

**Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students of**

**Kean University
1000 Morris Avenue
Union, New Jersey 07083**

By

**An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

**Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report and a
visit to the campus on April 17-20, 2011**

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair, and it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist Kean University. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO:

Dawood Farahi

Chief Academic Officer:

Mark Lender
Vice President of Academic Affairs

Chair of the Board of Trustees:

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Kean University
Middle States Visiting Team Report

I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF THE VISIT

Institutional Overview

Founded in 1855, Kean University is a public, state-supported, co-educational institution of higher education in the New Jersey State College System, attaining university status in 1997. In 1958, the University moved to its current 120-acre main campus in Union Township which is located in one of New Jersey's most densely populated and diverse suburban regions. The University is led by Chief Executive Officer and President Dr. Dawood Farahi, who was appointed by the Board of Trustees in February 2003. The past decade has been a period marked by transformation and progress for the University. Student enrollment has grown from 12,958 in 2005 to 15,939 in 2010, an increase of 23%. Faculty (full-time, part-time and adjunct) have increased from 1,162 in 2005 to 1,329 in fall 2009, an increase of 14%. The University now offers 48 undergraduate degree programs, 34 graduate programs, and 2 doctoral programs. Recently, through a partnership with Ocean County College, the University established an additional location, Kean Ocean, offering over 20 academic programs. In the past few years, enrollment has quadrupled at this location. This institutional growth has occurred in spite of a significant and continued decrease in funding by the state.

Scope of Institution

Degree levels: Certificate/Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's; Doctor of Education in Urban Leadership; Doctor of Psychology

Branch campuses: None

Additional locations: *Ocean County College, Toms River, NJ

Self-study process and report: Kean University engaged in a comprehensive self-study which was organized by groups of standards. The self-study was guided by a 21-member Steering Committee, which included representation from faculty, staff and administration. A 5-member Executive Council of the Steering Committee was established to lead the team. In order to collect data for the self-study, the Steering Committee utilized a variety of research processes including: surveys; focus groups; access to governing processes and documents, and meetings with campus constituents. A University-wide distribution and review of a self-study draft document commenced in August 2010. Input and feedback was obtained through a variety of mechanisms including: an on-line open-ended response form, public fora, and presentation to standing committees.

II. AFFIRMATION OF CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF AFFILIATION

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by Kean University and other institutional documents, the Visiting Team affirms that the institution continues to meet requirements of affiliation in *Characteristics of Excellence*.

*The asterisk indicates that this additional location was visited.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS; ISSUES RELATIVE TO STATE REGULATORY OR OTHER ACCREDITING AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

Based on a review of the self-study, certification by Kean University, other institutional documents, and interviews, the Visiting Team affirms that the institution's Title IV cohort default rate is within federal limits.

IV. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Kean University presented a comprehensive and forthright self-study providing extensive documentation and data to support the self-study's analysis of its strengths, challenges and recommendations. During the Visiting Team's visit to Kean University, from April 17-20, 2011, the University community demonstrated an overall commitment to the continuing transformation of the institution consistent with its mission of excellence in a student-centered environment.

This report acknowledges the many significant accomplishments, progress, and exemplary and innovative practices achieved by the University. The University has achieved growth in student enrollment, diversity of its student population, academic programs, student support programs, faculty teaching and scholarship, and campus beautification and site improvement efforts. Growth in these areas is remarkable considering the fiscal challenges faced by the University in terms of over two decades of decreased state funding.

However, this report also finds, which the institution has acknowledged in its self-study report, deficiencies with institutional and student learning assessment. Essentially, the University lacks a systematic and integrated institution-wide assessment process that generates tangible evidence to measure the extent to which the University is meeting the aspirations of its mission, student learning outcomes, and other outcomes for program improvement. The Visiting Team was impressed that the University, in coordination with the Middle States reaccreditation process, has moved quickly and decisively to organize and implement effective responses to this challenge. The report recognizes momentum and evidence that an institutional assessment scaffold is being constructed which will contribute to establishing a University-wide culture of evidence and documentation.

V. COMPLIANCE WITH ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Chapter Two: Mission and Goals and Institutional Assessment

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Kean University meets Standard 1, but does not meet Standard 7.

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University's mission statement has been consistent through the years with some minor modifications in 2007 that were approved by the Board of Trustees. Three overriding themes of the mission are based on excellence in a student-centered environment, serving as a

major resource to the region, and providing global opportunities (cosmopolitan rather than metropolitan emphasis) for both faculty and students.

The University does not have a rigorous assessment process in place to measure mission statement goals. For example, the University does not conduct or consistently utilize alumni surveys to ascertain the effectiveness of its mission. There is an alignment disconnect between the mission, goals, assessment and budgeting processes. Additionally, the present strategic plan goals are diagnostic rather than operational which limits the measurement of their effectiveness. Annual dissemination of the mission statement to the University community is lacking.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

The mission of Kean University has both an internal and external constituency and stakeholder focus. The University serves an increasingly diverse student population offering 48 undergraduate, 34 graduate, and two doctoral degrees. The overall enrollment has grown to 15,939 in 2010, an increase of 23% over the previous five years. The University has established an additional location to meet the needs of students.

