recently appointed Chair of the BOT. He is an award-winning Media Production Executive in network entertainment, sports and news. Fastook is currently Senior Vice President of Operations for CNBC, responsible for production and operations of the network. Over the span of his career, Fastook has been the recipient of nine Emmy Awards for his work covering the 1988 Seoul Olympics; creation of the national syndicated Rosie O’Donnell
Show: graphic design, studio production and remotes, and special events like the Macy’s Parade.

In 2006, Fastook received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Kean University. He is also currently Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Kean University Foundation and sits on the board for the International Radio and Television Society, an organization dedicated to enhancing education for media students.

The BOT is responsible for institutional policy and planning, and financial planning and decisions. It oversees legal affairs, directs planning, establishes tuition and fee structures, sets admissions criteria, confirms degree requirements and academic programming, confirms certain personnel decisions, stewards financial investments, fundraising and budgeting, and guides improvements to the physical campuses (Evidence Inventory, 66). It also documents institutional outcomes and reporting and interacts with the state for support.

The BOT, in accordance with the provisions of the State budget and appropriations acts of the New Jersey State Legislature, appoints and approves the compensation of the President of the University, who is the University's executive officer and the Board's chief adviser, and an ex officio member of the Board without a vote. All communications to the Board are transmitted through the President of the University except as the Chairperson of the Board shall invite communications (Evidence Inventory, 66).

President of the University and Administration

The President serves at the pleasure of the BOT. As noted in the BOT by-laws, the executive leadership, responsibility and management of the University is delegated to and vested in the President of the University to achieve its mission and goals. The President has the general responsibility for the leadership and management of the University in achieving its mission, objectives and purpose – including instruction, research and service – in accordance with the policies of the Board, the laws of the state and the resources of the institution. All administrators at the University directly or indirectly report to the President (Evidence Inventory, 66).

The University is a comprehensive workplace with main divisions in Research, Planning, Finance, Administration, External Affairs, Academic Affairs, Entrepreneurial Education Initiatives, Student Affairs, Enrollment Services, Student Success and Retention, and University Relations. The functional divisions and associated offices work together to achieve the mission of the University, further the strategic plan and make recommendations to the President (Evidence Inventory, 66).

Faculty and Staff

Roles and responsibilities of full-time employees with faculty, librarian and professional staff titles are articulated by relevant labor agreements. Tenured or tenure-track faculty have defined teaching loads with associated non-teaching duties in scholarly research, service to the University community, and advising and mentoring of students in their respective programs. All full-time faculty, librarians, professional staff and administrators are members of the University Senate constituency. The Senate constitution forms the basis for organizing faculty to participate effectively in the governance process. The Senate is the principal agent in the faculty governance process. The Senate serves as the forum for formulation and discussion of educational policy. Directly or through appropriate committee structures, faculty participate in
the selection of the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors and other officers of the administration (Evidence Inventory, 104, 292). Faculty governance beneath the college level varies.

**Students**

Kean University is focused on inspiring students to be upstanders, helping those in need and fostering a sense of civic engagement, community responsibility and integrity in all campus life experiences. Student participation is integral to Kean’s governance structure. The student body is represented broadly through participation on the BOT, Student Organization (the umbrella organization for all student groups), Graduate and Part-time Student Council, and on numerous committees across the institution (Evidence Inventory, 133).

On the Board of Trustees, two student trustees are elected by the students; the primary student trustee has one vote, and the alternate student trustee serves as non-voting. The Student trustees attend and participate in BOT meetings and business of the BOT except where specifically prohibited by law (Evidence Inventory, 66).

**Transparency**

Transparency of action occurs at each level of governance. At the BOT level, all meetings are held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (Evidence Inventory, 66). Notices informing the public of the date, time and location of the BOT meetings are published with local print media channels as well as on the University website. The minutes remain available on the website for two years, and then they are archived and available upon request from the board. Copies of board resolutions are distributed at every public meeting, sent to the offices of all bargaining units on campus, shared with the governing board of Kean’s host communities, and are available upon request from the BOT office (Evidence Inventory, 66).

