

Kean University Action Plan 2020

Executive Summary

Kean University is a public cosmopolitan university serving undergraduate and graduate students in the liberal arts, the sciences, and the professions. The University dedicates itself to the intellectual, cultural and personal growth of all its members. In particular, the University prepares students to think critically, creatively and globally; to adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments; and to serve as active and contributing members of their communities. The University seeks to combine excellence with equity in providing opportunities for all students. (Kean University Mission Statement)

As a public university in NJ, in an extremely diverse region, Kean is committed to providing access, opportunity, and affordability to our students and the surrounding community. Not only is Kean culturally diverse, as indicated by being named among the top institutions for diversity. Kean is proud of its history of service to the community. Through the vision of the President and the Board of Trustees, the University has answered the call to serve, and continues to be supportive and committed to civic engagement initiatives. Through active civic participation, we aim to develop civically minded student leaders who will lead the way in impacting our campus and our surrounding community.

Leadership

Susan Figueroa – Managing Assistant Director Community Service and Civic Engagement – Center for Leadership and Service

Scott Snowden – Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs

Jason Pleitez – Student Trustee, Service Specialist

Corinne Kenny – Graduate Intern Community Service - Center for Leadership and Service

Lauretta Farrell - Director Human Rights Institute

Collaborators

Human Rights Institute

School of General Studies

Office of Student Government

Office of Residential Student Services

Involvement Center

Leadership Institute

Greek Life
Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
Holocaust Resource Center
Africana Studies
Center for Interdisciplinary Studies

Partnerships

Campus Compact - Campus Compact New Jersey operates as a higher education presidents' coalition guided by a mission to further community prosperity by generating both commitment and access to civic engagement initiatives.

When We All Vote: Nonpartisan organization that is on a mission to increase participation in every election and close the race and age voting gap by changing the culture around voting, harnessing grassroots energy, and through strategic partnerships to reach every American.

ALL IN Campus: The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge strives to change civic culture and institutionalize democratic engagement activities and programs on college campuses, making them a defining feature of campus life.

Ask Every Student: Uses the framework that full student voter participation comes from integrating person-to-person voter registration into existing processes, such as orientation or classes that reach all students.

BallotReady: BallotReady aggregates content from candidates' websites, social media, press, endorsers and board of elections for comprehensive, nonpartisan information about the candidates and referendums on your ballot.

Democracy Works: Democracy Works is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the status quo by using technology to make voter engagement seamless.

Issue Voter: Application that helps students maneuver the issues on Capitol Hill that they care about and alerts them about relevant new bills. IssueVoter summarizes the issues, and offers pros, cons, and related news for context, keeping students informed year-round.

League of Women Voters: The League of Women Voters of the United States encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Teaching Tolerance: Teaching Tolerance emphasizes social justice and anti-bias. The anti-bias approach encourages children and young people to challenge prejudice and learn how to be agents of change in their own lives. Our Social Justice Standards show how anti-bias education works through the four domains of identity, diversity, justice and action.

Commitment

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

Kean is proud of its history of engagement. Through the direct support of the President's Office and the Board of Trustees, The Center for Leadership and Service was established in 2009, creating a comprehensive connection point for student development and empowerment, assisting students to create change and have a positive impact on campus and in the community. The Center works with various departments and student organizations to join, plan, organize, implement, and assess initiatives on behalf of the University. The Center oversees and coordinates voter registrations drives, National Voter Registration Day, Voter Volunteer Orientations and Voter Education throughout the year. Organizing these opportunities into defined areas of social concern, encourages Kean students to move from understanding the issues, to attempting to create impact through their voice and their ballot.

In addition, The Human Rights Institute is also recognized as a major resource aimed at promoting understanding and tolerance across ethnic, racial, religious and other barriers. This year their focus was voting and human rights which created a concerted approach to synthesize efforts within the division of student affairs but also across the division. This partnership helped provide programs to be co-sponsored and supported by The Center for Leadership and Service and all of the student groups under its umbrella as we move forward into the new normal we are experiencing in NJ.

Landscape

Beginning in 2012, the School of General Studies curriculum required civic engagement as a mandated component of freshman seminar. Participating in Registration Drives has become one of the staple offerings that first year students can be a part of on campus throughout the year. First year students must write their freshman seminar reflection based on this experience once they have selected it as their GE approved service/civic engagement program.

All students involved in voter registration drives, voter education orientations/programs are eligible for service hours as well as the addition of their activity onto their official Co-Curricular Transcript, which is signed by the Vice President of Student Affairs and sealed by the Registrar's Office as an official Kean University document.