The University serves its student population through: the establishment of a Center for Academic Success that integrates advisement, learning support, and career counseling in one entity; creation of a Students Partnering with Faculty Summer Research Program which allow students to conduct research with faculty; fostering the McNair Scholars program and The Hopkins Material Transfer Agreement to promote academic success; and establishment of a Center for Leadership Service where students can participate in community service.

The University also serves as a resource for regional advancement most notably through the New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics, the Liberty Hall Museum, Human Rights Institute, Small Business Development Center, Premiere Stages theatre program, and an Annual Thinking Creatively Conference. The institution has promoted global studies and has an established Center for International Studies. It is currently exploring the creation of an academic partnership with China.

Suggestions

1. Kean University should specify measurable goals and objectives in developing the next strategic planning process.
2. The University should align unit and department mission and goals with the institutional mission statement.
3. Institutional budgeting priorities should be linked with the mission and strategic plan.
4. A communication plan should be developed to raise awareness of the institution's mission and goals among all stakeholders.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this

standard. Kean University does not have a coordinated, well-defined, integrated institutional assessment process. Assessment functions that are in place are not directly aligned with the University mission and goals. Additionally, with one exception, the College of Education, multiple measures in its existing assessment process are not consistently employed.

The University has not conducted a comprehensive evaluation of its assessment process and procedures. There is an absence of a cyclical process to determine how assessment processes are effectively utilized for improvement purposes. While the University does have guidelines for academic program review, it does not conduct those reviews on a consistent and timely basis.

Although there is useable data on enrollments, retention and graduation, the University does not have five years worth of consistent, reliable data for use in many institutional assessment functions. The University does not maximize its available institutional research data in its current assessment process. For example, while there are results of surveys (NSSE) there is no evidence as to how they were utilized for program and service improvements.

There is no definitive ownership of the University assessment process, and administration, faculty and staff do not have an adequate understanding of their role in the process. Adequate resources for prolonged, recurrent, sustainable assessment efforts are lacking. Until recently, there was an absence of professional development in assessment, and there are currently no reward structures for those units that practiced assessment techniques for program improvement.

The University recognizes these deficiencies and is working on rectifying them. There is momentum and evidence that an institutional assessment scaffold is being constructed. That scaffold will substantially contribute to establishing a culture of evidence and documentation. That platform will serve as the foundation for a University-wide culture of comprehensive institutional assessment.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University generates a wide variety of data including but not limited to: a Performance Indicator Report to establish and measure internal and external benchmarks; graduation rates on 4, 5, and 6 year cohorts pursuant to Right to Know mandates; benchmark data on New Jersey and IPED peer institutions; and peer comparison retention rates for first time full-time degree seeking students. The President and executive staff review related performance indicator reports including student and faculty profiles, program enrollment highlights and enrollment trends, full time faculty office hours, classroom utilization and department profiles.

The University is in the process of establishing and implementing a comprehensive, sustainable assessment plan, and recently established an Office of Assessment and Accreditation and hired a Director of Assessment. The University has also established guidelines for program review which is designed to foster excellence by identifying areas of strengths and improvements. The Faculty Senate has a standing assessment committee.

Twenty individual academic programs that impact 44% of enrolled students have some form of professional accreditation, and the College of Education was recently re-accredited in 2010 by NCATE with no recommendations for improvement.

Suggestions

1. Kean University should develop a simplified model of institutional assessment with appropriate metrics.
2. A University-wide data assessment warehouse should be established that is accessible, contains agreed upon elements, and is updated on a consistent annual basis.
3. The University should provide more opportunities for assessment training to the University community, and recognize and reward those departments and units that demonstrate best practices in student learning outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Kean University should design and implement a University-wide assessment process to generate tangible evidence indicating the extent to which the institution is meeting the aspirations of its mission statement. Clear guidelines and realistic timelines for implementing institution-wide assessment should be established.
2. As part of the assessment process, the University should continue to establish relevant Key Performance Indicators with stated goals, specific benchmarks, and comprehensible scorecards that coincide with the mission statement aspirations.
3. Senior management should encourage and empower ownership of the University assessment process to appropriate offices, areas or personnel. Those entities should be provided with adequate resources and be held responsible for tangible outcomes, which may include assigning an assessment liaison for every unit and providing campus-wide assessment training.

Requirements

1. Kean University needs to establish, promote, foster, sustain and demonstrate a culture of evidence and assessment.
2. The University must utilize assessment outcomes for program improvement in order to “close-the-loop.”

Chapter Three: Planning, Resource Allocations, and Institutional Renewal and Institutional Resources

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

Kean University meets these standards.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. One of the foundations for Kean University’s 2007-2012 Strategic Plan was a broad environmental scan that included the use of several internal and external focus groups. The strategic plan was developed by the University Planning Council, which is a broadly represented body, and was approved by the Faculty Senate, President, and Board of Trustees. Concurrently, a

Leadership Council/Forum was created to increase participation and interaction among the University governing structures.

Assessment that is linked to planning and resource allocation is in its infancy. An Office of Accreditation and Assessment was recently established and development of an action plan and assessment toolkit is being implemented. A Director of Assessment was appointed in February 2010. His primary focus has been in the academic area, and he has met with University administrative departments. This area has been slow in its uptake of assessment. Although there are some administrative departments where assessment is taking place that is guiding resource allocation, in general resource allocation is not guided by the results of assessment activities. Assessment has not been focused on the accomplishment of goals in the strategic plan.