**President’s Office**

The University President embraces and engages in a transparent leadership role that invites participation, feedback and engagement from all members of the campus community and the many community audiences served.

The President delivers an Opening Day Address at the start of each academic year to share goals for the year with the entire campus community as well as a status report on initiatives undertaken in the previous academic year.

The President also embraces a transparent communications program with the campus community that includes a weekly campuswide communiqué and periodic student focused Town Hall meetings. The weekly messages provide updates on pressing issues, information about upcoming events and initiatives, and celebratory remarks on the achievements of employees and students alike. These messages also are shared with the Board of Trustees.

The President embraces transparency through regularly scheduled labor-management meetings attended by the President and Chief of Staff, Provost, and University labor counsel.

**Budget**

The development of the annual budget and the setting of tuition and fees use transparent measures that flow through multiple levels in Kean’s governance structure. At the onset, the
creation of the budget involves all academic and administrative units where each is provided an
annual budget report related to their areas that includes four years of historical data and an
opportunity to provide input into their next year’s budget in a meeting with the Senior Vice
President for Finance and the Budget Director. With this information and other financial
assumptions, such as predictive student enrollment, a preliminary budget is created that
includes a recommended rate for tuition and fees. The proposed budget is reviewed by the
President who incorporates institutional priorities and initiatives (Evidence Inventory, 187).

Tuition

As a measure of promoting transparency, a public tuition hearing is set prior to BOT approval.
The Divisions of Finance and Student Affairs work together in holding this event and announce
to all students, faculty and staff of the upcoming tuition hearing date through an email blast and
social media platforms. At the hearing, the proposed budget and tuition and fees are presented
and the rationale for the proposed changes are discussed. At the June BOT meeting the budget
is finalized by the BOT Finance Committee and tuition and fees are ultimately approved by the
BOT. In another measure of transparency, the annual budget and tuition and fee rates are
published on the Kean website for all constituents to view (Evidence Inventory, 105).

Kean University has structures and processes in place to support the work of the BOT to serve
the public interest through broadly announced meetings and dedicated public sessions. The
public may put forth questions to the Board and speak during the public session of meetings
(Evidence Inventory, 66).

Mission

The institution clearly states its mission through internal and external communications channels
such as the University website, Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs, and through alignment
with the University Strategic Plan. Each specialized standing committee of the BOT maintains
oversight of different aspects of the Strategic Plan (Evidence Inventory, 66). These committees
include Academic Policy and Programs, Audit, Facilities and Maintenance, Finance,
Governance, Legal and Personnel, Student and Community Affairs, Institutional Advancement,
Nominating. The BOT may also add, alter or abolish standing committees as needed (Evidence
Inventory, 66). The BOT maintains a fiduciary responsibility to the University through members’
compliance with and adherence to the BOT Code of Ethics (Evidence Inventory, 66). The BOT
is accountable for maintaining the academic quality, planning and fiscal well-being of the
University. The BOT acts principally through standing committees, a quarterly review of
accreditation, annual review of the University Strategic Plan, annual academic and
administrative assessment reports and the annual University Profile compiled by the Office of
Institutional Research.

Board of Trustees

The Board strives to ensure its membership is reflective of the students and constituencies it
serves and contains the expertise needed to succeed in this field. The Governance Committee
reviews recommendations for trustees, recognizing however that the Governor has the ultimate
authority to nominate persons to the Board. The Higher Education Restructuring Act of 1994
empowers the Board to recommend appointment of Trustees to the Governor with Senate’s
consent (Evidence Inventory, 66).
Board Members are selected with relevant experience and expertise with biographical information posted on the University website. The trustees work together, collaboratively, to bring their various expertise to discussions and decision making and work hard to reach consensus on important issues that shape the institution. In addition, new Trustees are offered a comprehensive orientation program upon appointment (Evidence Inventory, 293). Trustees are invited to participate in the Association of Governing Boards annual conference. The Board demonstrates accountability to the institution chiefly through its BOT Code of Ethics (Evidence Inventory, 66).

