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**QuickTakes!**

## **Newark Museum Internship Puts Kean University Senior on Path Toward Arts Leadership**

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*Jennifer Zuniga, a Kean University art history student, is interning at the Newark Museum as part of the new Diversifying Art Museum Leadership initiative.*

A Kean University art history student is being groomed as a future leader in the art world with a prestigious three-year internship at the Newark Museum.

Senior Jennifer Zuniga, who grew up in Jersey City and now lives in Elizabeth, started her Diversifying Art Museum Leadership Initiative internship in June 2018. The program exposes college students to the full range of museum departments, paying them while training them in all aspects of the business.

“It’s an understatement to say I’m excited at this opportunity to gain in-depth museum experience while continuing my education at Kean,” said Ms. Zuniga, who is one of six interns in the program at the museum. “I will graduate with three years of experience, which already sets me up with a foot in the door.”

The \$6 million initiative is funded by the Ford Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation at 20 museums across the country with the goal of diversifying curatorial and management staff. Newark Museum is the only museum in the New York-metropolitan area that is part of the initiative.

Ms. Zuniga said she applied to the program despite initial skepticism.

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“I didn’t think there was a grant or group of people who cared enough to start an initiative like this,” she said. “As time passed by, I realized that this is truly a goal that they have – to diversify art museums. That has me super excited. It makes me think about big things for the future, about being someone working in the museum world who is going to make a change.”

A first-generation college student and daughter of Honduran immigrants, Ms. Zuniga said she offers a perspective that can help transform museum accessibility.

“Going into a museum or gallery can be intimidating to some people. You may think you need a certain level of education to understand the exhibits. My mother has expressed to me that she doesn’t want to go certain places because she will feel out of place,” Ms. Zuniga said. “Being more conscious of the kinds of audiences that we are reaching out to and trying to gear exhibits to everyone would be a better goal to have in mind.”

Ms. Zuniga previously interned in membership and special events at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

At the Newark Museum, Jennifer currently works in education and exhibition design, after rotating through the development department where she learned about fundraising, grant writing and corporate philanthropy.

“Jennifer Zuniga’s selection at the debut of this prestigious program demonstrates that the academic preparation Kean University students receive enables them to successfully compete with the best in New Jersey and across the country,” said Associate Provost Suzanne Bousquet, PhD.

As part of the initiative, Ms. Zuniga will spend 10 weeks this summer at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas on a fully funded externship.

“The well-considered, flexible structure of the initiative opens the door to working-class students and promises an innovative collaboration between art institutions and universities,” said Lewis Kachur, PhD, Ms. Zuniga’s art history professor at Kean.

Ms. Zuniga already is thinking about her next steps after her internship ends. She may attend graduate school and ultimately pursue a doctoral degree. Or, she may put all of her experience to work right away with a job in development at a museum.