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# KEAN UNIVERSITY

## Grants Operations Assessment

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2025

This report is an independent Grants Operations Assessment to evaluate the institution's current research administration structures, policies, staffing, and systems.

This report was funded through Kean's NSF GRANTED subaward from Emory University through the NORDP Consultants Program.



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## Introduction

McAllister & Quinn (M&Q) was engaged to conduct an independent Grants Operations Assessment in late summer/early fall 2025 to evaluate Kean's current research administration structures, policies, staffing, and systems. The assessment aims to:

- Provide an unbiased evaluation of Kean's grants operation infrastructure.
- Identify areas requiring improvement or investment to sustain R2-level activity; and
- Offer actionable recommendations for strengthening Kean's research enterprise in alignment with its strategic plans in the short and long term.

The assessment was funded by and also conducted as the result of Kean's NSF GRANTED subaward from Emory University through the NORDP Consultants Program and included document and website reviews, interviews, and benchmarking analyses. M&Q conducted structured discussions with stakeholders in the grants operations process, including the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), Finance, Human Resources, the Office of Science and Technology, and faculty investigators. In addition, comparative data from peer and aspirant institutions were analyzed to contextualize Kean's staffing and funding trends.

A detailed account of M&Q's methodology and data sources is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B presents a summary of Kean funding and a comparison of staffing to peer and aspirant institutions. Appendix C is the CV of Carol Burdsal, PhD, the M&Q consultant who led the assessment.

## Executive Summary

Kean University (Kean) is a public institution of higher education primarily located in Union, New Jersey, adjacent to the city of Newark, NJ. Since its founding in 1855 as the Newark Normal School serving educators of the city of Newark, Kean has earned a distinguished reputation through its education and service mission. Today, Kean is a diverse, access-oriented, and research-focused institution comprised of eight schools and four campuses. As of Fall 2025, Kean enrolled approximately 19,000 undergraduate students and graduate students across all campuses, including Kean Ocean (Toms River/Manahawkin, NJ), Kean Online, Kean Skylands, and Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU).

Over the past five years, Kean has embarked on an intentional shift to strengthen its research profile—particularly emphasizing interdisciplinary and community-engaged inquiry. [In 2021](#), the State of New Jersey designated Kean as its first Urban Research University, recognizing Kean's increasing role in conducting research and generating solutions to issues in urban communities statewide.

Kean's recent institutional focus on research as a mission-level activity is highly complementary to its educational and service missions. Kean has enjoyed a steadily growing national and international profile over this period, including growing recognition of its research activities. Kean has made significant investments in faculty recruitment to enhance research activity. For example, more than half (54%) of Kean's full-time faculty have joined the institution since 2021, many bringing active research programs and aspirations, as well as experience with and an appetite for sponsored projects. The above achievements have signaled Kean's commitment to contribute meaningfully to urban and global innovation.

[In February 2025](#), Kean achieved the Carnegie Classification of R2: Doctoral Universities – High Research Activity, recognizing the university's significant research activities. From 2021 to 2025, awards made to Kean increased from 39 to 59 for a total of over \$13M. This work allowed Kean to meet the R2 threshold of over \$10 million in research expenditures (Kean's HERD reported total = \$10.062M) while awarding 26 doctoral degrees in FY 2023.

In addition, in October 2025, Kean signed a merger agreement with New Jersey City University, which will add faculty and require adjustments to staffing and processes in grant operations. The rapid growth of Kean's research identity, current scale, and level of ambition in research make this an ideal time to assess the organizational infrastructure that supports and enhances these grant operations now and in the years to come.



## Summary of Strengths

- Strong commitment from the higher administration to support research growth.
- Rapid growth in research activity, which recently culminated in an R2 - doctoral level university: high research activity classification.
- Research is integrated throughout the six Core Values of the University's *Elevate 2030* Strategic Plan (Academic Excellence, Equity, Inclusivity, Wellness, Social Mobility, and Public Impact).
- Research-active faculty.
- Dedicated research administrative staff.
- Growing interdisciplinary and global collaborations.

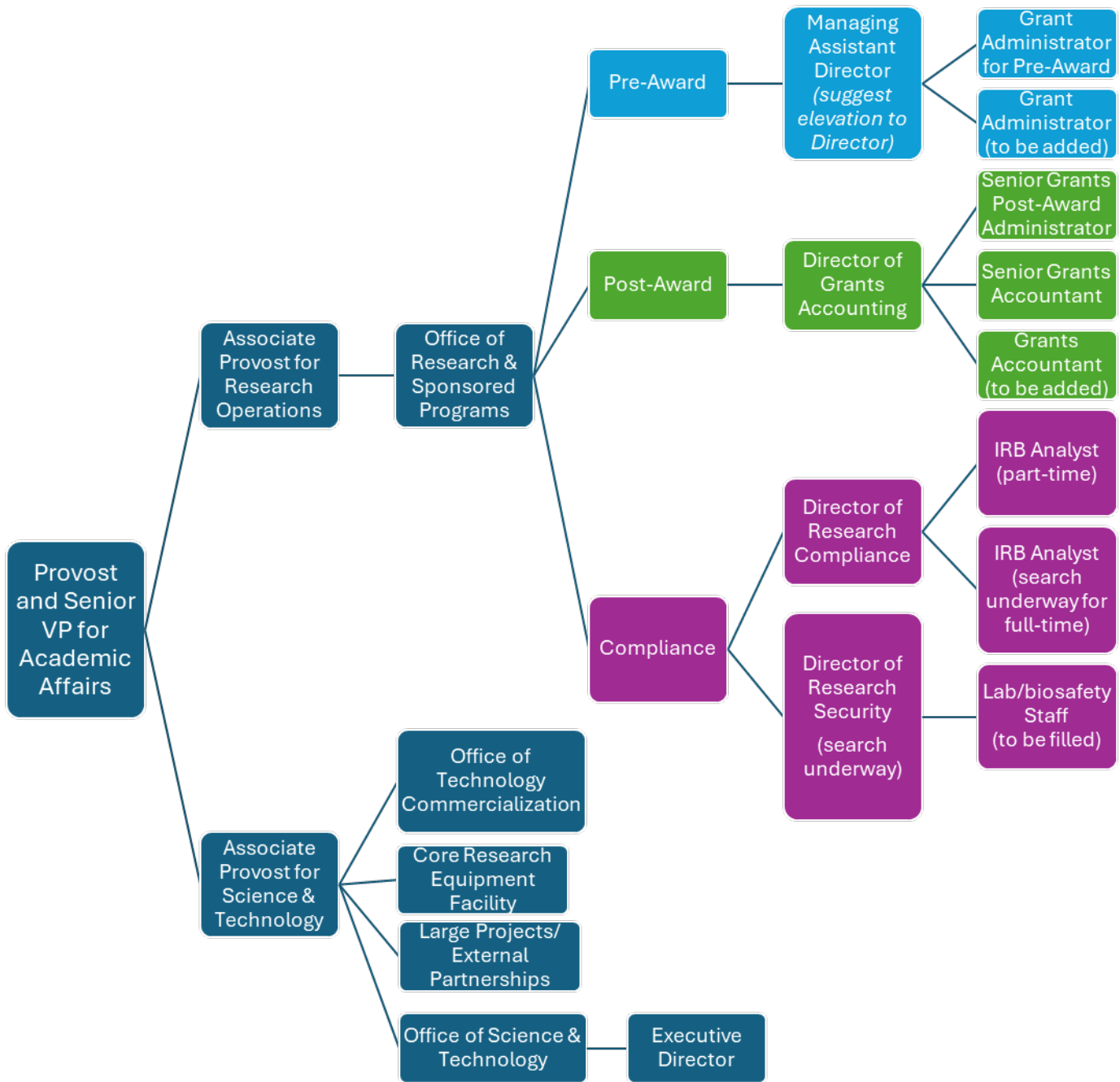
## Summary of Challenges

- Vacancy in high-level leadership for ORSP.
- Bifurcated institutional culture (research-focused vs. education/teaching-focused).
- Ambiguity regarding roles and responsibilities among offices supporting research and disconnects in communication.
- The University's budget model does not adequately recognize its R2 status.
  - Overextended faculty risks burnout due to
    - high teaching (4:4) and advising loads
  - Insufficient release time and research support
  - Inadequate laboratory and research space
  - Infrastructure, systems, and staffing lag behind current research activity
    - creates operational bottlenecks
  - Generates compliance risks
- Fragmented administrative communication among ORSP, OST, Post-Award, HR, Finance, and IT.
- Integration of NJCU faculty, staff, and research functions is unclear.
- Absence of a clear messaging strategic plan for research among campus-wide administrative and operational levels of grants operations.



## Recommendations

Figure 1. Suggested Revised Organizational Structure for Kean Grant and Science and Technology Operations



### Suggested Revised Organizational Structure for Kean’s Grants Operations

With the loss of the last executive leader for ORSP, the organizational structure has been one adopted out of necessity, but not one that is ideal for best operational practices at Kean. As **Figure 1** suggests, with the hiring of a new Associate Provost for Research Operations (who will be fully enabled to instate prioritized changes, new policies, and procedures at Kean), M&Q suggests a clear separation of OST oversight and OSRP oversight.

M&Q suggests that ORSP maintain its structure with three main pillars of effort (Pre-Award, Post-Award, and Compliance, and the Directors who manage those offices). Currently, the Pre-Award Office is successfully carrying out required

activities that include prospecting for funding opportunities, budget development, research administration support for applications (ensuring application compliance), acting as authorized institutional submitters, and receiving and communicating award notices. M& Q suggest that staffing is needed in this office (see the appropriate section below) and that the Pre-Award office should also prioritize effort for:

- strategic research development (at the institutional and individual PI level),
- managing aspects of Post-Award non-financial administration,
- serving as a liaison for faculty with the Post-Award office,
- assisting with required funder reporting, and
- providing more training/outreach to faculty and staff.

The Post-Award Office currently reviews and accepts awards, holds kick-off meetings with PIs, sets up accounts, manages budgets in the Ellucian system, and provides needed financial reports. Kean and the Post-Award office need:

- to improve processes or additional staffing (see the appropriate section below) to allow more efficient tracking of spending and preparation of monthly statements that PIs can use to track spending.