In response to external financial pressures, the institution has produced a comprehensive academic reorganization plan, which is currently being implemented. In addition to its annual budget, the University has a financial plan that includes each fiscal year through 2015. The plan tests a number of budget scenarios with variations in enrollment, tuition and fee increases, and state appropriations. Currently, departments are generally not involved in the budget building process, and the University is attempting to establish procedures to improve the interface between planning and budgeting. The University has outrun its 1999-2009 facilities master plan, and it plans to issue a contract for the preparation of a new plan in summer 2011. There is an enrollment plan, but there is no direct link between the enrollment plan and the financial and capital facilities plan. The University does not have a technology plan.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Accountability is becoming part of the Kean University culture. Environmental scans are done on a routine basis and they guide strategic planning and institutional renewal.

There is a functioning University Planning Council and a University Leadership Council/Forum composed of campus-wide membership, which serve as vehicles to inform as well as facilitate campus-wide planning.

The academic reorganization plan and its implementation shows that the University's faculty, administration, and staff are pulling together to help the institution remain viable.

The University established an additional location, Kean Ocean, to meet the needs of its population base, and the University has steadily increased the number of academic offerings over the last five years.

Suggestions

1. Kean University should develop a transparent, participatory, University-wide strategic planning process that incorporates an assessment of the strategic planning goals while aligning with budget functions. An individual should be appointed to lead that effort.
2. The University should develop a current facilities master plan and technology plan, and all institutional plans should be integrated.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University's financial well-being has been assaulted on many fronts. State funding has been reduced over a 22 year period from 60% of the budget to about 16%. Tuition increases are capped by the state and the University's desire to keep its tuition competitive. Another blow was struck by the state when it agreed to two pay increases for all union employees in the 2011 fiscal year. Despite this assault, the University has remained financially viable. This is extraordinary considering that Kean has made advances in many areas at the same time including facilities, campus beautification, technology, and expanded programming in response to market trends.

There are concerns that state appropriations for Kean may continue to decline, and changes to the cost sharing formula for state funded health benefits could affect Kean's ability to attract staff once economic conditions improve. Additionally, staff reductions in administrative departments may affect their ability to deliver services at the levels to which they aspire.

The distribution of the University's resources is in keeping with its mission statement "...to adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments..." However, the use of these resources is not consciously analyzed as a part of outcomes assessment.

Kean's buildings and grounds are attractive and well maintained. The University is considering the use of third parties to finance and construct additional residence halls.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University has been able to keep its tuition and fees low in comparison to most other New Jersey public institutions. This is not only due to enrollment increases, but also due to the University's desire to remain accessible. Kean's upgraded physical plant is also a key factor in attracting students.

The University has maintained bond ratings of A- from Standard and Poor's Rating Services and A3 from Moody's Investor's Services. These are investment grade ratings and, when coupled with Kean's unqualified external audit, are reflections of the institution's financial strength. The University's recent capital campaign exceeded its \$30 million goal.

Chapter 4: Leadership and Governance, Administration and Integrity

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

Standard 5: Administration

Standard 6: Integrity

Kean University meets these standards.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

Summary of Evidence and Findings:

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University has a delineated governance structure, from the Board of Trustees to the administration, Faculty Senate, collective bargaining units, and the Student Organization. The ultimate authority for the University rests with the Board of Trustees, an autonomous body which operates pursuant to its own bylaws. Board members are appointed by the State Governor and confirmed by the State Senate for a term of six years. A student member is elected to sit on the Board by the student body. The Board's duties include appointing and evaluating the University President and developing and guiding the University's mission in all areas of operation through institutional policy and planning.

The University administration consists of the President; the Executive Vice President for Operations; the Vice Presidents, Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Academic Deans and the Director of the Library.

The Faculty Senate is an elected, self-governing body which operates pursuant to its own constitution and is the principal agent of faculty in University governance. Senate membership is comprised of 30 representatives from full-time faculty, librarians, professional staff and non-academic unit managers and administrators. Each year, ten individuals are elected to the Senate for three-year terms. The Senate is responsible for making recommendations to the President regarding academic policies and is supported by 17 standing committees.

The Kean University students are represented by the Student Organization providing students with a voice and involvement in University decisions.

The Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT) is a collective bargaining for full-time faculty unit which operates pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement. The KFT represents its members in matters related to the terms and conditions of employment according to the collective bargaining agreement. Labor relations between the KFT and the University administration are extremely poor. Other collective bargaining units include the Adjunct Faculty Federation AFT Local 6024, the Communication Workers of America 1031, and the Police Benevolent Association.

While there is a delineated governance structure at Kean, there is a lack of communication, coordination, and cohesiveness between the various governing bodies and the administration.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University's governance structure is delineated by written governing documents such as Board of Trustee Bylaws, Faculty Senate Constitution, and collective bargaining agreements.

There is opportunity for student input regarding decisions that affect them. A student sits on the Board of Trustees as well as on each of the standing committees of the Faculty Senate. Officers from the Student Organization frequently meet with the President on numerous matters affecting the student body including tuition, student life, and academic offerings.

The Board of Trustees evaluates the President annually.