In their roles as Trustees, members must remain free of political and financial influence and even the appearance of external interference (Evidence Inventory, 66, 237). The BOT safeguards this responsibility through numerous checkpoints: a State mandated Public Officer Financial Disclosure Form (Evidence Inventory, 289), an annual Conflict of Interest form (Evidence Inventory, 288), and mandatory ethics training at the state level. In matters where a potential conflict of interest could arise, the members must recuse themselves, with the recusals recorded in the public minutes (Evidence Inventory, 66).

**Separation of Powers**

The BOT and the administration are able to separate their roles and functions through the vertical alignment of governing and administrative powers. Trustees are guided to direct all questions about day-to-day operations of the University through the Board Office and/or the President. All communications to the Board shall be transmitted through the President of the University, except as the Chairperson of the Board shall invite communications. The BOT Code of Ethics elucidates the role of the Board as a policymaking body and to avoid participation in the administration of policy. The BOT also understands that the President of the University is the agent of the Board in the conduct of institutional affairs and serves as the formal channel of communication to the faculty, staff and student body. As described in the University’s Organizational Chart, the President serves as chief executive with the BOT as the governing body. Assisted by the Chief of Staff and Executive Director for Board Operations, the President works directly with seven senior members of his administration, including the Provost/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, Senior V.P. for Research, Senior V.P. for Planning and Special Counsel to the President, Senior V.P. for Finance, Senior V.P. for Administration, Senior V.P. for Entrepreneurial Education Initiatives and Senior V.P. for External Affairs (Evidence Inventory, 163). These Senior Vice-Presidents are in charge of academic and administrative units, which oversee the daily operational activities of the University through a comprehensive substructure of offices and programs.

Beyond the vertical alignment of governing and administrative powers, as indicated by the Organizational Chart, are other broad-based committees at Kean University that have decision making capability at the institution. Prominent among these is the University Senate which “communicates recommendations to the President on such matters as faculty affairs, curriculum, instruction, student affairs and other matters relevant to the welfare of Kean University” (Evidence Inventory, 103).

**Academic Policy and Procedures**

The BOT utilizes a strategic committee structure to oversee operations at the policy level. With regard to quality of teaching and learning, the BOT's Academic Policy and Programs (APP)
Committee meets four times per academic year (September, December, March and May) to consider academic issues impacting the quality of teaching and learning as well as the approval of new degree programs. The quality of teaching and learning is ensured by this committee's review of all faculty personnel recommendations by the President, such as hiring, reappointment, sabbatical, range adjustment, promotion and tenure. This committee also considers personnel actions of academic staff who are responsible for the day-to-day operations of each academic program, including Executive Directors and Deans. The BOT is briefed annually on reappointment criteria, the faculty and staff promotions process and sabbatical leave procedures (Evidence Inventory, 66).

**Curriculum**

The quality of curriculum is ensured by the BOT APP by review and action of all new degree programs after consideration and recommendation by the faculty that includes the General Education Curriculum Committee, the College Curriculum Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, the University Senate and final review by the Provost/Snr. VPAA or Chief Academic Officer and the President. The aforementioned committees also include members representing the University Senate and the Kean Federation of Teachers. If approved, the BOT will issue a resolution supporting the new degree program, to be submitted along with a Program Approval Document to the statewide Academic Issues Committee (AIC) of the New Jersey Presidents Council (NJPC). The AIC of the NJPC serves as peer review by the Presidents or their designee of institutions throughout the state. If recommended by the statewide AIC and approved by the NJPC, new degree programs are then submitted to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education for final approval (Evidence Inventory, 287).

**Teaching and Learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is also monitored by the BOT APP committee through discussion of regular academic program review conducted by faculty and staff, matters of accreditation for academic programs accredited by professional organizations that include assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) and program learning outcomes that are aligned with the University's mission.

**Research Support**

Discussion and review of internal research support and engagement, external funding to support faculty mentoring of students engaged in research, student services and professional development also contribute to the BOT APP's oversight of the quality of teaching and learning by monitoring the quality of learning outside of the classroom (Evidence Inventory, 66).