The Office of Research Integrity, Security, and Compliance (Compliance) has clear plans and processes in place to manage appropriate areas of risk for Kean; however, the office is understaffed. Importantly, staff hired for this office need to have the appropriate level of technical knowledge or expertise/experience to ensure that Kean is adequately protected by their efforts.

With respect to OST, M&Q suggests that the office's responsibilities be streamlined to include management of:

- the Office of Technology Transfer,
- development and management of large research projects,
- management of Kean's external partnerships (national and internal), and
- Kean's Core Research Equipment Facility (CREF).

Limiting the office's efforts to technology and collaborative partnership management should enhance its ability to continue to produce results such as the Brazil SENAI partnership. It may be that responsibilities removed from this office (e.g., oversight of the McNair program, etc.) could be moved to ORSP (when appropriate staff additions have been made). Detailed challenges and recommendations for OST are provided in the appropriate section below.

## High-Level Recommendations

Kean's next phase requires balancing its research and educational missions while professionalizing its research administration and grants operations.

- Hire permanent executive leadership for ORSP in a timely manner.
- Due to the pivotal role that this position will play in sustaining and strategically leading Kean's growth in research activity, it is not clear why the status of the position was changed from Vice President to Associate Provost for Research Operations.
- Kean needs to ensure that the position has the credentials, experience, and authority to carry out necessary changes in policies and procedures to more efficiently manage Kean's grant operations. The new executive leader for Research Operations will need:
  - the credentials and demonstrated success in research endeavors (securing funding) to be respected by the faculty,
  - the support of higher administrators and administrators in support offices to make changes in policies and processes at the institution that are currently barriers to sustaining research levels and/or growth.
  - secure standing/authority to call standing or ad hoc meetings with grant operations stakeholders, including higher administrators and stakeholders throughout the Kean community.
- Align understanding and expectations for Kean's research endeavors of high-level and mid-level administrators, and the entire campus community.



- In collaboration with the new Associate Provost for Research Operations and appropriate other high-level stakeholders, such as the Executive Vice President for Academic and Administrative Operations, develop and implement a clear university-wide research strategic plan that articulates priorities, resources, and metrics for sustaining R2 status.
- More clearly define research administration roles and responsibilities to enhance efficiency.
- Modify Kean’s budget model to support its current R2 status and future plans for research.
  - Make short- and long-term plans to align faculty workload and compensation with research expectations.
  - Expand laboratory and research space, with central transparent oversight of space allocation.
  - Strengthen administrative infrastructure supporting research, particularly systems and staffing in Pre-Award, Post-Award, Compliance, and IT support.
- Create clear policies for the establishment and oversight of research centers and institutes.
- Establish a high-level Research Operations Steering Committee that meets regularly to coordinate strategy, communication, and policy alignment among administrative units and relevant grants operations stakeholders.

## Kean University Proposal and Awards Summary

Kean’s faculty and staff PIs, and especially the ORSP staff, are to be commended for outstanding achievement in securing external funding over recent years. As shown in **Table 1**, Kean’s number of awards has risen significantly from FY22 through FY24. The number of dollars requested, and the dollars awarded showed a similar significant increase over this time period. Kean’s FY is defined as July 1 – June 30 each year, therefore, the data for 2025 indicates that a significant rate of growth in submissions continues in the current FY. A detailed breakdown of the funding handled by Kean’s ORSP in FY22-FY25 is presented in Appendix B.

**Table 1. Summary of Recent Kean Submissions and Funding**

Funding Period	# ORSP Submitted Applications*	Dollars Submitted	# Grants Awarded	Dollars Awarded
FY22	32	\$9.6M	32	\$10.1M
FY23	56*	\$32.8M	41	\$14.5M
FY24	80	\$33.9M	83	\$19M
FY25	95	\$23.3M	59	\$13M
FY26 YTD	58	\$5.3M	17	\$5.0

\*Excludes \$45 million NJ OSHE construction and equipment grant. Kean FY: July 1 – June 30 each year. Data provided by Kean’s ORSP as of November 4, 2025.

ORSP data indicate that Kean’s significant growth in securing awards has been fueled by increases in the number of applications by unique PIs each FY (from 24 to 75 over FY22-25) and diversification in Kean’s funding portfolio (that is, an increase in applications/awards to unique agencies; see Appendix B for details). An analysis of Kean’s funding portfolio is presented in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Distribution of Kean Grant Applications Submitted by Funding Type**

Funding Period	Private	NJ State & County	NIH	NSF	Federal excl. NIH & NSF
FY22	9%	22%	22%	16%	31%
FY23	11%	27%	7%	29%	27%
FY24	23%	15%	6%	24%	33%
FY25	35%	19%	10%	22%	14%
FY26 YTD	43%	16%	5%	21%	16%

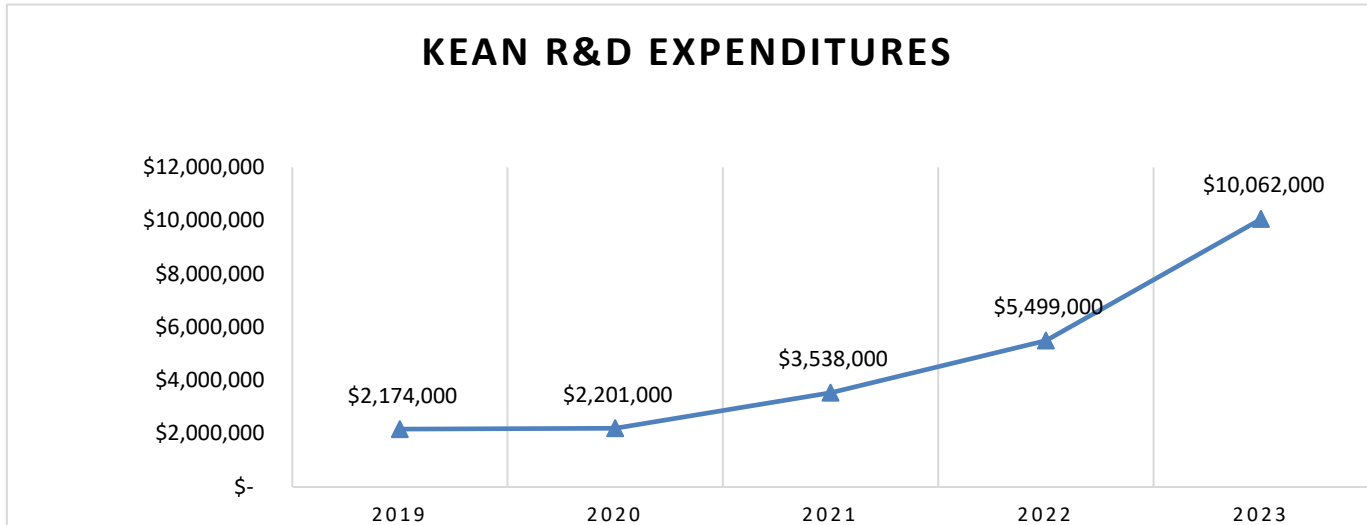
Data provided by Kean’s ORSP as of November 4, 2025.



Of note, **Table 2** shows that submissions to private sources have increased significantly from FY22-24. Not surprisingly, the largest percentages of applications were submitted to NSF, the State of NJ, and the county. Submissions to NIH have fallen since FY22 and could be explored as an opportunity for more strategically matching the urban translational goals of Kean’s mission with funding opportunities.

## Research Expenditure Comparison to Comparable and Aspirant Institutions

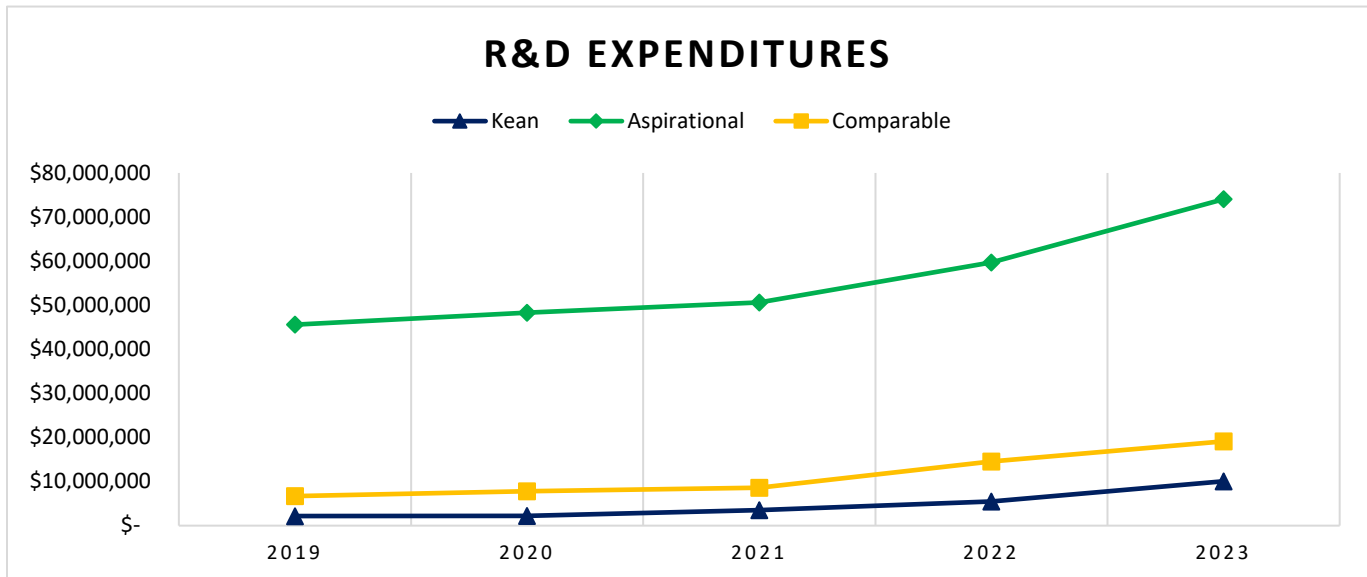
Figure 2. Kean Reported HERD Funding 2019-2023



Kean achieved the Carnegie Classification of R2: Doctoral Universities – High Research Activity, recognizing the university’s significant research activities. From 2021 to 2025, awards made to Kean increased from 39 to 59 for a total of over \$13M. This work allowed Kean to meet the R2 threshold of over \$10 million in research expenditures (Kean’s HERD reported total = \$10.062M) while awarding 26 doctoral degrees in FY 2023.