Suggestions

1. Kean University should develop more effective communications between the University administration and all governing bodies.
2. A more transparent and inclusive process for administration decision-making and initiatives should be implemented.
3. Strategies should be developed and implemented for improving labor relations between the University administration and the KFT.
4. The role of the University Leadership Council/Forum should be further clarified.

Standard 5: Administration

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University has well-defined lines of organization, authority, and responsibility among management with a dedicated executive staff. The University has a Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for the achievement of the University's mission to be a public, cosmopolitan institution serving undergraduate and graduate students in the liberal arts, the sciences, and the professions. The Chief Executive Officer, who has been President since 2003, is leading the institution toward the achievement of the institution's 2007-2012 strategic goals.

The executive staff is evaluated yearly by the President and receives performance plan evaluations. However, a high turnover rate among executive staff in the last ten years has interfered with effective management of the University. For example, Kean has had five different vice presidents for academic affairs in the last five years. Although student diversity reflects the demographics of the larger community, the executive staff does not. The staff is diverse by gender but not ethnicity. There is an absence of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services.

The University lacks consistent, frequent, and clear communication from the administration. Communications to the faculty and staff tend to be episodic and event oriented. Effective communication with prospective students through the University website is also lacking. The University's written policies and procedures that effectively address employee concerns and questions are not readily accessible.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Under the administrative leadership, Kean University enrollment has increased significantly, and its student population has become one of the most diverse in the nation. Student demographics mirror those of the region, suggesting that Kean is a model for future trends in higher education in the United States. Evidence of the over 100 countries represented at the institution is proudly displayed each fall on a student photo board located in the campus library.

The roles and responsibilities of the executive staff are clearly delineated, and lines of organization and authority are documented. There has been growth in college deans' level of scholarly contributions (i.e., publications, grants, presentations, creative activities, honors and

awards, proposals and abstracts). Additionally, a partnership with Ocean County College has led to the development of Kean Ocean offering over 20 of the University's academic programs. Recently, enrollment has quadrupled at this facility. Other improvements to the physical infrastructure include the addition of new buildings, such as the STEM Research Center.

Suggestions

1. Kean University needs to engage in periodic assessments of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services toward achieving its goals.
2. Because of the high staff turnover in the last ten years, the University needs to develop transition plans for all new hires. In addition, job satisfaction surveys might identify high turnover rates among executives.
3. Recruitment strategies and initiatives need to be developed and implemented to address the lack of diversity in executive staff.
4. The University should identify and implement mechanisms to maintain a flow of information to and from all campus constituencies.
5. The University needs to institute strategies to improve communication with prospective students who are attempting to navigate the institution's website. Administration should ensure that renovation of the University website is properly executed.
6. The University needs to develop and improve access to readily-accessible written policies and procedures that effectively address employee concerns and questions.

Standard 6: Integrity

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University disseminates a clear code of student conduct, and provides this code in their student handbook, faculty/staff handbook and on their website. The code of conduct includes an appeals process for students and the University has a policy for grade and other academic appeals. Procedural guidelines for hiring, evaluation and dismissal of faculty and staff are provided in the faculty/staff handbook. With regard to tenure and promotion, new faculty members are informed of expectations at new faculty orientations, and at fall and spring workshops on reappointment. There is equitable and consistent treatment of faculty, staff and students as it relates to application of policies.

The University demonstrates sound ethical practices through its Ethics Office. This office monitors and posts the Uniform Ethics Code and the Plain Language Guide. They administer plans to track adherence to the ethics code. The University supports academic and intellectual freedom, and protection of intellectual property rights. The University also has policies that discourage academic dishonesty that are disseminated to students.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University operates with a high level of integrity.

Chapter Five: Student Admissions and Retention and Student Support Services

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

Standard 9: Student Support Services

Kean University meets these standards.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. The Kean University admissions office hosts on-campus Open Houses which have brought over 7,000 visitors to the campus in 2009-2010. The purpose of the visitation is to introduce potentially new students to the campus and its offerings. Potential students are also able to visit the campus through Kean Information Day Tours, Student Visitation for a Day, and On-Site Decision Day. A number of University offices as well as faculty volunteers participate in the Open Houses. The Admissions Office also has published literature for interested students.

Graduate admissions has also been evaluated and modified. Graduate programs also host a similar program to the undergraduate Open House with over 1,000 potential students attending a Graduate Open House during the current year. There are a minimum of three contacts with each potential applicant.

Admissions requirements are widely publicized for both the undergraduate and graduate programs, either on-line or through printed materials. Social networking, i.e. Facebook and Twitter, have also been used to maintain connections with potential students. Significant enrollment growth has been noted over the past decade.

Retention rates have been shared through the Office of Institutional Research with 2000 being the initial cohort for first year students. First year retention rates have improved in the last ten years from 75% to 81%. Compared to other New Jersey state universities, Kean is ranked seventh out of eight for five and six year graduation rates and sixth out of eight for four year graduation rates.

The Center for Academic Success houses a number of support services to enhance retention. The University offers a T2K one credit course to all entering students taught by volunteer adjunct faculty. There is an Early Warning System and an Academic Instructional Mentors program to support instruction in the T2K courses. An Academic Coaching Model is available through the Counseling Department of the Graduate College and Residence Life.

