



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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**QuickTakes!**

## **Legislative Office of NJ Assemblyman Dan Benson Mentors Kean University STEM Major**

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The summer before starting her graduate studies in biotechnology at Kean University, and just weeks after graduating from Kean with a Bachelor of Arts in science and technology, Union resident Chelsea Mann '17 worked at a summer internship – in politics. It wasn't a typical path for a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) major. The position didn't involve her usual activities of drawing chemical compound structures or

experimenting with organic synthesis, but it proved that a career in STEM can take many forms.

As a science and environment intern for Assemblyman Daniel Benson, Ms. Mann drafted articles on STEM-related news, updates and legislative policies. She also sat in on voting sessions, hearings and assembly meetings at the New Jersey State House, witnessing the legislative process as bills dealing with some of the state's most pressing issues moved through the legislature.

"As a future scientist, I learned how much the political world affects my research, work and opportunities," said Ms. Mann, who is now enrolled in Kean's Master of Science and Biotechnology Science program. "I was able to utilize the resources I learned at Kean and to incorporate what I knew about scientific writing to create more politically focused pieces."

"As part of the STEM program, I learned how to search for articles, break them down and, more importantly, how to prepare my own research papers using established publishing standards," she said. "So, when it came to drafting articles for Assemblyman Benson's science blog, I used what I had already learned to generate excellent pieces."

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In addition to her studies in Kean's New Jersey Center for Science, Technology, and Mathematics (NJCSTM), Mann earned multiple National Collegial Athletic Association) NCAA-All-Academic Honors as a play for the Cougar's field hockey team and was an active member of the Alpha Sigma and Phi Eta Sigma honor societies.

It also helped that Mann was familiar with her employer. Her senior year, she was named a 2017 New Jersey Governor's STEM Scholar. As part of the highly competitive program, she led a research time of high school students and established connections with some of the state's top pharmaceutical researchers and companies. It was at that time that Assemblyman Benson recruited Ms. Mann for the internship.

"The position wasn't typical for someone majoring in science, but the internship taught me to take every opportunity, even if it doesn't seem to fit your path," said Ms. Mann, who earned her undergraduate degree, summa cum laude, in cellular and molecular biology with a minor in analytical chemistry from Kean in May of 2017.

#### ***About New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics***

*The New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics at Kean University(NJCSTM) offers a vibrant teaching and research environment dedicated to preparing a new generation of innovators for careers as professional scientists, physicians and educators. NJCSTM has 5-year combined B.S./M.S. programs in Biology, Mathematics, and Chemistry Education, Computational Science and Engineering, and Biotechnology, along with a B.S. program in Biomedicine and a partnership with New Jersey Institute of Technology for students pursuing careers in engineering science. With outstanding degree options, engaged faculty and exceptional student support services, NJCSTM provides a rich and supportive learning environment that has achieved unparalleled success in graduation rates and career placement. Visit [www.kean.edu/NJCSTM](http://www.kean.edu/NJCSTM)*