To place Kean’s research endeavors in a broader context, a summary of the institution’s total research and development (R&D) expenditures versus comparable and aspirant institutions is provided in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**.

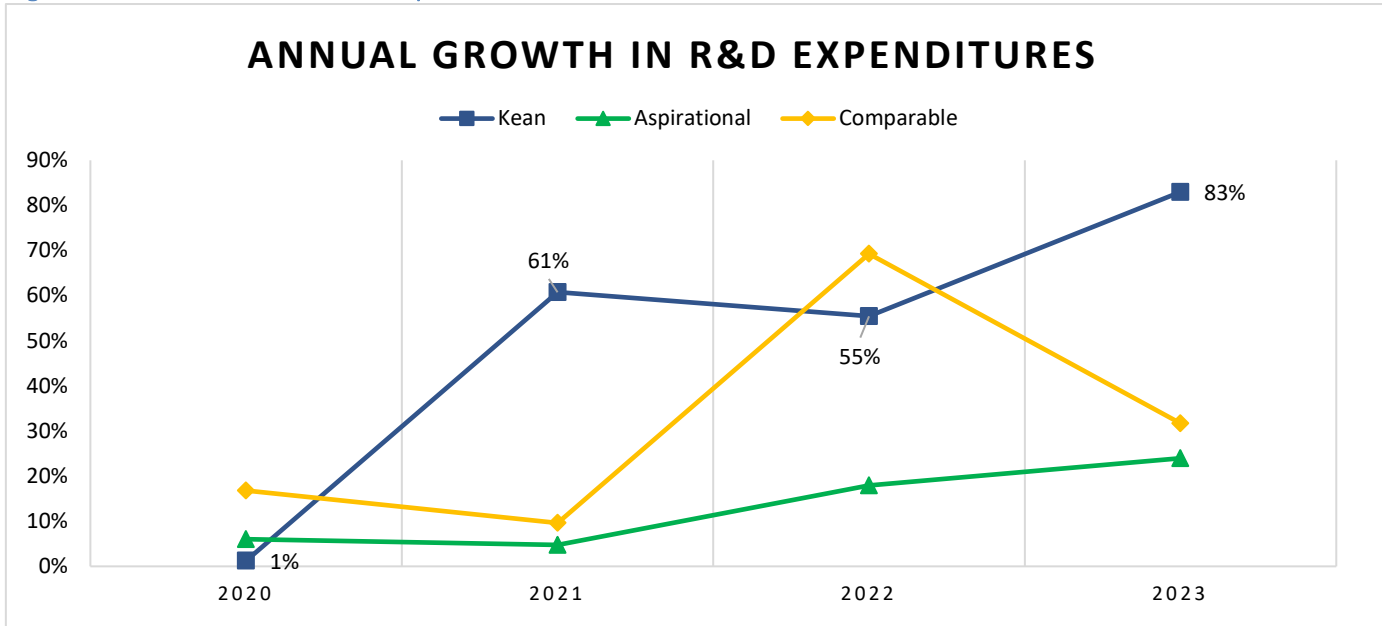
Figure 3. Comparison of Kean’s HERD Research Expenditure vs. Average of Peers



As the graph in **Figure 3** shows, Kean’s rapid and significant growth to R2 classification (Doctoral University: High Research Activity) is indicated by the dark blue line and the higher than \$10M in HERD reported expenditures in 2023.



Figure 4. Annual Growth in R&D Expenditures



The graph in **Figure 4** shows annual growth in R&D expenditures. Kean’s growth rate has far exceeded that of the average of comparable and aspirational institutions.

Detail on the NSF HERD expenditures of Kean’s comparable and aspirant institutions is presented in **Table 3**.

Peer Group & Institution Name	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Kean U.</b>	\$2.2M	\$2.2M	\$3.5M	\$5.5M	\$10.1M
<b>Comparable (average)</b>	\$6.7M	\$7.8M	\$8.6M	\$14.5M	\$19.1M
Hofstra U.	\$1.7M	\$1.4M	\$5.5M	\$6.9M	\$8.2M
Montclair State U.	\$15.6M	\$17.6M	\$17.4M	\$32.2M	\$38.2M
Towson U.	\$3.4M	\$3.6M	\$3.8M	\$8.8M	\$17.2M
U. San Diego	\$6.0M	\$8.6M	\$7.6M	\$10.1M	\$12.9M
<b>Aspirational (average)</b>	\$45.6M	\$48.3M	\$50.6M	\$59.7M	\$74.0M
Morgan State U.	\$13.3M	\$17.2M	\$20.6M	\$29.5M	\$43.9M
New Mexico State U.	\$101.5M	\$107.3M	\$110.6M	\$121.5M	\$126.3M
North Carolina A&T State U.	\$37.3M	\$36.2M	\$40.8M	\$47.9M	\$62.3M
Nova Southeastern U.	\$24.6M	\$26.0M	\$24.5M	\$31.2M	\$50.2M
Rowan U.	\$22.9M	\$26.0M	\$26.5M	\$29.9M	\$47.8M
Rutgers, State U. New Jersey, Newark	\$26.7M	\$28.0M	\$23.9M	\$28.3M	\$29.8M
San Diego State U.	\$93.0M	\$97.7M	\$107.7M	\$129.8M	\$158.0M

The detailed analysis shows that among the four comparable institutions (Hofstra University, Montclair State University, Towson University, University of San Diego), Kean’s expenditures were higher than Hofstra University’s in 2019, 2020, and 2023. Kean’s expenditures were roughly equivalent to Towson University’s (\$3.5M and \$3.8M, respectively) in 2021. In 2023, expenditures at three comparable institutions (Montclair State University, Towson University, and University of San Diego) range from ~\$13M-\$38M compared to Kean’s \$10.1M. These data suggest that there is clear potential for further success in Kean securing external funding and increasing research expenditures if further growth can be adequately supported (see staffing discussion below in this section and in the previous **Suggested Revised Organizational Structure for Kean’s Grants Operations** section in this report).

Examination of seven aspirant institutions (Morgan State University, New Mexico State University, North Carolina A&T State University, Nova Southeastern University, Rowan University, Rutgers University Newark, San Diego State University) indicates that Kean is closest in expenditures to Morgan State and Rutgers University Newark, but both report double to triple the research expenditures of Kean. Strikingly, Rutgers University Newark’s research expenditures have stayed

relatively flat over 2019-2023, while Kean's have grown significantly. Kean's administration needs to set clear goals for maintaining its new Carnegie classification (R2 - doctoral level university: high research activity) in the short term and for attaining levels of research activity (expenditures) that elevate its standing among its comparable and aspirant peer groups.

## Staffing Comparison at Kean vs. Comparable and Aspirant Institutions

M&Q carried out a comparison of staffing in grant operations at Kean's comparable and aspirant institutions. Table 4 presents a summary of the number of Directors, Pre-Award, and Post-Award staff as gleaned from publicly available information.

With respect to the group of comparable institutions, Kean's number of Pre-Award staff is below comparable institutions (1 vs. 2-4). Of note, Kean's staffing in Pre-Award is below the two institutions that report research expenditures in the same order of magnitude as Kean's (Hofstra U. and U. San Diego). Post-Award staffing at Kean is similar to comparable peers. With respect to aspirant institutions, staffing at Kean in both Pre-Award and Post-Award is significantly lower. This analysis of comparable and aspirant staffing levels indicates that Kean could/should increase ORSP support positions to stabilize grants operations in the short term and ensure growth in the long term.

Institution	# Sponsored Programs Director	# of Pre-Award Staff	# of Post-Award Staff
Kean U.	1	1 (plus Grad Student Assistance)	3
<b>Comparable</b>			
Hofstra U.	2 (1 Pre-Award and 1 Post-Award)	2	1
Montclair State U.	1	4	3
Towson U.	2 (1 Pre-Award and 1 Post-Award)	4	4
U. San Diego	1	2	2
<b>Aspirational</b>			
Morgan State U.	1	6	4
New Mexico State U.	1	g <sup>b</sup>	
North Carolina A&T State U	2 (1 Pre-Award, and 1-Contracts & Grants)	4 <sup>c</sup>	4 <sup>d</sup>
Nova Southeastern U.	3 (1 Pre-Award, 1 Post-Award, and 1 Contract & Grants Accounting)	7	5 <sup>e</sup>
Rowan University	2 (1 Pre-Award and 1 Post-Award)	2	2
Rutgers University-Newark	none	4	1
San Diego State U.	2 (1 Engineering & Physical Sciences and 1 Health Sciences)	2	Info unavailable

<sup>a</sup>Data gathered from publicly available sources & excludes VP and AVP level executives.

<sup>b</sup>Available data does not differentiate Pre-Award vs. Post-Award staff.

<sup>c</sup>Five positions are listed as vacant in the NCA&T Sponsored Programs Office

<sup>d</sup>Four Grant Accountant positions are vacant in the Contracts and Grants Office.

<sup>e</sup>One Contract Manager in Pre-Award and four Grants Accountants in the Office of Contract and Grants Accounting.



## Pre-Award Operations

### Pre-Award Roles and Responsibilities

Kean's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) is the central institutional unit overseeing both non-financial and financial award management. The three pillars of ORSP support are Pre-Award research administration, Post-Award non-financial and financial research administration, and Compliance oversight (i.e., the Office of Research Integrity, Security, and Compliance). Kean's Pre-Award office is responsible for proposal development, submission, and Pre-Award-related compliance. Since the exit of the most recent Vice President for Research, Dr. Sue Porterfield, a few months prior to this assessment, oversight for grant operations at Kean has been provided by the Interim VP for Research, Dr. Keith Bostian. Dr. Bostian concurrently serves as Associate Provost for Science and Technology, CEO of the Institute for Life Science Entrepreneurship (ILSE), and Acting CEO of Kathera Bioscience. The search for a new grants operation executive leadership has been initiated with the approval of a job description for an Associate Provost for Research Operations.

The ORSP Pre-Award office is led by Sherrie Calish, Managing Assistant Director of Pre-Award Services (although her title on the OSRP website reads "Director, Pre-Award Services"), and is supported by Barbara Gallo-Compton, Grant Pre-Award Administrator. Two Graduate Assistants support the Office of Pre-Award (and Research, Integrity, Security, and Compliance). They provide 15 hours/week of work (for 15 weeks each fall, 15 weeks each spring, and 10 weeks in summer). The Graduate Assistants are funded through a grant that will end on December 31, 2025.

