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Kean University Presidential Search

Abstract

Announcement of Presidential Search Committee

Keywords

President, search, Standard VII



KEAN

Return to Campus

A mask mandate is currently in place on campus. Learn more about the University's [health and safety protocols](#) to help protect the campus community from COVID-19 and reduce the spread of the virus.

Kean University Announces Firm for Presidential Search

Sep 16, 2019



Board chair names Presidential Search Committee members

The Kean University Board of Trustees today selected Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates (SPA) to lead the search for the University's next president following the recent announcement by President Dawood Farahi, Ph.D., that 2020 will be his last year as president.

SPA is a leader in executive recruitment for higher education and is familiar with the New Jersey marketplace. The firm most recently completed a successful search for the president of The College of New Jersey, among others. SPA will begin work immediately under the direction of Board Chair Ada Morell '97 and a search committee comprised of a representative group of Kean community members, including trustees, faculty, alumni and students.

"We are excited to work with such a qualified partner with a strong record of success," Morell said. "Selecting Dr. Farahi's successor will not be easy considering his legacy of outstanding accomplishments here at Kean. But we are eager to begin a collaborative process and are confident it will result in finding a new president who will continue to move the University forward."

Farahi, who is the University's 17th leader, told the Kean community during his annual Opening Day Address in late August that 2020 will be his last year as president after serving 17 years in the position. He started at Kean more than 30 years ago as a member of the faculty and was instrumental in championing new academic programs and expanding the University's footprint, including the opening of Wenzhou-Kean University in China.

Morell said she selected the search committee members following consultation with various university leaders, stakeholders and constituents. The committee members bring a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives to the search process. The committee will work with all campus constituencies during the search and provide opportunities for individuals and organizations to share recommendations on the characteristics and qualifications the next President should bring to the job, Morell said.

"The search team knows how important this assignment is to our students, our faculty, our supporters and our future," Morell said. "I'm grateful for their willingness to volunteer their time for this important work."

The University has launched a Presidential Search section of Kean.edu to keep the Kean community informed about the search process. The site will be updated, as information becomes available, with details about the timeline as well as opportunities for members of the public to participate in the process.

“Now that our search firm is on board and the search committee is in place, we will begin the process in earnest,” Morell said. “Kean is a truly amazing university; I have no doubt we will attract some of the best and brightest.”

Chair Morell appointed the following individuals to serve on the 13-member committee that includes trustees, faculty, students, alumni and community leaders:

Patricia Barksdale '95, CRPC – Vice President, Merrill Lynch

Barksdale is a leading wealth management advisor with Merrill Lynch. She has worked in the financial services industry for 38 years, including the past 26 at Merrill. Barksdale graduated Kean with dual degrees in finance and economics. She remains connected to the University and its mission through mentorship programs with Kean students, philanthropy and also by having served as a member of the Kean University Foundation Board of Directors.

Thomas J. Bistocchi, Ph.D. – Kean Trustee, Secretary of the Board

Bistocchi served as superintendent of the Union County Vocational-Technical School District for nearly 10 years before retiring from the post in 2013. At UCVTS, he led the creation of five new high schools for Union County residents, including the creation of the Union County Magnet High School for Science, Mathematics and Technology, one of the highest performing schools in New Jersey. He also served as a member of the Board of Commissioners for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and served in the role of chairman of the Board of Commissioners in 2011.

Consuelo A. Bonillas, Ph.D – Professor, School of Health and Human Performance

Bonillas teaches in the College of Education's School of Health and Human Performance, in addition to her recent assignment as coordinator for the Women's and Gender Studies program. She is an expert in sexual and reproductive health, adolescent pregnancy prevention and women and gender studies and has earned significant national and state grants for research in these fields.

Michael D'Agostino – Kean Trustee, Vice Chair of the Board

D'Agostino has served on the Board since June 2004, overseeing the University's extensive expansion and renovation in his role as chair of the Board's facilities and maintenance committee. He is a strong advocate of the labor community, having started his career working with the Carpenters Union Local 715 and working his way up to leadership roles in organized labor. D'Agostino lives in Union Township, Kean's host community, and is a lifelong resident of Union County.

