



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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QuickTakes!

Kean's New College of Liberal Arts Shines Spotlight on Developing Critical Thinking Skills

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Kean University recently launched a new College of Liberal Arts, encompassing programs formerly under the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The College reflects Kean's dedication to student success and to liberal arts education as a core component of any undergraduate degree program.

The Kean University College of Liberal Arts will provide current and future generations of students with affordable access to a liberal arts education. Areas of study include journalism, English, psychology, history, political science, sociology, economics and the performing and fine arts.

The newly created School of Fine and Performing Arts within the College offers a wide range of bachelor's degree programs in Kean's new Fine Arts Conservatory, Theatre Conservatory and Music Conservatory.

Jonathan Mercantini, PhD, has been appointed dean of the College. Dr. Mercantini has been with Kean since 2007, most recently as an associate professor and chair of the university's history department.

"Students in the College of Liberal Arts will develop critical thinking, written and oral communication, and analytical skills sought by employers. Moreover, they will come to appreciate how the liberal arts enriches their lives and communities," said Dr. Mercantini. "With outstanding faculty committed to student success, the College of Liberal Arts is poised to provide a world-class education."

Dr. Mercantini is the author of *Who Shall Rule at Home: The Evolution of South Carolina's Political Culture, 1748-1776* and was Emmy nominated in 2017 for his work on *It Happened Here - New Jersey*, a weekly series on New Jersey history. He earned his PhD in American history from Emory University.

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Kean fine arts students exhibit their work throughout the year in the University's many galleries, and performing arts students have many opportunities to work and perform alongside globally acclaimed artists. In the past year alone, Kean performing arts students appeared onstage with Broadway legend Patti LuPone and folk music icon Judy Collins, and had master class workshops with Tony Award winner Billy Porter and innovative choreographer Michael Mao, and others. In addition, performing arts students have the opportunity to earn Equity credits toward working with Kean's professional theatre-in-residence, Premiere Stages. Kean's state-of-the-art studio and performance spaces provide fine and performing arts majors with meaningful professional opportunities.

"This reorganization was designed to strengthen Kean's programs and offerings, and enhance resources invested in these programs," said Jeffrey Toney, PhD, Kean University provost and vice president for academic affairs.

About Kean University

Founded in 1855, Kean University has become one of the largest metropolitan institutions of higher education in the region, with a richly diverse student, faculty and staff population. Kean continues to play a key role in the training of teachers and is a hub of educational, technical and cultural enrichment serving nearly 15,000 students. The University's five undergraduate colleges offer more than 50 undergraduate degrees over a full range of academic subjects. The Nathan Weiss Graduate College offers four doctoral degree programs and more than 60 options for graduate study leading to master's degrees, professional diplomas or certifications. With campuses in Union and Toms River, New Jersey, and Wenzhou, China, Kean University furthers its mission by providing an affordable and accessible world-class education. Visit www.kean.edu.