### Current Pre-Award Policies and Procedures

ORSP Pre-Award service initiates with prospecting for and providing faculty/staff with information on funding opportunities. The Managing Assistant Director and Grant Pre-Award Administrator manage funding prospecting through the use of GrantForward (a subscription database) and via information provided by Hanover Research. The application process begins with the submission of a Pre-Award Screening Form (which is readily available on the ORSP website). ORSP staff meet with the faculty or staff member serving as Principal Investigator (PI) to review sponsor guidelines, develop budgets, and establish internal deadlines. ORSP staff draft and review budgets, budget justifications, and administrative and compliance documents. The Managing Assistant Director and/or Grant Administrator for Pre-Award review docs, including the project description, for compliance with funding announcements. The Managing Assistant Director of Pre-Award Services holds Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) status for electronic submissions. ORSP staff collaborate extensively with the Kean University Foundation on proposal submissions. Applications are processed through a workflow that is similar to that just described, including narrative review and compliance checks.

When an award is made, the Managing Assistant Director communicates the award via email to the Post-Award Office, with select announcements shared with University Relations for broad distribution. ORSP staff (most often the Grant Administrator or Graduate Assistants) enter application submission data in an Excel spreadsheet. Submission information is also entered into the Cayuse Research Administration & Compliance software system.

ORSP Pre-Award staff communicate and perform outreach using a number of different mechanisms. Hanover Research provides weekly funding opportunity digests, which are reviewed by either the Managing Assistant Director or the Grant Administrator for Pre-Award. The weekly Hanover Research funding digests are distributed to faculty, while select funding opportunities are posted on the ORSP website.

The Pre-Award staff communicates procedures and policies via a well-organized [webpage](#). Relevant policies, guidelines, and forms are linked on this page, as are the other units in ORSP (Post-Award and Research Integrity, Security, and Compliance).

The Pre-Award office provides training materials and recorded workshops for faculty on subjects that include grant writing and agency policies.



ORSP issued a newsletter highlighting faculty research in early 2025 and will do so again in November 2025. This effort is led by the Managing Assistant Director for Pre-Award and the Director of Compliance. Also in the past, ORSP was commonly invited to present at new faculty orientation; however, this activity was paused in 2025.

## Faculty Pre-Award Experiences

Faculty greatly value Pre-Award's support in proposal submission, especially the high-level expertise in budget development and their compliance review of applications. While faculty value the Pre-Award staff's review of documents for compliance, they are unclear when they can ask for more assistance or if writing assistance is available. Many faculty continue to prepare narrative sections independently due to limited staff capacity. Most probably due to the low Pre-Award staffing relative to the rapid growth of Kean's research-active faculty, some researchers requested more training on prospecting or more dedicated prospecting in Pre-Award. The Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research has internal staff who provide research administrative support and maintain positive coordination with ORSP.

## Challenges

While the Pre-Award staff are routinely praised by collaborating offices and faculty for their assistance, the staff have been forced to provide service in a highly reactive manner and pressurized atmosphere as Kean has rapidly increased research activity. The lack of a permanent high-level research operations administrator has led to a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities in grant operations. In addition, the small number of Pre-award staff in light of Kean's rapid growth in research activity has led to a number of challenges, including:

- insufficient time for Pre-Award staff training, policy, and process development,
- staff conduct overlapping roles (lack of delineated roles and responsibilities within the office),
- minimal time for strategic research development, and
- reduced time for effort spent on faculty training and outreach.

Other challenges include:

- weak communication with higher administrators and with collaborating stakeholders in grants operations (Post-Award, Finance, OST, etc.),
- minimal/inefficient use of Cayuse for routing and tracking of applications, and
- lack of dedicated staff to manage Post-Award processes to enhance project implementation and interactions with the formal Post-Award office.

## Recommendations

To meet the short-term goal of better supporting research activity at an R2 level and the long-term goal of supporting future growth, M&Q makes the following recommendations for the Pre-Award Office:

- Elevate/promote the Managing Assistant Director for Pre-Award Services to Director of Pre-Award Services based on the expertise, experience, and responsibilities being carried out.
  - This change is in line with both comparable and aspirant institutions (see Appendix B) and better reflects Kean's commitment to its research mission.
- Add a staff member to the Pre-Award office to serve as an additional Grant Administrator.
  - The new Grant Administrator should carry out duties focused on both Pre-Award services and Post-Award grant management (that is, non-financial grant management such as reporting budget status check-ins, and compliance).
  - The job description for a new Grant Administrator could/should describe a 50:50 split of Pre-Award and Post-Award administrative activities.
  - Alternatively, Kean's ORSP could formally split this new Grant Administrator position between the Pre-Award and Post-Award offices for a period of time (suggested 1 year), but both offices will need full FTEs



- as Kean's research activity continues to grow. If shared, the position will need to have grants accounting expertise.
- Note: The NJCU Interim Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs was interviewed for this assessment, and this NJCU staff member does NOT have the expertise or experience (that is, Post-award management skills) needed to complement Kean staff.
  - As much as possible, define distinct roles and responsibilities for the Managing Assistant Director of Pre-Award Services (recommended to be Director of Pre-Award Services), Grant Administrator for Pre-Award, and (future) Grant Administrator.
  - The new Grant Administrator should meet regularly with Post-Award office staff and help establish standard protocols for smooth implementation of awards.
  - The new Associate Provost for Research Operations should institute a high-level Research Operations Steering Committee that meets regularly (quarterly, once/semester?) to discuss strategic grant priorities, grant processes, communication, grants in the queue, etc.
  - This Research Operations Steering Committee could/should include the Provost, other high-level administrators, selected office directors, deans, department chairs, and grants operations personnel.
    - A major goal of this committee's work would be to bring all levels of Kean's grants administration and grants operations stakeholders on the same page with respect to Kean's vision for sustaining and then growing its external funding portfolio.
    - The committee would discuss strategic institutional grant priorities, grant processes and policies, space planning, facilities, communication, grants in the queue, etc.
  - Pre-Award should fully implement Cayuse for proposal tracking, routing, and management to enhance the efficiency of Pre-Award processes.
    - Make use of Cayuse representative-provided training to implement the systematic integration of Cayuse in grant management at Kean.
    - Some training from Cayuse representatives is available at no charge, but if this option has been exhausted, representative-compensated training is a reasonable cost to pay to greatly enhance efficiency in Pre-Award. In addition, the enhanced use of this system will most likely free up/reduce strain on existing staff.
  - Consider adding internal grant writing capacity (especially for complex proposals) in the form of an additional half-time staff or faculty member.
  - Support dedicated time for internal and external professional development for Pre-Award and all ORSP staff.
    - Support attendance at professional society conferences and training, such as those offered by NCURA, for all ORSP staff.
  - Enhance Pre-Award's strategic research development by creating an internal annual calendar of recurring funding opportunities and high-priority opportunities, and carry out outreach to faculty on these opportunities.
  - Reinstate ORSP faculty outreach and training by:
    - Distributing periodic newsletters, giving departmental presentations, and participating in the new faculty orientation to introduce ORSP services.
    - Creating and providing holistic training on sponsored programs services (Pre-Award and Post-Award) to enhance the success in securing and implementing awards.



## Post-Award Operations

### Post-Award Roles and Responsibilities

The Post-Award office within ORSP is led by Mirela Boariu, Director of Grants Accounting and Post-Award. Post-Award staff includes Marissa McYeng, Senior Grants Post-Award Administrator, and Marriam Saleem, Senior Grants Accountant. The Post-Award office is responsible for Kean's non-financial and financial grant management activities from award, to budget management, to post-award compliance monitoring (see below).

### Current Post-Award Policies and Procedures

The Director of Grants Accounting oversees all financial administration in the office, trains Post-Award staff, and coordinates with the VP for Research on policies. The Director of Grants Accounting receives the award notice via email from the Director of Pre-Award Services and passes the notification to the Senior Grants Post-Award Administrator, who reviews terms and conditions (and carries out award negotiation if necessary), accepts the award, and completes an award kick-off form for use as a checklist for communicating with the PI at an in-person meeting. Next, the Senior Grants Accountant reviews the award budget and sets up the account in the Ellucian Grant Project Accounting module. At this point, the PI can start spending funds. The Senior Grants Accountant also manages quarterly project budget reconciliations, cost transfers, recharge center creation, and indirect cost application.

The Post-Award staff plays a role in oversight and management of procurement using external funds. Such procurement is handled through Ellucian Spend Management (ESM), with PI approval at the first level, and the Senior Grants Post-Award Administrator serves as the second-level reviewer for allowability and fund availability. The Senior Grants Accountant also oversees financial reporting on grant accounts to funding agencies.

Post-Award staff communicate with Pre-Award via email and sometimes via phone. For communication with faculty, the Post-Award office responds in a timely manner to email inquiries and phone calls. Monthly account review meetings are held with the most grant-active faculty. Automated reminders (at 30, 60, and 90 days before the due date) are issued to all PIs for reporting and closeout deadlines. Additional multiple faculty-focused resources are housed in the online [Post-Award Faculty Tool Box](#).

### Faculty Post-Award Experiences

Kean faculty consistently praised the knowledge and dedication of the individual Post-Award staff members, but are frustrated by repeated challenges with assessing grant balances, and barriers in purchasing and procurement (including delays, system errors, and lack of transparency).

Faculty have difficulty accessing accurate real-time data from both the legacy Ellucian system and Ellucian SAS platform. They have little to no assistance translating monthly budget report categories (when they can get them) into budgets that match the submitted/approved award budget. This type of budget reconciliation is usually done by the Post-Award office, but this office at Kean does not have the capacity to meet current needs. In addition, there are challenges with the office's ability to gather accurate grant accounting data (see Challenge below).

Many faculty maintain parallel "shadow" accounting to track project balances, and this effort contributes to an overall concern that they are responsible for too much post-award management. Faculty report significant delays and even barriers to procurement/spending grant funds. Purchase orders have not been processed due to errors in the accounting carried out by the Grant Project Account module. Unsuccessful attempts have been made to correct the error in the module, which has been double-subtracting expenditures and reporting to the PI that they have no money to spend. Successful faculty may be scaling back on grant writing as awards are too burdensome to manage; therefore, these implementation issues must be addressed as a priority for Kean to maintain its current level of research activity and for future growth.