Approximately 70% of Kean students rely on some form of financial aid. As compared to other New Jersey institutions (50-60%), it is critically important to students attending Kean. A web site has been developed to assist students with financial aid questions.

The University has maintained its mission of providing access to students from the immediate area and all of New Jersey as well as expanding its recruitment area outside the borders of the state. An Enrollment Management Plan has been developed recently that outlines targeted

enrollment goals for both undergraduate and graduate programs. The Enrollment Management Plan has been developed through the leadership of the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and a number of areas across the University.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University has expanded its enrollment to include out-of-state students as well as New Jersey residents. There is definite evidence of the importance of enrollment management.

Changes have been made in the University's website most recently. This may assist with enrollment and attraction to the University at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Several offices provide language assistance to students and their families in Spanish and Chinese. The Student Financial Aid website has been changed to address a number of new and returning student needs. It is easily accessible and provides students with a great deal of information and assistance. This is needed to support the recruitment process.

The creation of the Center for Academic Success has proven to be supportive of the increase in retention rates and a highly diverse student population.

The University President's commitment to student success is widely noted on campus and is positively received by the student body. The beautification of the campus has also been a positive impact on all admissions activities.

Suggestions

1. As a part of its "world class education" initiative, making admissions literature and other resources available to non-English speaking students' needs to be explored.
2. Due to significant increases in enrollment, staffing level issues need to be addressed as they have not always been maintained to accommodate additional student need.
3. It is imperative that the Enrollment Management Plan be implemented and a permanent committee be created to monitor the evolution of the Plan.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University identifies over 270 support services and programs dedicated to its mission of providing a student-centered program consistent with its Strategic Plan, 2007-2012. The Student Affairs Division has been actively engaged in program assessment and measuring its effectiveness with students. As a division, it is also very active with academic departments in meeting student needs.

The Center for Academic Success addresses transfer student admission, orientation, undecided/undeclared students, tutoring services, academic dismissal and appeals, career development, special admission programs (Passport, Exceptional Educational Opportunities Program, Entry Program into College) international students, veteran affairs and a one-stop service center. It is staffed by eight full-time professionals and about one hundred student

employees. Services are also provided by the Office of Student Intervention and Retention as well as Counseling Center and Office of Disabilities Services. Project Excel is offered to students with documented learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorder.

Campus Life provides approximately 2000 students with on-campus living and dining accommodations. The Campus Center for Leadership and Service promotes volunteer opportunities for community service. Additionally, health services are available on the campus with numerous offerings to all students. Wellness and recreation offer a number of different opportunities for students to be active. Athletics is a NCAA Division III competitor.

The campus has emergency services offered through Public Safety and Police which operates 24/7/365 per year. In addition, a campus alert system is also available through automated telephone notification, text messaging and e-mail.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

The Student Affairs Division has been actively engaged in program assessment and measuring its effectiveness with students. As a division, it is also very active with academic departments in meeting student needs.

The Center for Academic Success has received commendation from John Gardner's *Foundations of Excellence* regarding the opportunities offered to students on the campus. Students actively engage Center staff and utilize the facilities to interact with faculty advisors. The facility provides the student body with a focus on engagement with all aspects of academic support.

Based upon the University's mission of providing an affordable education, General Education Foundation courses are available to all admitted students in providing the opportunities for students to succeed. Students with special needs are served through the Counseling Center.

The diversity of its student body has many advantages for students to experience a global interaction without leaving the campus including extra-curricular programming.

By constructing athletic and recreational facilities that adjoin one another, the University community has access to quality facilities. The Athletic Department has established higher academic standards for athletic competition than other conference members.

KeanWise is an on-line assistance tool that is available to all students. This provides students with a great deal of information to campus services. Students are also given notice of events and organizations through e-mail and Kean Mobile App.

Suggestions

1. Staffing levels in all areas of service offerings will need careful consideration with the proposed enrollment increases. With the retirement of the Director of the Counseling Center, who also served as the disabilities coordinator, careful succession planning will need to be made.
2. Concerning the Center for Academic Success, careful and planned assessment, that is tied to effectiveness, needs to be incorporated. A number of client assessments have been done recently, but the Center's overall accomplishments and plans have not been measured.

3. The University must complete a University Assessment Plan that will enable all student services to evaluate, plan and assess its services in order to allocate resources and determine future directions of the offices.

4. The Athletics Department should review its program offerings for female students to ensure it is in compliance with Title IX.

Chapter 6: Faculty

Standard 10: Faculty

Kean University meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University faculty include full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty, both tenured and untenured. From 2005 to 2009, the number of adjunct faculty increased by 24% whereas full-time faculty decreased by 8%. Corresponding to the increase in adjunct faculty is an increase in the number of course sections taught by adjuncts (40.95% in 2005 to 47.0% in 2009). The number of full-time faculty at Kean University has not grown relative to student enrollment, and a five-year Faculty Replenishment Plan has been developed to address this. Demographically, the number of Black and Hispanic faculty have decreased over the past five years, whereas the number of Asian faculty have increased, resulting in an average faculty diversity of 28.13%.