**Finance and Audit**

Pertaining to assurance of strong fiscal management, the BOT convenes the Finance and Audit Committee, has full access to quarterly financial reports, reviews the Annual Financial Audit, and adopts the audit’s findings during the public session of BOT meetings. The BOT Finance Committee considers recommendations for funding that support teaching and learning, such as technology upgrades in classrooms and laboratories, scholarly resources for classroom
teaching and student and faculty research, including but not limited to academic software, computer and information services, physical and electronic books and electronic journals and monographs (Evidence Inventory, 66).

**Awarding of Degrees**

Approval of awarding degrees is monitored by the University Registrar through degree audits of each candidate for graduation that may include evaluation of transfer credits from other institutions.

**Appointment and Evaluation of the President**

The appointment of a new President is a relatively rare occurrence for the BOT. It occurred most recently in 2020. Kean has had 18 leaders in its 166-year history. From Kean’s earliest days as a Normal School, those leaders were principals. In 1937, the institution became New Jersey State Teachers College, and its first president was appointed.

In the present era, the search for a new president generally begins by choosing a national, independent search firm to assist in the search process. The Executive Committee of the BOT interviews various firms and reviews their credentials. The committee recommends the hiring of a firm at a public meeting of the BOT, and the BOT votes publicly on the selection. Under the guidance of the search firm, a prospectus for the position of President and candidate profile are created with input from various campus constituencies. Once completed, the prospectus is posted for public review. The Board Chair selects various leaders, stakeholders and constituents for prospective committee members, interviews all potential candidates for the search committee, and then appoints the Presidential Search Committee (PSC). The PSC members are representatives of the Kean University community, including trustees, faculty, alumni and students (Evidence Inventory, 286). Once the finalist has been selected, the Board of Trustees approves the appointment and compensation of the President.

**Evaluation**

The Executive Committee reviews the contractual conditions annually, makes recommendations and submits the recommendations for BOT approval. The Executive Committee comprises the Board Chair (who shall chair the Committee), Vice-Chair, Secretary and additional appointees from the Standing Committees’ Chairpersons. The Chair of the BOT makes the appointment of the other appointees. The Executive Committee has a minimum of four members but is not to exceed five members. During an executive session, the BOT will annually conduct an informal evaluation of the President, outlining the ensuing year's goals. A formal evaluation of the President is conducted every four years. The BOT appoints an external evaluator with the approval of the President. The Board can evaluate the President more frequently if deemed necessary (Evidence Inventory, 66).

**Good Practice**

The BOT ensures that it is informed in all of its operations by principles of good practice through multiple measures. By statute, the role of the BOT for New Jersey state colleges and universities is to ensure self-governance, free from partisanship (Evidence Inventory, 66). The BOT ensures that Kean University’s mission represents the public's need and interest in higher
education and does not represent individual constituencies. The Board is responsible for creating and implementing policies in accordance with the mission of the University (Evidence Inventory, 66). Furthermore, the BOT and its respective committees hold meetings following the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-7 et seq. This enables all community members to bring information to the Board’s attention. The BOT benefits from the work of its eight standing committees (Academic Policy and Programs, Audit, Facilities and Maintenance, Finance, Governance, Legal and Personnel, Student and Community Affairs, Institutional Advancement, Nominating), each focusing on areas of importance for BOT oversight. The BOT also benefits from engagement with the student trustees, each invited to participate in the full BOT meetings and the Student and Community Affairs standing committee (Evidence Inventory, 66). The BOT members subscribe to the Code of Ethics as defined in the BOT Bylaws (Evidence Inventory, 66) as well as the State Uniform Code of Ethics. Kean’s BOT is a member of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), a national organization for college and university board members. The AGB provides many support services, workshops, trainings and data briefings. The Board also subscribes to two related periodicals, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Trusteeship Magazine*.