## Challenges

The Post-Award office is well organized, but the rapid growth in Kean's research activity has created challenges for this office's role in implementing projects. These challenges include:

- Limited staff capacity.
  - Kean's level of research activity has outgrown the service that this office can provide.
  - Additional effort is needed for Post-award administration and grants accounting to ensure that accurate and efficient grant management is conducted and that all PIs receive assistance in translating monthly grants accounting statements.
- Weak cross-office/university communication.
  - Due to a lack of time/capacity in this office and the same situation in Pre-Award, there is poor communication between the offices. The lack of a Post-Award-focused position in Pre-Award also hinders easy communication between these two offices.
  - The Post-Award office also lacks capacity to conduct campus outreach and training on Post-Award compliance. This training could be done jointly with Pre-Award as suggested above.
- The malfunctioning Ellucian Grant Project Accounting module represents a critical compliance and financial risk.
  - Reportedly, this error is being addressed, but efforts to correct it have failed.
  - Inaccurate reporting of grant balances to PIs is a significant risk to the institution, as such reporting can lead to overspending (leading to payback) or to underspending of grant funds (leading to the requirement to repay the funder)
  - These risks also include potential audit findings, disallowed costs, and damage to Kean's reputation with federal funders.
- IT support has not prioritized research-related system fixes.
  - Forms and processes that could improve the efficiency of Post-Award processes have not been addressed with any urgency by IT due to a reported failure to understand that research supports the mission of the university to serve students.
- Reconciling three data systems (the legacy Ellucian system, the Ellucian SAS system, and PREM) increases accounting effort and the risk of error and makes it impossible for PIs to accurately assess their spending.
- Weak understanding across campus of Post-Award compliance requirements.
  - PIs may be overwhelmed with teaching, service, and research effort, and researchers often fail to respond to Post-Award requests for compliance (for example, effort reporting requests) without the imposition of consequences.

## Recommendations

To remove Post-Award barriers and allow for future growth, M&Q recommends:

- Increase Post-Award staffing (a grants accountant or equivalent support).
- Participate in the to be established Research Operations Steering Committee for cross-unit communication.
- Prioritize remediation of Ellucian Grant Project Account issues.
  - The Ellucian issue is not just an IT problem but a core business continuity and compliance risk for the entire research enterprise.
- Strengthen communication and coordination between Pre-Award, Post-Award, and Compliance.
- Enhance campus education on compliance and fiscal accountability.
- Develop standardized reports to give faculty real-time budget visibility.
- Add Strategic Analytics (and possibly HR) to 30-, 60-, 90-day or close-out notices to enhance PI's ability to get necessary data in a timely manner.



## Office of Research Integrity, Security, And Compliance

### Compliance Roles and Responsibilities

The Office of Research Integrity, Security, and Compliance (Compliance) at Kean is led by Nate Rigel, Director of Research Compliance. The Director oversees aspects of institutional compliance that include human subjects research, research integrity, conflict-of-interest management, lab and biosafety, and export controls. This includes research compliance policy development and management.

The office reduced its staffing by two during summer–fall 2025. Since the summer, there have been no additional FTEs on the compliance team; a part-time Institutional Review Board (IRB) analyst has been in place since early September. A search is currently underway for a full-time staff member. These staffing shortfalls have significantly limited the operational capacity of Kean’s research compliance function. A search is currently underway for a full-time IRB analyst. A new Director of Research Security position has been approved, but not yet posted, and is expected to report directly to the Director of Research Compliance. This new role will manage institutional obligations under federal research security requirements and coordinate efforts related to conflicts of interest (COI/FCOI) and research integrity. An additional FTE on the compliance team is vacant and is intended to address pressing needs in lab/biosafety.

The Director maintains active memberships in both NCURA and SRA International, ensuring access to national professional development and best-practice resources. The Director also secured Kean’s membership in COGR’s emerging research institution pilot program, providing him access to national experts in research administration. Future staff are expected to participate in external training programs to maintain currency with evolving federal requirements. As described above, the office shares two Graduate Assistants with Pre-Award. In collaboration with his counterparts at Montclair State University and New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), the Director has formed NJ-RISC, which is intended to become a statewide community of practice for research security and compliance.

### Compliance Current Procedures and Policies

Research compliance training for faculty, staff, and students is efficiently delivered through the CITI Program, with modules covering human subjects protection, laboratory safety, export control, and responsible conduct of research. The Director partnered with the Center for Teaching Excellence to launch NSF’s free online research security curriculum through Canvas, Kean’s learning management system (LMS). This will reduce costs and improve accessibility to the Kean research community. The Director of Research Compliance tracks all training completions and renewal dates.

The University fully utilizes Cayuse Human Ethics for processing IRB submissions. The system has significantly improved efficiency and user satisfaction by reducing time-to-decision and enabling the tracking and reporting of previously undocumented activities. The system will also facilitate internal audits in support of a program quality improvement.

Efforts are underway to implement electronic systems (i.e., SciShield) for laboratory chemical and biosafety management, mirroring the improvements achieved with the IRB system.

Kean’s Export Control Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2025, established a cross-functional Export Control Working Group. Implementation of electronic workflows within Cayuse is a current priority and will require dedicated support from IT to fulfill. New policies on Financial Conflicts of Interest/Commitment, Disclosure of Other Support, Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Program Prohibition were approved by the Board in September 2005, along with a revision to the existing Research Integrity/Academic Misconduct policy. These policies were created in partnership with the Office of General Counsel and were in direct response to looming federal regulatory mandates. Trainings to support these policies will also be housed in Canvas. A revision to Kean’s existing Human Subjects Research policy and a new Biosafety policy will be presented to the Board for approval at their December meeting.



## Challenges

The office is to be commended for managing compliance during the period of rapid growth in research activity at Kean; however, challenges also flow from this growth and the reduction in personnel. In addition, the institution needs to take care not to equate the absence of recent compliance incidents with the absence of risk or fail to give urgency to compliance needs. The foremost challenge for this office arises from the changes in staffing, which have created uncertainty in roles and responsibilities across compliance areas that the office must simultaneously manage oversight of (human-subjects research, biosafety, and research security, etc.), without sufficient specialized staff.

Other challenges include:

- There is limited understanding among faculty regarding required training modules and compliance responsibilities.
- Staffing shortages constrain outreach and training capacity.
- Relationship/ reporting structure to Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) is poorly defined and should be better coordinated to eliminate duplicative efforts, while ensuring appropriate subject matter expertise is in place.
- The University's compliance oversight of ILSE (the on-campus incubator/accelerator) remains undefined.
  - The prior master use and facility agreement expired in December 2024, and the absence of a renewed agreement complicates the delineation of responsibilities.
- The University's relationship with Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) requires more precise definition, particularly regarding oversight, reporting, and export-control obligations.

## Recommendations

- Clarify office structure, roles, and responsibilities.
  - Finalize and communicate a structure that clearly defines the responsibilities of the Director of Research Compliance, the forthcoming Director of Research Security, and related functional areas (biosafety, IRB, export control).
- Develop expectations for consistent communication between colleges/departments and Compliance team.
- Restore and strengthen staffing.
  - Add professional personnel—via external hires or potentially through internal reassignment—with appropriate credentials and/or expertise or experience with compliance functions.
- Participate in the to be established Research Operations Steering Committee for cross-unit communication.
- Enhance communication and outreach.
  - Develop concise guidance materials and orientation sessions for faculty and staff outlining mandatory compliance training and reporting expectations.
- Implement additional Cayuse training and provide refresher workshops for compliance.
- Define and implement oversight of ILSE.
  - Confirm whether a formal agreement between the University and ILSE is currently in effect. If not, develop and execute a revised facility and compliance agreement clarifying roles, reporting lines, and University oversight obligations. Ensure that the Vice President, General Counsel, and Chief of Staff participate in this process.



## Additional Faculty Comments on Grant Operations

As described above, Kean faculty were positive in their comments concerning Pre-Award services, positive with respect to the staff in Post-Award and Compliance, but critical of Post-Award processes when implementing projects. Additional comments expressed by the faculty on subjects that affected their ability to successfully carry out research at Kean are presented below.

A significant issue is the general preparedness of Kean to carry out R2-style research, as viewed by federal funders. In a review of a federal grant, a critique stated that Kean is not an appropriate institution to carry out the research proposed. This critique was tied to the unavailability of lab space for the PI/project and illustrates the need for Kean's administration to more strategically plan and use space to support research-active faculty who are seeking external funding. A related challenge for faculty is the aging facilities (e.g., electrical, HVAC) at Kean. To maintain R2 status, Kean must prioritize infrastructure support in all ways that overlap with high research activity.

While faculty appreciate the administration's goal for the Release Time for Research (RTR) program, a few concerns were discussed in interviews. They included questions as to the amount of time it takes to carry out the burdensome process of applying and reporting on the 1-year award. Faculty also question how RTR awards are prioritized (for example, full professors receiving awards as opposed to new faculty). To better serve the purpose of freeing researchers to carry out research, the structure of this program should be reconsidered, the process made more transparent, and the Kean administration could reconsider who would best strategically benefit from this support.

Faculty were also concerned that current expectations with respect to research effort might not be realistic in light of teaching and service loads. It is understood that teaching loads have been and are being addressed, but extremely high levels of service (such as advising in certain departments) are a barrier to faculty finding time for research.

## Offices that Collaborate on Grant Operations

### Finance and Office of Treasury Management & Accounting

The Office of Treasury Management & Accounting is led by Joseph Antonowicz (University Treasurer and Controller), who reports to Orley Wainberg (VP for Finance). In the office, Jennifer Strahan serves as Accounts Payable Manager. The Controller manages all university financial operations, including grant operations, and reviews grant project general ledger entries made by Post-Award staff. The office serves as accounts payable and is responsible for drawdowns from funding agencies and preparing year-end and close-out financial reports. When faculty have issues with understanding their account balances and need more assistance than Post-Award can provide, they do contact this office. Faculty report satisfaction with service from this office, but the process for providing grant account status information should be more user-friendly so that faculty do not need to reach all the way to this office for assistance.

### Challenges

- Poor awareness of increased effort/pressure on the office and strategic demands on the office due to vacancy in the CFO position (vacant since July 1, 2025).
- Significant workflow disruptions this year due to the accounting system migration to Ellucian SAS and the adoption of the Grant Project Accounting module (the inaccuracy of this module was discussed above).
- Communication gaps exist between Finance and ORSP Post-Award, leading to delays in fund set-up and drawdowns.
- It is unclear how the merger with NJCU will affect this office with respect to required effort levels and staffing needs.

