Kean University’s new Dean of the College of the Liberal Arts is an experienced and student-centered academic leader. Jessica Thurlow, Ph.D., served most recently as the Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, as well as Associate Provost, at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Washington. She has extensive experience in outcomes-based curriculum design and development, academic administrative management, faculty professional development, governance, mission-focused strategic planning, evidence-based continuous improvement, and leadership of collaborative general education review and reform. She brings over 15 years of accreditation and assessment experience, working with both specialized and institutional (formerly regional) accreditors, most recently serving as the Accreditation Liaison Officer at Cornish where she has provided leadership, oversight, and planning for accreditation, assessment, and institutional effectiveness. She also holds a Mission Fulfillment Fellowship with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) alongside a small group of faculty and administrators across NWCCU institutions. Her early career included roles as the Vice Chair and Chair on the Council of Licensure of School Professionals supporting graduate and undergraduate programs across the Colleges of Social Work, Education, Arts and Sciences, and Nursing, Departmental Chair positions, Honors Program Co-Director, and a Fellowship with the Gayle Morris Sweetland Writing Center at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Thurlow earned her Doctorate in History degree from the University of Michigan, both a Masters of Philosophy in History and Master of Arts in English Literature from the University of Sussex, and a Bachelor’s degree in English and Comparative Literature from Occidental College. She has taught widely across a range of subjects including European History, 20th-Century U.S. History, Western Civilization, women’s history, the First World War, and 19th-century literature and also led study abroad courses in England, Ireland, and France.

Provost David Birdsell observed that, “Jessica Thurlow has a terrific track record in nurturing people and programs. An outstanding scholar in her own right, she has the experience and the vision to bring the College of Liberal Arts to new heights in the areas of research, teaching, and public outreach; we’re delighted to have her aboard.”

As Dean of College of the Liberal Arts, Dr. Thurlow is excited to work with faculty, staff, and students across the university to support the current general education revision and reform, inclusive of a focus on the elimination of program equity gaps and increasing retention. She is also looking forward to engaging in collaborative, strategic academic program planning with CLA faculty to ensure alignment with the university’s strategic plan, the success of all CLA programs, and deepening CLA’s connections across Kean Colleges and campuses. She starts on August 28th.