For Spring 2020, Kean University completed its first freshman student path through Campus Labs, promoting student engagement. The path encompasses six domains; one of the domains is civic engagement. Participation in an on-campus voter registration drive and registering to vote were two of the primary electives for the civic engagement domain. The second phase of the pathway will begin for upperclassmen beginning Fall 2020 with distinct features supporting voter participation.

Kean University's President has signed the Presidential Commitment to striving toward full student voter participation for 2020 with the All In Campus Challenge.

The Center for Leadership and Service oversees all campus voter education postings and supports balanced non-partisan accurate informational materials and supports equal opportunities for all students to take part in free political speech through clear university and state policy enforcement.

In terms of programming, there have been many disruptions due to COVID-19 and therefore we can only provide the most current information in terms of what has occurred and what we plan to see happen for the remainder of the summer and the fall. Many initiatives were postponed/cancelled in March and April and we await how to best translate initiatives into the virtual space in order to reach the greatest number of students.

Goals

Short Term Goals:

- To imbed voter registration into the New Student Orientation process for the first time for 2020.
- To begin using Turbo Vote reporting tools to help see a clearer picture of student trends across campus and provide easier access to all students.
- To support voter registration efforts on our satellite campuses at Kean Ocean and the Skylands.
- To counter the negative effects of COVID-19 on our voter education process.

Long Term Goals:

- To work with technological services to imbed voter registration into all university platforms: KeanWise, university website landing pages, student portals, etc.
- To continually introduce voter engagement into more major campus events and programming to achieve 100% voter registration rate and above 75% voter participation rate.

Strategy

Implementation of voter registration during New Student Orientation for all first year students for Summer 2020. The Center for Leadership and Service will be presenting (either in person or virtually) during campus engagement sessions that all first year students will be attending during orientation days planned throughout the summer months, beginning in early July and throughout August. New Student Orientation Leaders will be trained as part of their job responsibilities to support all new students with all voter registration questions and issues before they begin the fall semester.

Cougar Link (Kean's Campus Labs Engagement Software) will be used to ask a student to register to vote on signing in. Cougar Link is the primary high volume software in the co-curricular arena for Kean University. This will be the first time that option is being utilized.

A campus wide email blast to remind students of voter registration programming, connect them to helpful tools and support their familiarization to early voting and vote by mail processes to be better prepared to navigate unfamiliar due to COVID-19. The NJ primaries have already shifted to July from June so information campaigns are pivotal to support current changes and potential future voting uncertainty for Kean students .

Utilize social media platforms throughout the division of student affairs as well as flyers and posters purposefully created to inform the student body of deadlines, voting information related to primaries and elections as well as tools that can support and assist the student's knowledge base as Election Day approaches.

Promote early voting and mail-in ballot to combat potential aversion to large groups assembling (due to the current state of emergency due to COVID-19).

Voter Registration Drives will continue in person if the campus is open and will be reimaged as Virtual Couch Parties if the university decides to run the fall semester remotely.

Voter Registration drives will continue on a bi-weekly basis beginning in June and leading into the fall whether we are in person or remote. Netflix Parties have been an ongoing virtual program followed by a Google Hangout after the movie to discuss voting issues and politics. The virtual program is geared at sharing resources such as Turbo Vote and Issue Voter. These types of programs have started remotely in April and will continue until Election Day.

Voter Registration Drives

Students are encouraged to engage in the process by helping to co-host a voter registration drive/Couch Party sponsored by the Center for Leadership and Service

- Students/Groups must Pre-Register for the event on cougar link
- Orientation must be completed before the drive
- Peer to Peer Registration efforts during drives is essential
- Service Hours can be earned for Voter Registration Drive completion

Voter Registration Drives Permeates Major Events

- New Student Orientation - Summer 2020
- Meet the Greeks – Traditionally Sept but TBD as per COVID-19 impacts on campus versus virtual attendance for Fall 2020
- Kean Day – Traditionally September but TBD as per COVID-19 impacts on campus versus virtual attendance for Fall 2020
- Welcome Week Programs - Traditionally September but TBD as per COVID-19 impact
- Community Service Fair – Traditionally Sept but TBD as per COVID-19 impacts on campus versus virtual attendance for Fall 2020
- National Voter Registration Day – September 22 , 2020 - Multiple drives occurring across all sections of campus.
- Human Rights Conference - VOTE: Human Rights in Action - September 22, 2020
- Student Governments Black History Month Kick Off Event focussed on 2020 Theme of African Americans and The Vote
- MLK Week of Service focussed on student engagement around Black History Month Theme of African Americans and The Vote. Programming examples such as trivia, tabling, voter registration tabling, voting through the decades displays, etc. - February 2020

Voter Registration Forms distributed and monitored throughout the campus, specifically at the following locations if we are in person.