### Recommendations

- Prioritize stabilization and debugging of the Ellucian Grant Project Accounting module.



- Determine appropriate staffing needs considering the NJCU merger.
- Ensure staff have adequate training in financial management matters pertaining to research.
  - NCURA's General Meeting will be held in NYC in August 2026, which presents a tremendous opportunity for professional development.
- Establish more routine communication (i.e., assign this as a responsibility) and share reporting calendars with Pre-Award to increase efficiency of the reporting process.
- Participate in the to-be-established Research Operations Steering Committee for Research Operations for cross-unit communication when appropriate.

## Office of Science and Technology (OST)

The Office of Science and Technology is led by Dr. Keith Bostian, Associate Provost for Science and Technology. OST's day-to-day activities are under the management of Dr. Marshall Hayes, Executive Director. This office was launched to consolidate research administration functions not captured by the existing ORSP, but the main activities of the OST are to support translational research and Kean's applied innovation ecosystem. The Executive Director's effort is devoted to the oversight of the following Kean functional units:

1. The Kean Diagnostic Lab (KDL). The KDL is a federally certified diagnostic facility that was established during the COVID-19 pandemic and provides technical services to Union County.
  2. The Core Research Equipment Facility (CREF). This centralized facility harnesses all the scientific capabilities and core research instrumentation available to Kean researchers. CREF has a Technical Director and a Managing Director for control of daily activities. The OST Executive Director provides oversight with respect to budgeting and long-term use trajectories.
  3. McNair Scholars Program – the Executive Director provides high-level oversight for Kean's long-funded McNair program. The McNair program has a Director who plays an active role in the direct management of the program.
  4. Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowship (CURF) -  
The mission of CURF is to develop, support, and celebrate faculty-mentored student research and creative projects with the overall aim of enhancing the undergraduate educational experience and preparing students for careers in all areas. CURF provides centralized resources, programs, and support for undergraduate students to engage in faculty-mentored research projects and provides services for highly motivated students interested in fellowships and post-baccalaureate study. CURF also runs Research Days, an annual event that is a celebration of innovation, inquiry, and discovery, bringing together scholars, researchers, students, and industry professionals from a wide range of disciplines. Research Days has grown from just 90 students and faculty participants in 2009 to nearly 1,300 students who registered to present at Research Days 2025.
  5. Mentors in STEM Research Program (MSRP). This program provides adjunct professor appointments for industry partners or retiree mentors and matches these mentors with undergraduates to carry out research projects.
  6. Office of Technology Commercialization – A significant effort provided by the Executive Director is the management of Kean's intellectual property (IP) via the Office of Technology Commercialization. Over the past two years, IP management capability has been built, a library of IP documents assembled (including Kean's IP policy, a disclosure form, etc.), and policies clarified or developed with respect to patenting, innovation, and commercialization at Kean. In the past, the Executive Director has provided faculty, staff, and student entrepreneurs with "IP101" training. Following the collection of IP disclosures by the Executive Director, a review committee, the App for Research, makes the decision on whether to launch into the formal patent application process. A pair of external patent attorneys provides Kean with additional guidance and assistance with filing. Following provisional filing or for the first filing of a non-provisional patent, a review committee is assembled by the AP for Research to review the filing and determine if additional filings should proceed.
- The Executive Director has played and continues to play a significant role in creating a translational mindset on campus and in achieving buy-in from the faculty and students for protecting Kean's IP. In this vein, the Executive Director proactively reaches out to new faculty to inform them of OST support and services.



A final significant OST responsibility is managing Kean's interactions with external partners such as the Institute for Life Science Entrepreneurship (ILSE) and the Brazilian SENAI network for faculty and student exchange. In the process of promoting large-scale transformative partnerships, the Executive Director develops collaborative partnerships, finds funding opportunities, and executes MOAs, to initiate these important projects. With respect to ILSE, the Executive Director essentially functions as Kean's liaison when the university and ILSE collaborate on joint research proposals. Kean's relationship with SENAI in Brazil, which was led by OST, is a relatively new and significant opportunity for international reach collaborations.

## Challenges

OST carries out vital functions that complement those of ORSP and that will promote research growth at Kean; however, challenges exist for this office that include:

- Responsibility for too many unrelated functions (McNair, CREF, Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowship (CURF), external partnerships...).
- Limited staff bandwidth due to the number of staff and widespread responsibilities currently in this office's portfolio.
  - The office is constrained by a lack of bandwidth for educating, training, and assisting in changing the culture on campus with respect to tech transfer and priority of translational research.
- There is a need for clear governance for research centers and institutes.
  - How do centers demonstrate value to Kean's research agenda?

## Recommendations

- Allocate additional OST staff and/or reduce scope of duties.
  - Focusing on large project development and management, external partnership development, and tech transfer would give cohesion to this office's identity.
  - Staff may still need to be added even if the scope of responsibilities for this office is reduced to ensure that faculty/staff outreach and training activities can remain a priority.
- Create an institutional structure for oversight of centers and institutes.
  - Clarify expectations for successful centers and how they are supposed to advance Kean's research mission.
  - Establish the formation, review, and sunseting of centers.
- Participate in the to be established Research Operations Steering Committee for cross-unit communication.

## Office of University Counsel

The Office of University Counsel is led by Kristin Ganley, Vice President and Chief University General Counsel, who manages a staff of four. The VP and Chief University General Counsel is highly supportive of research efforts at Kean, and the office plays a critical supporting role in research compliance policy development. The Chief University Counsel is to be commended for proactively pursuing research compliance training. The Chief University Counsel's collaboration with the Director of Research Compliance has been invaluable in establishing and implementing policies, such as Kean's Export Control Policy. The office and institution are also to be commended for seeking external consultant assistance for developing the complicated Export Control Policy.

Challenges may arise for this office with respect to international research collaborations; however, the only recommendations are:

- continue to collaborate when appropriate on the development of policies and procedures, and
- continue to support required workflows through Cayuse where appropriate.



## Human Resources (HR)

HR is led at the highest administrative level by Joseph Morgan, VP for HR. At the office level, the main interactions with grants operations are led by Gina Kendra, Director of Recruiting, and Mackenzie Carty (Associate Director, Recruiting - Part-time). The Director of Recruiting handles hiring for grant-funded full-time positions, while the Associate Director handles hiring for grant-related part-time positions, including adjunct faculty and student employees.

HR staff have a very positive attitude with respect to supporting grant operations, but report that their office (like others on campus) was unprepared and is understaffed for the large increase in effort required to support Kean's increased research activity. HR recruitment effort begins when they are informed of the need to fill a grant-related position. There is significant variability in when HR is informed of this need (that is, it most often occurs after the award is made). This places extreme pressure on the staff to meet the researcher's needs, as a compensation analysis must be done before the researcher's needs can be met. This process also takes time because HR has to collect all the needed grant-related information from Pre-Award, Post-Award, or the PI, prior to initiating the hiring process. HR has standard policies and procedures for hiring student workers, which include complying with federal regulations such as having the student complete an I-9 form, which confirms identity and that the student can work in the US.

## Challenges

- Frequent delays due to incomplete information being provided from ORSP and PIs.
- Students have been working for weeks on projects prior to PIs notifying HR to hire the student.
- Lack of early HR involvement in proposal development.
- Gaps in communication regarding grant start/end dates.
- Absence of research-specific job classifications (e.g., postdoctoral associates).
  - Faculty report that HR can be a barrier to project implementation in that there is no research-based post-doctoral position in Kean's portfolio of job descriptions.
  - Highly active PIs will need the freedom to recruit post-docs to Kean, and this administrative barrier must be removed as soon as possible.

## Recommendations

- Enhance communication between HR and OSRP by including HR in planning discussions at the pre-award stage to review job descriptions and salary ranges.
- Add a compensation analyst/compensation position to HR to handle research-related pay structures and enhance the office's ability to provide support to PIs.
- Develop forms or standard operating procedures for requesting grant-funded positions.
- Conduct joint ORSP-HR training for faculty and administrators.
- Have HR participate in the to be established Research Operations Steering Committee for cross-unit communication when appropriate.

## Academic and Administrative Operations (Strategic Analytics)

Michael Salvatore (Executive VP for Academic and Administrative Operations) drives strategic integration of academic and administrative functions. Dr. Salvatore co-led the President's Task Force for Research, whose goal was achieving R2 status. The Executive VP and this office have continued to support Kean's new research focus by leading pragmatic hands-on events such as a recent Strategy Execution Seminar that trained 150 campus leaders to operationalize the University's strategic plan and metrics. This office is an important touch point for integrating upper- and mid-level administrators, Directors of grants operations offices, facilities, and other university offices, such as IT, to produce efficient grants operations at Kean. Strategic input from this office will be essential for meeting the short-term goal of maintaining R2 levels of research activity and Kean's long-term goal of enhanced research growth.



## Challenges

- Ongoing tension among newly hired faculty between teaching and research expectations.
- Need to translate R2 metrics into behaviors and practices at the departmental level (revise or devise new faculty workloads and/or incentives for increased research effort).

## Recommendations

- Consider leading or initiating a program with upper administration and HR to differentiate teaching-intensive and research-intensive faculty tracks to allow for increased time for faculty to devote to research.
- Collaborate with higher administration to create programs to ensure that faculty who choose to focus on Kean's mission of teaching don't feel like second-class citizens.
  - For example, create recognition programs for excellence in both teaching and research.
- Participate in the to-be-established Research Operations Steering Committee for cross-unit communication.

## Conclusion

Kean University has made a remarkable transition from a mainly teaching-focused institution to a research-focused university with a strong foundation for sustained growth. However, the transition to R2 status requires continued investment in infrastructure to align administrative capacity with scholarly ambition.

By making strategic investments in its people, processes, space, and systems, Kean can sustain its hard-won R2 status and accelerate its trajectory as a powerhouse Urban Research University, driving innovation and opportunity for the region and beyond.



