



NEW JERSEY

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QuickTakes!

Kean University Receives \$1.5 Million Federal Grant for Student Academic Support

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Kean University's Supplemental Instruction (SI) program has received a \$1.5 million federal grant to fund a major expansion of the program, which offers specialized, peer-to-peer academic support to students enrolled in traditionally difficult gateway courses such as chemistry and mathematics.

The grant from the Department of Education will also fund the renovation space and the addition of cutting-edge technology in the Learning Commons to accommodate Supplemental Instruction classrooms. The funds will roll out over five years.



"This expansion will have a direct impact on our students' success," said Neva Lozada, EdD, director of the Kean Office of Student Success and Retention, who applied for the grant and will oversee the expansion. "I am thrilled that a program that began as a pilot program about a year ago will expand more than eightfold by the Spring semester. I am excited about what's to come."

Supplemental Instruction puts SI leaders – students who have already taken and excelled in the selected classes – into those classes again to attend lectures, take notes, act as model students and work with faculty. They then hold informal review sessions for any students in the class seeking extra help.

The program began in Fall 2018 by supporting General Chemistry I, and in Spring 2019, General Chemistry II and Computer Organization and Programming were added. By 2024, it will support eight challenging courses in chemistry, computer science, math and accounting. The initial staff of six SI leaders is expected to grow to more than 50 by the Spring semester.

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“For many students, these difficult gateway courses are roadblocks to completing their degrees,” said Felice Vazquez, Kean’s special counsel and vice president for planning. “Our Supplemental Instruction program is removing those roadblocks and helping our students achieve their academic potential.”

Data from the first year of the SI program shows that students who attended the sessions saw a 38 percent average higher final grade compared to students who chose not to get the extra academic support, Dr. Lozada said. She said the number of withdrawals in the courses also decreased.

SI attendance this year is far outpacing last year. Since classes began in September, 297 students have attended 801 Supplemental Instruction sessions. About 200 students participated in the program during the last academic year.

“The expansion of the SI program supports Kean’s ongoing effort to bolster student services and help students stay in school and graduate on time,” Dr. Lozada said. “It also gives high-achieving students an opportunity to take on leadership roles on campus. It is a win for all of our students.”

Hayya Ali, a junior from Sayreville majoring in cell and molecular biology, is an SI Leader supporting students in chemistry.

“Being an SI Leader is very rewarding,” Ali said. “It helps me every day by interacting with different people who want to go into the same field as me. I love helping my peers and appreciate that they are so confident in my ability. I also get to refresh my skills in chemistry.”

About Kean University

Founded in 1855, Kean University is 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, technological and cultural enrichment serving more than 16,000 students. The University’s six undergraduate colleges offer more than 50 undergraduate degrees over a full range of academic subjects. The Nathan Weiss Graduate College offers six doctoral degree programs and more than 80 options for graduate study leading to master’s degrees, professional diplomas or certifications. With campuses in Union, Toms River, Jefferson and Manahawkin, New Jersey and Wenzhou, China, Kean University furthers its mission by providing an affordable and accessible world-class education. Visit www.kean.edu.