- Center for Leadership and Service
- Disability Services
- Harwood Arena Information Desk
- Maxine and Jack Lane Center for Academic Success Information Desk
- Miron Student Center Information Desk
- One Stop Service Center
- Office of Residential Student Services
- Office of Student Affairs, Kean Hall
- Student Health Services
- Office of Student Government
- NAAB Front Main Desk
- Stem Building Main Desk
- Library

Voting Programming

The 13th Annual Human Rights Conference topic for 2020 is (VOTE: Human Rights in Action) which will take place on September 22, 2020. The conference which was scheduled for March will be held virtually in order to reach the maximum participants regardless of what is occurring in terms of COVID-19. The purpose of the conference is to provide students, educators and activists with the opportunity to hear from leading experts about voting and human rights.

The Rohingya: How We Deny, Forget or Ignore Genocide - Holocaust Resource Center

Super Tuesday Results Party - Human Rights Institute

Suffragist March - Human Rights Institute

SHOUT! A History of Votes for Women - A Poetry Reading - Vice President for Academic Affairs

Census 2020 Be Prepared - Human Right Institute and Lambda Theta Phi

Constitution Day - Center for Leadership and Service and Human Rights Institute

Make Your Mark - Office of Residential Student Services

Distinguished Lecture Series - Martin Luther King Jr. - President's Office

Distinguished Lecture Series - Samantha Power - President's Office

Everything You Need to Know About Voting - HRI

African People: Law and Order in the Age of Trump - Center for Interdisciplinary Studies

The Voting Rights War - Office of Africana Studies

Let's Caucus - Mock Caucus - Lambda Theta Phi and HRI

Debate Watch Party - Human Rights Institute

Knock Down The House - Center for Leadership and Service

Which Candidate Do You Want to Spend Your Valentine With - Human Rights Institute

Voting 101 - Human Rights institute conversations about human rights, with a focus on voting and the census.

Census 2020 - Human Rights institute conversations about human rights, with a focus on voting and the census.

Summer 2020 Bookclub

- *The End of America*, by Naomi Wolf. An impassioned call to action for Americans from all walks of life to restore the checks and balances and time-honored protections against abuses of power outlined by the Founding Fathers. Though written over a decade ago, the issues raised are even more relevant today. Aim to invite Dr. Wolf to participate in this discussion.
- *Not on Our Watch*, by John Prendergast, former Anne Evans Estabrook Senior Human Rights Fellow at Kean.
- *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, by Martin Luther King, Jr. In this book, King defends the strategy of nonviolent resistance to systemic racism in America, explaining that people have a moral responsibility to break unjust laws and take direct action to change society. We will aim to invite Martin Luther King III to participate.

Reporting

NSLVE results will be shared throughout the university through educational campaigns, allowing for campus wide acknowledgement of where we stand institutionally and where we would like to see ourselves in November and beyond.

Broad Social Media campaign (especially if we remain remotely learning) to help students realize that they are an important untapped voting block especially as first year students (since first year students vote at a significantly lower rate than any other

student). We aim to inspire and target first year student participation with introduction of voter engagement during New Student Orientation.

Cougar Link (Campus Labs) Through Campus labs we will be able to track student attendance in relation to their participation in civically minded programs as well as support organizations that broadly cover voting topics.

Co-Curricular Transcript provides documentation of service hours rendered in the area of civic engagement.

Cougar Climb completion rate will show how many first year students (and upperclassmen) who specifically completed civic engagement domains that encompass voter engagement criteria.

Evaluation

Turbo Vote advanced reporting and tracking approved for June 2020 through purchase order and to be used as a valuable reporting tool for upcoming election cycles. Since it will be the first time we will have access to Turbo Vote reports, we anticipate this tool being an addition to the information that we acquire through NSLVE.

National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) participation to best track changes in voter registrations and voting patterns of Kean University students to assess impact of initiatives.

NSLVE information will be shared with all university vice presidents as a continued resource to be used in the classroom, in academic research and co-curricular planning. Student affairs directors will also gain access to the report for the 2020 cycle including Health Services, Counseling Services, Miron Student Center, Center for Leadership and Service, Student Government. The report will also be directly shared with The Human Rights Institute, Holocaust Resource Center, Student Affairs Vice President/Assist Vice Presidents and Academic Affairs Vice President/Assist Vice Presidents.