**Freedom from Conflict of Interest (COI)**

As stewards of a public institution of higher learning, Kean Trustees are briefed during an onboarding orientation, and annually, on Conflict of Interest (COI) regulations and policies. Board members are required to annually update their COI reporting forms with the state Ethics Office and to engage in annual ethics training. Additionally, trustees must review the University vendor list annually and certify that no conflict exists. The executive director of the Office of the BOT and the University’s Ethics Liaison Officer (ELO) confirm their filings each year with the state. The Trustees are required to complete a series of online or in person trainings each year, per the statute. At the beginning of each academic year, BOT members are advised by Kean University Counsel and the ELO of the requirements to recuse themselves in writing on matters that constitute or may appear to constitute a conflict of interest. To avoid a conflict of interest, the BOT members are asked to excuse themselves from conversations on the matter and recuse themselves publicly from a vote (Evidence Inventory, 66).

The New Jersey Conflicts of Interest Law (N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12 et seq.), the rules of the State Ethics Commission (N.J.A.C. 19:61-1.1 et seq.) as well as the University’s code of ethics contain standards that apply to the Trustees in their official capacity (Evidence Inventory, 268, 237, 236). As the University’s governing board, members must file related forms as well as financial disclosure forms annually with the State of New Jersey Ethics Commission (Evidence inventory, 289).

**Autonomy**

Inculcated in the oath of office, all trustees endorse the University’s mission and work to support the President to ensure that all actions and decision making stays true to both the mission and the vision for the institution. Additionally, Trustees participate in ethics training annually that clearly defines their responsibility as state officers to protect the institution from undue influences and conflicts of interest (Evidence Inventory, 237, 268). As an independent body that provides general policy oversight of the University, the BOT supports the President by adopting policies and making financial decisions that reflect a commitment to the mission of the University.
and its commitment to excellence, equity and evolution (Evidence Inventory, 66). Prominent examples include the creation of the Division of Student Success and Retention, expanded scholarship funding, creation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) office, hiring of Equity in Action Postdoctoral Fellows, and a comprehensive plan to pursue Carnegie research institution (R2) designation.

Relevant Credentials for the President of Kean University

A Kean alumnus and former member of the Board of Trustees, Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. came to the presidency after serving as the Commissioner of Education under New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy. During his time as commissioner, he and his team worked to expand early childhood education; promote a school culture that embraces social and emotional learning; and strengthen STEM opportunities for students. During his tenure, New Jersey's public schools were ranked number one in the nation in the Education Week “Quality Counts 2019” report, which captures key data to assess a state's educational performances. Dr. Repollet worked closely with Governor Murphy as New Jersey’s public school children shifted to remote education amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

From 2014 to 2018, Dr. Repollet served as superintendent of the Asbury Park School District. In his early days on the job, he carried a white hard hat to send a message that together with staff and students, they would rebuild the schools. He implemented new instructional and organizational approaches in the district, including a pre-K to grade 12 Literacy Intervention and Leadership Development initiative. This, along with other programs, helped increase the graduation rate by 30%. Previously, he served as principal of Carteret High School, where his leadership garnered national recognition, earning him a reputation for decreasing the achievement gap.

Dr. Repollet has long ties to Kean, having earned his master's degree in educational administration from the University in 2000. He served on the Kean Board of Trustees from 2011 until 2018, assuming the role of Secretary as well as Chair of the Academic Policy and Programs Committee. While on the board, he visited Wenzhou, China in 2012 when Wenzhou-Kean University first opened and returned again to speak at WKU’s second commencement in 2017.

Dr. Repollet has earned honors and recognition from numerous organizations. In 2018, he was honored as an Outstanding Human Rights Educator by Kean's Human Rights Institute. Most recently he received the 2019 Medal of Excellence for Distinguished Service from The College of Education at Rowan University, the 2019 Trailblazer Award from the Innovation for Equity Summit and the 2019 Conclave Image Award from Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

In addition to his Kean master's degree, Dr. Repollet received his Bachelor of Arts in communication from The College of New Jersey and a Doctorate in Education from Nova Southeastern University (Evidence Inventory, 333).