## Appendix A. Assessment Methodology and Data Sources

From August 26, 2025, to September 19, 2025, M&Q conducted a comprehensive assessment of Kean’s grants operations. In light of Kean’s success in securing external funding and achieving R2 (doctoral level: high research intensity) status, the aim of this assessment was to gain a full understanding of both current structure, processes, and practices, as well as the goals of the institution around grant seeking in the near and long term. This assessment included (1) collection and review of existing process and policy documents, (2) interviews and follow-up with key stakeholders, and (3) benchmarking with peer and aspirant institutions.

### Collection and Review of Documentation

M&Q collected and reviewed documentation on Kean’s existing grant management policies and procedures. This documentation included the following:

- Kean’s current Strategic Plan - [Elevate 2030](#)
- Job description for new VP for Research
- Organizational charts (provided by Kean administration and staff)
- ORSP Pre-Award [website](#) (including policies, guidelines, and forms)
- ORSP Post-Award [website](#) (including policies, guidelines, and forms)
- ORSP Compliance (the Research Integrity, Security, and Compliance [website](#), including policies, guidelines, and forms)
- List of applications submitted, and amount requested over Kean FY22-25 (provided by ORSP)
- List of grants awarded, and amount awarded over Kean FY22-25 (provided by ORSP)
- Data summarizing profile of unique number of PIs and diversity of Kean’s funders
- List of peer and aspirant institutions (provided by ORSP)

### Interviews with Key Personnel/Stakeholders

M&Q conducted nineteen virtual interviews (via Zoom) with representatives from Kean’s administration, the Office of Sponsored Programs, faculty (both those experienced with grant seeking and those not experienced with grant seeking), and other offices and stakeholders who collaborate on grant operations. These discussions centered on current processes, challenges, opportunities, resources available and/or needed, faculty development needs, and office/institutional readiness for sustained growth. **Table 5** details the schedule of administrators, faculty, and staff interviewed.

Interviewee, Office, or Role in Grants Operations	Date of Interview
ORSP – Pre-Award	8/26/25 @ 10:30am (60 min)
Provost	8/27/25 @ 1pm (60 min)
Office of Science and Technology	8/28/25 @ 1pm (60 min)
ORSP – Post-Award	9/3/25 @ 1pm (75 min)
ORSP – Interim VP for Research	9/4/25 @ 12pm (60 min)
Faculty Focus Group (Experienced Grant Submitters)	9/8/25 @ 11am (60 min)
Faculty Focus Group (Experienced Grant Submitters)	9/8/25 @ 1:30pm (60min)
Human Resources	9/9/25 @ 11am (30 min)
Watson Institute	9/9/25 @ 11:30am (60 min)
Finance	9/9/25 @ 12:30pm (30 min)
Faculty Focus Group (Inexperienced Grant Submitters)	9/9/25 @ 1pm (60 min)
NORDP Consultants	9/10/25 @ 1pm (60 min)
Faculty Focus Group (Experienced Grant Submitters)	9/10/25 @ 2pm (60 min)
Admin College of Liberal Arts	9/11/25 @ 11:30am (30 min)



General Counsel	9/11/25 @12pm (60 min)
Exec VP for Academic and Administrative Operations	9/11/25 @ 2pm (60 min)
ORSP – Managing Assistant Director Pre-Award Services	9/15/25 @ 11am (60 min)
ORSP –Office of Research Integrity, Security, and Compliance	9/16/25 @ 10am (60 min)
NJCU Interim Director Grants and Sponsored Programs	9/19/25 @ 11am (60 min)



## Appendix B. Kean Internal Data and Staffing Comparison with Peers

### Kean Internal Data

Data was collected from internal and external sources to characterize grant activity at Kean.

**Table 6** summarizes the significant growth in the number of application submissions, dollars requested, and unique PIs over Kean FY22-25.

Table 6. Profile of Recent Kean Funding Activity					
	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 YTD
# of grants submitted	32	56	80	95	58
Total \$ amount of all ORSP submitted applications	\$9,602,753	\$32,804,279*	\$33,948,184	\$23,309,777	\$5,265,143
# of unique PIs	24	46	57	75	43

\*excludes \$45 million NJ OSHE construction and equipment grant. Data provided by Kean's ORSP as of November 4, 2025.

**Table 7** presents a summary of the growth in the number of applications submitted, dollars submitted, grants awarded, and dollars awarded over Kean's FY22-25.

Table 7. Summary of Recent Kean Submissions and Funding				
Funding Period	# ORSP Submitted Applications	Dollars Submitted	# Grants Awarded	Dollars Awarded
FY22	32	\$9.6M	32	\$10.1M
FY23	56*	\$32.8M	41	\$14.5M
FY24	80	\$33.9M	83	\$19M
FY25	95	\$23M	59	\$13M
FY26 YTD	58	\$5.3	17	\$5.0

Data provided by Kean's ORSP as of November 4, 2025.

The diversity of Kean's submissions by funder is presented in **Table 8**. Submissions to private funders have grown over FY22-25, as have those to NSF.

Table 8. Kean Grant Applications by Funder Type						
Funding Period	Private	NJ State & County	NIH	NSF	Federal excl. NIH & NSF	Total
FY22	3	7	7	5	10	32
FY23	6	15	4	16	15	56
FY24	18	12	5	19	26	80
FY25	33	19	9	20	14	95
FY26 YTD	25	9	3	12	9	58

Data provided by Kean's ORSP.



## Descriptions of Comparable and Aspirational Institutions

### Focus Institution

**Kean University:** Kean University is a public institution in New Jersey, known for its commitment to research, innovation, and urban engagement. It holds a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production) and focuses on professions-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs at the master's level (large/medium).

### Comparable Institutions

**Montclair State University:** Montclair State University is a large public research university in Montclair, New Jersey, offering a comprehensive range of academic programs and fostering innovation. It holds a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production), and offers mixed undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctoral level (large).

**Towson University:** Towson University is a public university in Towson, Maryland, known for its strong teacher education, business, and health-related programs. It holds a Research Colleges and Universities designation, focuses on professions-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs at the master's level (large/medium).

**University of San Diego:** University of San Diego is a private Roman Catholic university in San Diego, California, distinguished by its liberal arts curriculum and commitment to social justice. It holds a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production), and offers mixed undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctoral level (medium).

**Hofstra University:** Hofstra University is a private university on Long Island, New York, offering diverse programs and noted for its law school and medical school. It gained a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production) in the same cycle as Kean, while focusing on professions-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctorate level (medium).

### Aspirational Institutions

**Morgan State University:** Morgan State University is a historically Black university in Baltimore, Maryland, recognized for excellence in teaching, research, and service. It holds a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production), and offers mixed undergraduate and graduate programs at the master's level (large/medium).

**New Mexico State University:** New Mexico State University is a land-grant research university in Las Cruces, New Mexico, with strong programs in agriculture, engineering, and science. It holds a Research 1 designation (Very High Spending and Doctorate Production), and offers mixed undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctoral level (medium).

**North Carolina A&T State University:** North Carolina A&T State University is a leading historically Black public research university in Greensboro, North Carolina, renowned for STEM education and innovation. It holds a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production), and offers mixed undergraduate and graduate programs at the master's level (large/medium).

**Nova Southeastern University:** Nova Southeastern University is a private university in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, offering a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs with a focus on health sciences and professional studies. It holds a Research 1 designation (Very High Spending and Doctorate Production), focuses on professions-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctorate level (large), and is classified by Carnegie as an Opportunity College with higher access and higher earnings.

**San Diego State University:** San Diego State University is a major public research university in San Diego, California, known for its diverse academic offerings and vibrant campus life. It holds a Research 1 designation (Very High Spending and Doctorate Production), offers mixed undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctoral level (large), and is classified by Carnegie as an Opportunity College with higher access and higher earnings.



**Rowan University:** Rowan University is a public research university in Glassboro, New Jersey, recognized for its engineering, business, and medical programs. It holds a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production), and offers mixed undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctoral level (large).

**Rutgers University - Newark:** Rutgers University - Newark is a prominent urban public research university in Newark, New Jersey, acclaimed for its social sciences, law, and community engagement. It holds a Research 2 designation (High Spending and Doctorate Production), focuses on professions-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs at the doctoral level (medium), and is classified by Carnegie as an Opportunity College with higher access and higher earnings.

## Detailed Staffing Comparison of Kean vs peers

To provide a more complete picture of Kean's grants operations, staffing levels at Kean vs. comparable and aspirant institutions were analyzed. Detailed comparison data is presented below. Note that Compliance, IRB, and IP staff are included in these tables.

**Table 12. Details on Comparable Staffing**

Comparable Institution Name	Montclair State University	Towson University	University of San Diego	Hofstra University
Sponsored Programs Executive		1	2	2
Sponsored Programs Director(s)	1	1	1	
Coordinator(s) of Pre-Award Grants (Director-level)	2	1		1
Coordinator(s) of Post-Award Grants (Director-level)	2	1		1
General Grants Manager	1		2	3
Researcher/Administrative Specialist(s)	2	4	2	
Grants, Contracts, Budget Specialist(s) (Manager-level)		3		
Office Manager/Accounts Payable/Human Resources				
Research / Budget Compliance Specialist		1		
Institutional Review Board	Yes	2	Yes	Yes
Office of Intellectual Property	No	Yes	No	Yes
Total	8	14	7	7

**Table 13: Details on Aspirational Staffing**

Aspirational Institution Name	Morgan State U	New Mexico State U	North Carolina A&T State U	Nova Southeastern U	San Diego State U	Rowan U	Rutgers U - Newark
Sponsored Programs Executive	1	3	1	4	1	1	1
Sponsored Programs Director(s)	2	2	1	1	2	1	
Coordinator(s) of Pre-Award Grants (Director-level)		2		1		1	
Coordinator(s) of Post-Award Grants (Director-level)						1	
General Grants Manager	1		1	4	2		1
Researcher/Administrative Specialist(s)	2	9	6	3		2	1
Grants, Contracts, Budget Specialist(s) (Manager-level)	3	1		2			3



Office Manager/Accounts Payable/Human Resources							
Research / Budget Compliance Specialist	4	5	2	1	2		
Institutional Review Board	Yes	4	No	3	4	Yes	Yes
Office of Intellectual Property	Yes	Yes	No	No	4	1	Yes
Total	13	26	11	19	15	7	6



## Appendix C. CV of Evaluator

**Carol A. Burdsal**

**Independent Grant Consultant**

[cburdsal6@gmail.com](mailto:cburdsal6@gmail.com)