Faculty have a 12-credit teaching load and hold eight hours of advisement per week. According to the self-study, full-time faculty advise an average of 44 students, although faculty in the Colleges of Business and Public Administration and Education may have over 100 advisees per faculty member. Full and associate professors have lower advisement loads than assistant professors, and adjunct faculty do not advise students. A Spring 2010 faculty survey reported that, over the last five years, faculty work increased from an average of 69.2 to 73.9 hours per week. This increase was attributed mostly to teaching responsibilities and only minimally to service and scholarly pursuits. In 2006, the Center for Professional Development was restructured to provide faculty with academic resources and support. However, teaching loads have prevented faculty from fully availing themselves of workshop opportunities.

Ninety-one percent of the full-time faculty hold a terminal degree. Over the last five years, tenured full-time faculty at the University have averaged around 74%, while tenure track have averaged around 22%. According to 2009-2010 data, around 69% of adjunct faculty hold a master's degree or higher. Faculty report a clear understanding of department and program criteria for retention, tenure, and promotion and yet express uncertainties about University policies and standards on retention and tenure. There has been a steady decline in the promotion and retention of tenured faculty. In particular, associate professors have decreased from 98 to 84 and full professors have decreased from 147 to 130.

Faculty are strongly committed not only to teaching but also to scholarly, creative, and service activities. Faculty averaged two to three scholarly publications, presentations or creative works in the 2008-2009 academic year (i.e., 108 peer-reviewed publications, 9 books, 13 edited books, 26 scholarly book chapters, 17 teaching-related publications, 214 scholarly and professional

conference presentations, 109 workshops presented or led, 26 panels moderated, and 100 creative works and performances).

The relationship between the administration and the Faculty Senate is strained, and the role of the Senate is unclear.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Faculty are assuming considerable advising and overload responsibilities to assist Kean University meet the demands of an increasing student population. At the same time, with the administration's emphasis on the teacher-scholar model, faculty continue to engage in scholarly and creative activities in their disciplines.

Suggestions

1. Kean University should develop/implement plans to replenish and increase tenure-track lines.
2. The University needs to continue the recruitment of diverse faculty.
3. A plan should be implemented along with strategies to increase the retention of associate professors and promotions, and sabbatical leave policies should be revisited for full-time faculty.
4. More creative efforts should be implemented to ensure faculty professional development opportunities, including support for grant writing, administration and pedagogical training.
5. With the University's strong dependence on adjunct faculty, professional development workshops on the recruitment, selection, and training of adjuncts should be provided.
6. The President should work proactively with the Faculty Senate to enhance the relationship between the Senate and administration. The administration should collaboratively determine whether the Faculty Senate serves as a consultative or decision making body.

Chapter Seven: Educational Offerings and General Education

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

Standard 12: General Education

Kean University meets these standards.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. The process of reviewing courses and academic programs has been undertaken by the Kean University Curriculum Committee (UCC). The UCC processes are also used to discontinue courses and programs. External consultants have also been used in the development of new academic programs. A number of new undergraduate and graduate programs have been developed in the last five years, and more than 50 undergraduate offerings have been discontinued. The University has also entered into a number of agreements with other universities to provide a variety of graduate and undergraduate course and program offerings.

Doctoral programs were created in 2008 with a five year Psychology Doctorate (Psy.D.) and a 90 credit Doctor of Education (Ed.D) in Urban Leadership degree. A number of undergraduate and graduate programs are offered at Kean Ocean as a part of an articulation agreement, and a new campus will be constructed sometime in 2013. Field based opportunities are available through internships, study abroad opportunities, on-line learning and experiential learning. The assessment of academic programs and links to decision-making processes are limited as most assessment processes are planned for the future.

Course syllabi have been reviewed and contain learning outcomes at the undergraduate level in General Education, and the Executive Directors/Department Chairpersons continue to review course syllabi. A policy was developed in 2008 that requires mandatory review of syllabi by department chairpersons to insure inclusion of learning outcomes, goals and objectives, and course and faculty information. Eighty-six percent of syllabi contain consistent course objectives and 54% of courses taught by adjuncts contain syllabi with learning goals and objectives. Annual reports have been completed by departments along with program reviews to evaluate the academic rigor and course content of educational offerings. Distinction has been made between undergraduate and graduate course requirements.

There is a concern about the distinction between graduate and undergraduate faculty qualifications. The growing number of adjuncts over the past ten years has been documented as there are now over 1,000 adjunct faculty members teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

The Admissions function clearly defines admission criteria for both the undergraduate and graduate programs, and academic program guides are available to students seeking admission. Academic advising has been assessed using focus groups by the Director of Assessment.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University has attempted to respond to the educational needs of its surroundings by developing academic programs that service its surrounding communities. The University has developed a sophisticated process of reviewing courses and programs and discontinuing those that it deems not needed. A number of programs include requirements for internships that provide students with “real world” experiences. The University also serves the non-traditional population in a number of different ways. For example, services are available to assist returning adults. Kean’s Library staff is dedicated to working with faculty members in providing information that is needed to support the academic mission of the University.

Suggestions

1. The Kean University community needs to have a better understanding of the evaluation process used to initiate new undergraduate and graduate academic programs.
2. The re-establishment of academic annual reports and the five year review process needs to be implemented for all academic departments.
3. It is important that the use of learning outcomes be expanded to all courses offered, including those taught by adjuncts.

4. The University is concerned about its graduation rates and how to improve them. Significant planning and assessment will be needed in order to achieve its goals. The new Enrollment Management Plan is a place to start but other evaluation efforts will need to be developed.