Having a working knowledge of BOT structure, Bylaws, and operations as a former trustee, as well as being a Kean alumnus, Dr. Repollet is uniquely qualified to lead the University. His experience and expertise make him an extraordinary leader for Kean.
Presidential Authority and Staffing Powers

The powers of the President are specifically defined in the BOT bylaws and provide broad authority of executive leadership, responsibility and management of the University in achieving its mission, objectives and purpose, including instruction and service in accordance with the policies of the Board, the laws of the state, and the resources of the institution. The President retains the authority to sign documents on behalf of the Board pursuant to the policies of the Board, state regulation and statute (Evidence Inventory, 66). The President has the authority to develop and implement institutional plans. A timely example of this authority was demonstrated during the recent operational challenges created by the global pandemic. The President exercised his authority in the implementation of an institutional restart plan affecting all divisions of the University. Related to staffing the organization, academic and non-academic division leadership makes hiring recommendations to the respective Senior Vice Presidents and ultimately to the President for approval.

Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness

The President maintains organizational authority for institutional efficiency and effectiveness through organizational structure and accountability. Reporting directly to the President, the Senior Vice President for Administration oversees an Office of Institutional Effectiveness and an Office of Accreditation and Assessment. These offices provide annual assessment data from academic and non-academic programs at the institution. All divisions engage in thorough annual reviews of associated activities within the division (Evidence Inventory, 163, 80, 77, 76). Institutional activities must demonstrate alignment with the University mission and Strategic Plan (Evidence Inventory, 1, 97). Numerous cabinet, divisional and departmental meetings occur regularly throughout the academic year by University constituents to contribute to institutional efficiency and effectiveness. Summative reporting is provided quarterly by the President to the BOT.

Organizational Structure and Reporting Relationships

A 15-member Board of Trustees oversees University policy and selects and empowers the President of the University, who serves as the chief executive of the institution. The President has both a Cabinet and Executive Team who serve as the primary managers of various divisions and initiatives. The Cabinet includes the Chief of Staff, Seven Senior Vice Presidents and two deputy chiefs of staff. It is responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of University policy as directed by the President, as well as emergent and/or emergency matters. The Executive Team includes seven Vice Presidents, the CEO of Kean Foundation, Inc., two special assistants to the President and three representatives from other key areas of leadership. This unit is responsible for managing and reporting on many of the critical daily functions of the University, ranging from student accounting to institutional assessment data to admissions and student success. All academic units report to the University Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs through the University’s Deans, Executive Directors and Chairs who are responsible for managing their respective Colleges, schools and programs (Evidence Inventory, 163).

In 2021, the University transitioned to Workday, a digital human resources platform streamlining all activities related to the hiring, development and retention of staff. All reporting relationships,
from entry level to chief executive, are clearly articulated and maintained through this platform (Evidence Inventory, 332).

Administrator Credentials

Kean ensures that its administrative members possess the appropriate qualities, skills and characteristics through the requisite skill sets posted in each job description and a competitive hiring process. The Office of Human Resources runs background checks, confirms degrees and checks that the requirements established in the posted job title are met by the candidates. Administrators are also subject to an array of annual mandatory trainings related to professional development (Ethics, DEI, HR managerial, Student Advisement, Assessment, Workday, Interfolio, etc.). Administrators at Kean are not represented by labor agreements and serve as “no limit” employees of the institution.

Administrators have regular engagement with faculty through shared governance committees, including the University Planning Council and University Senate (Evidence Inventory, 104, 103). Administrators also serve as event hosts, student group advisors, and workshop facilitators to student groups. The President of the University as the chief administrator has regular contact with students formally through the President’s Advisory Council and student focused Town Hall meetings held every semester (Evidence Inventory, 285, 284).

Administrative Unit Assessment

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) supports the institution's mission, goals and institutional priorities through the implementation of continuous improvement initiatives that foster a timely, measurable and systematic administrative assessment process. Through integrated planning, IE works closely with the Office of Accreditation and Assessment in making assessment more efficient and more useful to the institution, while maintaining a focus on data integrity and supporting student success in alignment with strategic goals and accreditation requirements.

In an effort to both streamline and improve the consistency of the resource request and allocation process, administrative units are required to complete a budget request form that reviews that the request aligns with the unit’s outcomes assessment from prior years as well as the institution’s strategic plan goals. The budget request forms are due with the final assessment report and then shared with the division’s senior leadership as well as UPC and the President (if approved at all levels). This systematic approach closes the loop in using assessment data to enhance institutional operations (Evidence Inventory, 121, 283).