### Positions Held

2025- present	Independent Grants Consultant
2020 – 2025	Director of Research Development, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
2015-2019	Managing Director of Grants and Federal Affairs, Higher Education Consultant, McAllister & Quinn, Washington, DC
2012-2015	Assistant Provost for Research, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA
2010-2011	Program Director, Physiological & Structural Systems Cluster, Division of Integrative Organismal Systems, Directorate for Biological Sciences, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA
2009-2010	Program Director, Developmental Systems Cluster, Division of Integrated Organismal Systems, Directorate for Biological Sciences, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA
2008-2012	Associate Dean for Academic Programs, School of Science and Engineering, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
2006-2008	Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, School of Science and Engineering, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
2005-2009	Co-Director, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology Master of Science Graduate Program, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
2002-2012	Associate Professor, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
1995-2002	Assistant Professor, Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
1993-1995	Postgraduate Research Biologist, Laboratory of Radiobiology and Environmental Health, University of California, San Francisco, CA
1990-1993	Postdoctoral Fellow, Laboratory of Radiobiology and Environmental Health, University of California, San Francisco, CA
1989	Course Assistant, Embryology Course, MBL, Woods Hole, MA 1987 Course Assistant, Embryology Course, MBL, Woods Hole, MA

### Other Professional Experience

2013-present	Registered Patent Agent
2002-present	Member, Editorial Board, Developmental Dynamics 1996-2012 Associate Editor, Journal of Experimental Zoology 1996-2014 American Society for Cell Biology
1995-1998	Society for Developmental Biology



## Academic and Professional Honors

- 1993-1995 American Heart Association, California Affiliate Postdoctoral Fellowship Award
- 1991 Research Award-Program in Analytical Cytometry, UCSF/Lawrence Livermore National Lab
- 1990-1993 NIEHS Postdoctoral Traineeship, Laboratory of Radiobiology and Environmental Health, University of California, San Francisco, CA
- 1985-1988 NIH Predoctoral Traineeship Grant, Duke University Cell and Molecular Biology Program
- 1983 Phi Beta Kappa, University of Miami

## Administrative Experience

- 2020-2025 Director, Office of Research Development, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
- 2012-2015 Assistant Provost for Research, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA 2009- 2011 NSF Grant Program Officer, Division of Integrative Organismal Systems, Biological Directorate, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA
- 2008–2012 Associate Dean for Academic Programs, School of Science and Engineering, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
- 2006-2008 Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, School of Science and Engineering, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

## Other Executive Administrative Positions

- 2006-2007 Executive Committee, Center for Public Service, Tulane University 2005–2009 Co-Director, Cell & Molecular Biology Masters Degree Program, Tulane University

## Publications

- Alliegro, M. C., Etensohn, C. A., Burdsal, C. A., Erickson, H. P., and D. R. McClay. (1988). Echinonectin: A New Embryonic Substrate Adhesion Protein. *J. Cell Biol.* 107, 2319-2327.
- Lotz, M. M., Burdsal, C. A., Erickson, H. P., and D. R. McClay. (1989). Cell Adhesion to Fibronectin and Tenascin: Quantitative Measurements of Initial Binding and Subsequent Strengthening Response. *J. Cell Biol.* 109, 1795-1805.
- Alliegro, M. C., Burdsal, C. A., and D. R. McClay. (1990). *In vitro* Biological Activities of Echinonectin. *Biochemistry* 29, 2135-2141.
- Burdsal, C. A., Alliegro, M. C., and D. R. McClay. (1991). Tissue-Specific, Temporal Changes in Cell Adhesion to Echinonectin in the Sea Urchin Embryo. *Devel. Biol.* 144, 327-334.
- Burdsal, C. A., Damsky, C. H., and R. A. Pedersen. (1993). The Role of E-cadherin and Integrins in Mouse Mesoderm Differentiation and Migration at the Mammalian Primitive Streak. *Development* 118, 829-844.
- Burdsal, C. A., Lotz, M. M., Miller, J., and D. R. McClay. (1994). A Quantitative Switch in Integrin Expression Accompanies Differentiation of F9 Cells Treated With Retinoic Acid. *Devel. Dynamics* 201, 244-253.
- Pedersen, R. A. and C. A. Burdsal. (1994). Mammalian Embryogenesis. *In The Physiology of Reproduction*, 2nd edition (Knobil, E. and Neill, J.D., eds.) pp. 319-390, Raven Press, Ltd., New York.
- Burdsal, C. A., Hyun, W. C., Pedersen, R. A., and J. J. Latimer. (1995). Isolation of Cell Types from



- Differentiated F9 Embryoid Bodies: A Novel Flow Cytometric Method Utilizing Differences in Cellular Autofluorescence. *Cytometry* 21,145-152.
- Prakobphol, A., Burdsal, C. A., and S. Fisher. (1995). Quantifying the Strength of Bacterial Adhesive Interactions with Salivary Glycoproteins. *J. of Dental Research* 174, 1212-1218.
- Burdsal, C. A. (1998). Mammalian Embryogenesis. In *The Encyclopedia of Reproduction*, (Knobil E. and Neill, J. D., eds.), pp. 1029-1037, Academic Press, San Diego.
- Burdsal, C. A., Flannery, M. L., and R. A. Pedersen. (1998). FGF Alters the Fate of Mouse Epiblast from Ectoderm to Mesoderm In Vitro. *Devel. Biol.* 198, 231-244.
- Boucher, D. M., Shaeffer, M., Gold, J. D., Burdsal, C. A., Meneses, J. J., Pedersen, R. A., and Blum, M. (2000). *gooseoid* Expression Represses *brachyury* In Embryonic Stem Cells and Affects Craniofacial Development. *Int. J. Dev. Biol.* 44, 279-288.
- Martinez-Ceballos, E., and Burdsal, C. A. (2001). Differential Expression of Chicken *CYP26* in Anterior Versus Posterior Limb Bud in Response to Retinoic Acid, *J. Exptl. Zool.* 290,136-147.
- Alappat, S. R., Zhang, M., Zhao, X., Alliegro, M. A., Alliegro, M. C., and Burdsal, C. A. (2003). Mouse *pigpen* Encodes a Nuclear Protein Whose Expression Is Developmentally Regulated During Craniofacial Morphogenesis. *Devel. Dynamics* 228, 59-71.
- Han, M., Yang, X., Taylor, G., Burdsal, C. A., Anderson, R. A., and Muneoka, K. M. (2005). Limb Regeneration in Higher Vertebrates: Developing A Roadmap. *The Anatomical Record (Part B New Anat.)* 287B:14-24.
- Yen, W. W., Williams, M., Periasamy, A., Conaway, M., Burdsal, C., Keller, R., Lu, X., and Sutherland, A. (2009). PTK7 is essential for polarized cell motility and convergent extension during mouse gastrulation. *Development* 36:2039-48.
- Williams, M., Burdsal, C., Periasamy, A., Lewandoski, M., and Sutherland, A. 2012. Mouse primitive streak forms in situ by initiation of epithelial to mesenchymal transition without migration of a cell population. *Devel. Dynamics* 241, 270-283.
- Gonzalez, I. M., Martin, P. M., Burdsal, C., Sloan, J. L., Mager, S., Harris, T., and Sutherland, A. E. 2012. Leucine and arginine regulate trophoblast motility through mTOR-dependent and independent pathways in the preimplantation mouse embryo. *Devel. Biol.* 361, 286-300.

## Presentations

- *I'm too spicy for Grant Funding*, Carol Burdsal, Monica Casteneda-Kessel, Jessica Venable, & Anna Ward. National Organization of Research Development Professionals Annual Meeting Roundtable presentation 2023.
- *Managing the Development of Complex Proposals*, Jeffrey Ritchie & Carol Burdsal. National Council University Research Administrators National Meeting, Washington, DC, August 2016
- *Experiencing the NCURA Peer Review, The Road Map and Beyond*, Dorothy Johnson & Carol Burdsal, National Council University Research Administrators National Meeting, Washington, DC, August 2015
- *Smaller Offices: How Do We Survive?*, National Council University Research Administrators Region II & III Joint Spring Meeting, Tampa, FL, May 2014
- The Forum on Education Abroad, Boston, MA, April 2008
- Gulf Summit on Service Learning, University of Southern Mississippi, February 2002
- Department of Biology, Loyola University, November 1997
- Department of Pathology, Tulane Medical School, Grand Rounds, September 1997
- Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, Tulane University, March 1995
- Department of Biology, University of Notre Dame, January 1995
- Department of Animal Science and Department of Avian Science, UC, Davis, 1994



- Netherlands Cancer Institute Conference on Cell Adhesion: Cell Adhesion, Regulation and Clinical Prospects, Symposium on “Cell Adhesion and Metastasis”, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, October 1993
- Mini-symposium on “Cell Lineages in Development”, national meeting, Society for Developmental Biology, Providence, RI, June 1993
- Mini-symposium on “Mammalian Development” at the 32nd Annual Meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology, Denver, CO, November 1992

## Selected Research Funding

- “Molecular Mechanism of Mouse Mesoderm Differentiation”

**PI:** Carol A. Burdsal

**Agency:** NIH

1998-2000 Shannon Directors Award 1R29 HD34926-01A2

**Project goals:** To determine the role FGF signaling plays in guiding mesoderm migration in the mouse during the period of gastrulation.

- “Regulation of Craniofacial Development in the Mouse”

**PI:** Carol A. Burdsal

**Agency:** Board of Regents, State of Louisiana, Human Excellence Fund

**Period of Award:** 7/1/00-6/30/05

**Project goals:** To determine the role of the *pigpen* gene in growth and morphogenesis during craniofacial development in the mouse embryo.

- “CYP26, A Retinoid Sensor, and Vertebrate Embryogenesis”

Environmental Sensors and Signals: A Virtual Center for Disease Prevention in Humans and Ecosystems,

**PI:** Carol A. Burdsal

**Agency:** CDC

**Period of Award:** 7/1/00-6/30/02

**Project Goals:** To characterize *CYP26* expression in response to retinoic acid during development and its possible use as a biomarker of retinoid exposure in vertebrates.

### Dissertations Directed

Sylvia Rose Alappat,	Ph. D., 2001	Cell and Molecular Biology Department
Eduardo Martinez-Ceballos,	Ph. D., 2001	Cell and Molecular Biology Department
T. Christopher Stuart,	Ph. D., 2001	Cell and Molecular Biology Department