Kristin Failla '19, Graduate Student, Alumna

Failla graduated from Kean with her Bachelor of Arts in sociology in May 2019, and is currently pursuing her master's degree in marriage and family therapy in the Nathan Weiss Graduate College. Failla was elected by Kean's undergraduate student body as the alternate student trustee to the Board of Trustees in 2017 and served as a voting member of the Board in the 2018-2019 academic year. She remains active with campus organizations as a graduate student, working with enrollment services as a graduate assistant and volunteering for projects with the Center for Leadership and Service.

Steve Fastook, '07H – Kean Trustee, Chair of Kean University Foundation Board

Fastook serves as a member of the Board of Trustees and chairs the Kean University Foundation's Board of Directors. He is an award-winning media production executive and currently works as Senior Vice President of Operations for CNBC, the world's leading business news entity owned by Comcast's NBC Universal Unit. In addition to serving on the University's leadership boards, Fastook works closely with academic programs to provide students with opportunities for internships and work study at CNBC.

Abby Gallego '16, Kean Alumna

Gallego, a resident of Elizabeth, is a 2016 graduate of Kean University with Bachelor of Arts degrees both in psychology and criminal justice. She currently works with CASA of Union County, training court-appointed special advocates for children who live in foster care. Gallego also has experience at Kean advocating on behalf of students as she served as student trustee during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Dave Gibbons – Kean Trustee

Dave Gibbons serves as CEO of Elberon Development Group, a family commercial real estate business that owns and operates approximately 2 million square feet of commercial industrial space in northern New Jersey. He oversees all aspects of the company, including capital allocation, asset management, financial analysis, personnel and strategic planning, with a particular focus on acquisitions, construction and development. He and his family have been longtime benefactors of the University, supporting students through significant investments in both scholarships and campus development.

Linda Lewis – Kean Trustee, Community Leader

Lewis has served on the Board of Trustees since 2003, holding various leadership positions on the executive, academic policy, governance and student affairs committees. She is a guidance counselor at Elizabeth High School where she also serves as a member of the school-management team. Lewis, a Union Township resident, previously served the federal government in the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights where she was charged with supervising equal-opportunity specialists and secretarial staff in the Post-Secondary Division.

Claire Mulry, OTD, OTR, CAPS – Assistant Professor, Department of Occupational Therapy

Mulry has been a practicing occupational therapist for nearly 20 years. She joined the university as a tenure-track faculty member in January 2010 following several years of adjunct work with the department. She specializes in adult rehabilitation practice, aging in place, environmental modifications and acquired brain injury. Mulry is an active participant in both department and campuswide initiatives, having most recently completed a term as Chair of the University Senate, where she continues to serve as a senator.

Ed Oatman '98 – Kean Trustee, Alumnus

Oatman has more than 16 years of governmental experience and currently serves as Union County Manager. In this role, he is responsible for the day-to-day operations and budget of a 21-municipality government with approximately 2,800 full-time employees, serving more than 550,000 residents. He also is responsible for the implementation of the policies of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Deshawn Reed – Undergraduate Student

Reed is a senior at Kean studying exercise science in the College of Education. He expects to graduate in May 2020 and wants to pursue a career as a strength and conditioning coordinator while simultaneously working on developing his culinary skills. Reed is a leader in the classroom and on the football field, where he plays as a defensive lineman, and is considered one of the team's most valuable players. He dreams of becoming an entrepreneur by expanding the small culinary business he owns with friends.

John Turner '92, '97 MPA – CEO, Corporate Synergies Group

Turner serves as CEO of one of the nation's leading employee benefits specialist firms and has an exceptional record of increasing growth through his focus on high-impact, service-driven strategies. Turner earned both his undergraduate and master's degrees at Kean University, along with an MBA from Regis University. He remains connected to the University and its mission through philanthropy and also has served on both the business college's advisory board and the Kean University Foundation Board of Directors.

Chair Morell has asked Fastook to chair the search committee.

The University will work with Storbeck/Pimentel on the development of a candidate profile and the recruitment of candidates via input from all campus constituencies. All faculty, staff, students and alumni, as well as members of the larger Kean community, will be invited to nominate candidates for this important position through the website. The list of candidates will be kept confidential throughout the process.

Please visit the website, www.kean.edu/presidential-search, for more information as the process continues and to stay informed on opportunities to participate in the process.

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