Self-Assessment of Self Study Working Group

With a variety of different stakeholders as members across the University, this group’s Self-Study work has fostered an inclusive and transparent process of comprehensive self-assessment through its frequent meetings and shared documents to which everyone can contribute. The lines of communication between the working group and administrators have been open; everyone has been working together to collect the needed information. Collaborative review of Kean’s institutional operations and policies has allowed not only deeper understanding but broader connections and campuswide input.
Areas of Strength

Kean is a public university focused on student success and growth aligned with its mission. With the installation of a new President, early indications of efforts underway to enhance communication and improve management-labor relations are evident. The President allows for the voices of the students to be represented; he has met with a committee of the full professors; he has formed numerous advisory councils, allowing him to listen and consider as he develops strategies for his presidency. The President has established a positive working relationship with the unions, allowing for open conversations and negotiations of terms and conditions as warranted. Communication, transparency and shared vision appear to be key to the future of governance at Kean.

The following are the new initiatives/administrative changes that transpired during the 2020-2021 academic year:

1. Creation and hiring of eight Equity in Action Postdoctoral Fellows
2. Establishment of a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Office
3. Renewed attention to the faculty recruitment and retention process as a new Workday digital platform was put into place to help streamline the needed hiring process
4. Emphasis on student success and retention with the creation of the VP level Division of Student Success and Retention, with the addition of the Center for Advising, Persistence and Success (CAPS)
5. Presidential commitment to becoming a Carnegie R2 institution.
6. Emphasis on accessibility of documentation at the University through digital platforms (Workday, AMS, CMS, Student Planning, etc.)
7. Promotion of a well-defined and visible Office of Accreditation and Assessment responsible for assessing administrative and academic operations at Kean
8. A commitment by President Repollet and the BOT to improving labor management relationships.

Suggestions for Improvement and Innovation

1. As Kean actively pursues R2 designation, the budgeting process should be refined to support this institutional priority.
2. In addition to budgeting for educational programs, materials and supplies, consideration should be given to creating a discretionary budget line to provide Deans and administrative leadership the flexibility to respond to emerging needs.
3. The current procurement process is cumbersome, particularly for small-dollar items. Consideration should be given to streamlining the process.
4. Empower leadership beneath the level of College Deans at the program and department level by standardizing the positions of Program Coordinators, Program Chairpersons and Executive Directors. Negotiations with the KFT are needed in order to clarify these roles and responsibilities similar to the negotiated role of Department Chairperson. A conversion process is needed in order to increase the number of Department Chairpersons across the University. The Provost recognizes the need to review the
current faculty governance with consideration to harmonize the University’s structure with that of peer institutions regarding the role of Department Chairpersons. The Provost/SVPAA is presently in conversations with the faculty union and constituents across the institution, including the University Senate to standardize and negotiate the roles of Department Chairpersons (Evidence Inventory, 291).

5. Consideration should be given to conducting a comprehensive audit of technology needs.

6. Consideration should be given to providing additional transparency regarding the criteria for tenure and promotion of faculty, as well as promotion and retention of staff.

7. Members of Kean’s BOT should be invited to campus to meet with faculty, staff and students outside of the regular meeting schedule to give the BOT an opportunity to deepen their familiarity with these constituents.

8. With the overarching goal of elevating Kean University to R2 status, the SVPAA should utilize an academic perspective as a central, perhaps primary, lens regarding decision making.

Initial Strategies on Continuous Quality Improvement

1. The working group commends the President for his enhanced lines of communication with stakeholders across the University and encourages him to maintain and build on these.

2. Leverage the findings of the R2 Committee’s examination of other R2 institutions’ budgetary practices to develop a specific plan of action that serves Kean’s R2 financial needs.

3. The working group suggests the Division of Finance consider digitization of budget documentation and purchasing processes, similar to use of technology by Human Resources, including Workday and Interfolio. Also, it would follow upgrades on institutional documentation with platforms such as Watermark and Digital Commons.