5. Adjunct faculty have a contract but need to be more integrated into routine campus life.

Standard 12: General Education

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University's School of General Studies with a new director provides an academic location for general education. Faculty assume responsibility for general education with adjunct faculty assuming primary involvement. The University created a General Education Strategic Plan in August 2010 with a revised general education mission, more focused learning goals for select general education courses, the creation of a Blackboard community, communication strategies, and a comprehensive assessment schedule. However, the assessment of general education is in its infancy and is inconsistent and fragmented rather than institutional and process-oriented. The hiring of the Director of Assessment in February 2010 should provide an added benefit to the collection of data, development of student learning objectives, and assessment of general education. Professional development and workshops related to general education are limited.

General Education includes: (a) Five Foundation courses (introduce general education expectations in the first semester of college); (b) Distribution courses in Humanities, Social Sciences, Science & Mathematics, and Health & Physical Education (31 departments), and (c) major Capstone course. A one-credit first-year experience course, referred to as T2K, is offered once-a-week and is taught voluntarily by adjunct faculty (10 in '08-'09) and staff (38 in '08-'09). The completion rate over the past five years was 80.45%.

When asked about the completion of general education requirements and the success in majors, (a) 54% of chairpersons and program coordinators reported that general education prepared students for completion of the major; (b) 60% of chairpersons and program coordinators reported that the minimum grade requirements for general education courses assured student success in the major; and, (c) 62% of chairpersons and program coordinators reported that students completed general education requirements based on course sequencing in the major.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University is to be commended for creating a School of General Studies. It is hoped that under the direction of the new director, the General Education Strategic Plan will be fully implemented. Although the self-study points out that adjunct faculty carry the burden of general education courses, it is also pointed out that student pass rates are similar, if not higher, for adjunct faculty, as compared to full-time faculty.

The University offers a first-year experience course that is adjusted to accommodate feedback and survey results. The University has been a member of John Gardner's *Foundations of Excellence* since 2009.

Although legitimate concerns are raised about the disconnect between academic departments and general education programs, some preliminary efforts are being made to improve communication by requiring reports, data, programmatic improvement, goal setting, and information on resource challenges from executive directors, department chairpersons, and deans.

Suggestions

1. The Kean University community needs to undertake a campus-wide dialogue to reinforce the fact that general education assessment is everyone's responsibility. This involves establishing clear learning outcomes for general education, including how courses prepare students to be successful as they declare majors.
2. More full-time faculty should be involved in the delivery of general education courses.
3. The University needs to provide more resources for professional development and workshops related to general education.

Chapter Eight: Related Educational Activities

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

Kean University meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Kean University's partnership with Ocean County College to develop an additional location on the site of the college has resulted in enrollments at Kean Ocean that have nearly quadrupled since 2008. Kean Ocean offers over 15 undergraduate degrees and over 5 Masters Degree programs. With a current enrollment of approximately 1500 students, Kean Ocean is projected to grow in size. The University is currently building the first of several buildings to house the new branch campus. Ocean County, one of the fastest growing counties in New Jersey, will now have a local higher education option to offer its student residents. The University, in accordance with its strategic plan to make the institution available to a larger population, has developed partnerships with several other New Jersey community colleges as well.

With over 70% of the University's student body enrolled in one or more remedial courses, the institution faces challenges in educating many of its students. Systematic procedures are in place to identify students who are not fully prepared for college level study. Non-credit reading classes and courses in basic skills along with an array of academic support services for students needing assistance are offered. Repeat failures in basic skills courses remain unacceptably high.

Other related educational activities at Kean include honors sections of major course requirements, international programs, and collateral programs. The Kean Experiential Learning Program awards credit to those students who have demonstrated knowledge attained. Although there is no designated degree program offered via distance education, Kean does offer some on-line courses and has plans in place to increase and improve their distance learning offerings. While there is an on-line instruction center through the Office of Continuing and Professional Education, there is no central coordination for on-line learning programs.

In compliance with the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, Kean offers certification programs to professionals in local school districts and businesses in response to work force shortages and employer needs. Collateral programs, offerings which provide career and professional opportunities, have very modest activity. Only eight of the 17 programs have student enrollment. Many students and even faculty struggle to find a purpose for these interdisciplinary programs. The University is also committed to serving disadvantaged students in the community school districts through various programs.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

The Kean Ocean partnership, a joint admissions program, is a step towards providing a seamless transfer of community college credits in accordance with the New Jersey Comprehensive State-Wide Agreement. Offerings at Kean Ocean appear to meet standards for quality of instruction, academic rigor and educational effectiveness comparable to those of other institutional offerings. Due to a steady increase in student enrollment and potential growth, the impact of Kean Ocean on the institution's resources does not impede the University in fulfilling its mission and goals.

Underprepared students who desire to obtain a college education at the University are provided with remedial and academic assistance. Study abroad programs are available to Kean students. Additionally, the University has signed articulation agreements with three universities in China and is planning to further develop this initiative.

The University is currently developing and preparing to implement policies to standardize on-line course offerings and to be in compliance with Section 495 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of August 2008. Plans are in place to hire a distance learning coordinator.

Suggestions

1. Systematic assessment plans are needed for all educational activities at Kean University to meet the goals and objectives of its strategic plan.
2. Retention and graduation rate data are needed to determine the success of remedial programs.
3. Evaluation is needed to determine the continuation of collateral programs.
4. The University needs to determine its direction in regards to distance education. Additionally, better coordination along with long term planning is needed for on-line learning initiatives.

Chapter Nine: Assessment of Student Learning

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Kean University does not meet this standard.

Summary of Evidence and Findings

Based upon a review of the self-study, other institutional documents, and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and others, the Visiting Team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard. Despite a history of student learning outcomes assessment, Kean University has not demonstrated an organized or sustained assessment process during the reaccreditation period. In the past ten years, the University developed three different programs: a Program Review Process which was suspended in 2005, a General Education Assessment process that was stymied by a

shift from program level to department level in 2004, and a Task Force on Assessment that began work but did not follow through on assessment program implementation.

Assessment of general education learning outcomes is conducted in a number of courses. These assessments include pre and post tests, rubrics, portfolios, external norms, capstone evaluation and more. However, these data are not used consistently for program improvement. It is unclear if, or how, these data are gathered or disseminated to instructors. In some cases, General Education data is gathered and used for improvement, particularly in the Transition to Kean, English Composition and Speech Communication areas. This progress could be extended to include other General Education areas.

At the College level, areas that do not have external accreditation lag behind in implementing assessment. The College of Natural, Applied and Health Sciences and the Nathan Weiss Graduate College do not conduct college wide assessment of student learning.

Overall, use of data for program improvement, or “close-the-loop” activities is poorly documented. Surveys conducted for the self-study show that 81% of departments have used assessment data for program changes within the last five years, but it is unclear what that means. There are only a few examples of best practices included that explain how data were used which are limited to the reporting of the successes in the College of Education and Composition Program. A few other good examples are provided, including the Department of Theatre, Department of Music, School of Nursing, Marketing Department, Geology/Meteorology, and Communication.

These anecdotal examples are important in demonstrating that there are pockets of assessment program success around campus, but they do not fulfill the requirements stated in Standard 14.

Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

Kean University is in the process of developing a comprehensive student learning outcomes assessment process. An Office of Accreditation and Assessment has been created and a Director of Assessment has been hired who has demonstrated leadership for student learning outcomes on campus. The Office of Accreditation and Assessment has also developed an Assessment Toolkit. The University has established a Faculty Senate Assessment Committee to guide and integrate student learning outcomes assessment on campus.

The College of Education is a leader in assessment, and has demonstrated a documented, organized and sustained assessment program that is rooted in their mission and goals. Their assessment program uses data effectively to measure student progress and feeds their findings back into program improvement initiatives. They have ample evidence to demonstrate that they share and discuss their data with appropriate constituents and that their assessment program is an essential part of their college.

Suggestions

1. Kean University should resume the academic program review cycle.
2. The University should implement curriculum mapping.
3. All undergraduate departments should be encouraged to establish rubrics to assess student performance in capstone courses and use the outcomes for program improvement.

4. The University should employ multiple measures when assessing student learning outcomes.
5. The University should encourage and support the strengthening of General Education learning outcomes.
6. On-going research should be conducted on student engagement and use the results to improve the culture of assessment and campus processes and procedures related to student learning outcomes.
7. The University should encourage and reward standardized assessment of course and program objectives.
8. Departments should be encouraged to establish rubrics to assess student performance in master's thesis and doctoral dissertations and use the outcomes for program improvements.
9. There should be a central repository for academic assessment reports.
10. The University should establish a best practice showcase for the undergraduate and graduate communities to encourage and share the positive outcomes of student learning.
11. The University should place teaching and learning as well as the assessment of learning at the center of Kean programming, training and workshops.
12. The University should consider establishing a Center for Teaching Excellence to improve the institution's pedagogy (assist with the professional training of full- and part-time faculty).
13. Alumni surveys should be utilized as indirect measures to ascertain the satisfaction of graduates with their learning outcomes.

Requirements

1. Kean University needs to establish an institution-wide, systematic and integrated student learning outcomes assessment program.
2. The University must utilize assessment outcomes for program improvement in order to "close-the-loop."

VI. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUING COMPLIANCE AND REQUIREMENTS

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

Recommendations

1. Kean University should design and implement a University-wide assessment process to generate tangible evidence indicating the extent to which the institution is meeting the aspirations of its mission statement. Clear guidelines and realistic timelines for implementing institution-wide assessment should be established.

2. As part of the assessment process, the University should continue to establish relevant Key Performance Indicators with stated goals, specific benchmarks, and comprehensible scorecards that coincide with the mission statement aspirations.

3. Senior management should encourage and empower ownership of the University assessment process to appropriate offices, areas or personnel. Those entities should be provided with adequate resources and be held responsible for tangible outcomes, which may include assigning an assessment liaison for every unit and providing campus-wide assessment training.

Requirements

1. Kean University needs to establish, promote, foster, sustain and demonstrate a culture of evidence and assessment.

2. The University must utilize assessment outcomes for program improvement in order to “close-the-loop.”

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

Requirements

1. Kean University needs to establish an institution-wide, systematic and integrated student learning outcomes assessment program.

2. The University must utilize assessment outcomes for program improvement in order to “close-the-loop.”