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President Advisory Council Reference

Abstract

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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 Installs President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., as 18th Leader

Oct 14, 2021



Kean University President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., was installed today as the 18th leader of the University in a campuswide ceremony attended by Kean faculty and students, state lawmakers, presidents of other colleges and universities across New Jersey, and family and friends.

A Kean alumnus, former Kean Trustee and the University's first Black president, Repollet gave a moving Inaugural Address in which he shared recollections of his childhood years and his vision for the University's future.

"As I accept this appointment as president, I acknowledge, 'To whom much is given, much will be required,'" he said.

At the University where many students are minority, low-income and the first in their family to attend college, Repollet pledged to foster an environment where students "learn, grow, take risks, make mistakes, regroup and keep climbing higher."

"Building a positive climate and culture is what we're all about," he said. "As Kean emerges as the Urban Research University of New Jersey, I am committed to leveraging the resources of Kean University to contribute directly to solving our state's most challenging social and economic challenges."

Attending the ceremony were New Jersey Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver; Secretary of Higher Education Brian Bridges, Ph.D.; Senators Joseph P. Cryan, Thomas H. Kean Jr. and Nicholas P. Scutari '89, a Kean alumnus; Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin; Governor Phil Murphy's Chief of Staff George Helmy, and other elected officials. The ceremony was also live streamed to a virtual audience.

A procession, including a color guard, 10-piece marching band, more than 100 Kean faculty members, other college and university leaders, and dignitaries, wound through the Kean campus to kick off the event.

Kean Board of Trustees Chair Steve Fastook '06H welcomed the audience, which included the president's wife, Darlene, and daughters, Lauryn and Taylor, and spoke about Repollet's accomplishments.

"President Repollet is already moving this incredible University – this beautiful, state of the art, vibrant and diverse community – forward on its journey to excellence," Fastook said.

The Lt. Governor spoke about Kean's role as an inclusive, diverse university and said Repollet would move the University to "a new height in the State of New Jersey."

"Kean is the place that has sent people out in the world to do miraculous things," Oliver said.

A former New Jersey Education Commissioner, school superintendent, principal and teacher, Repollet was named Kean president in 2020, but the pandemic delayed his formal installation.

Since taking office, he has focused on safety, academic excellence and equity, while overseeing health and safety measures to curtail the spread of COVID-19.

Calling Repollet a “visionary leader and champion for student success,” Secretary of Higher Education Brian Bridges, Ph.D., said under his leadership, the state will strengthen its partnership with Kean University.

“From teacher and coach to principal, Education Commissioner and now University President, Dr. Repollet shares our vision to create a stronger and fairer economy through equity-driven policies that ensure all students, regardless of life circumstances, can earn a college degree at an affordable price,” Bridges said.

Repollet has created programs to increase equity, diversify the faculty and boost research, including spearheading a drive toward elevating Kean to a Carnegie R2 research institution.

Claire Mulry, OTD, chair of Kean’s Occupational Therapy program and a member of the University Senate, offered remarks on behalf of the faculty and noted the historic significance of a former Kean student and Trustee becoming the University’s first Black president.

“But honestly, the real excitement today is not history. It is our future – and how incredibly promising it looks under Dr. Repollet’s leadership,” Mulry said. “As faculty, we are both challenged and excited by his vision of Kean as an R2 Carnegie research institution by 2025. We stand ready and able to work with President Repollet on achieving this goal and many more.”

Repollet spoke directly to students in his address, saying, “like me, you have a duty to keep going so that you can reach back as you climb.”

In his first year as president, Repollet has reached out to students, establishing a President’s Advisory Council and Student Town Halls, creating new recreation spaces, and being a visible presence at campus events.

Jason Pleitez, executive president of Student Organization, spoke on behalf of Kean’s students, noting he has worked closely with President Repollet since he took office in the summer of 2020.

“Under his leadership, there is a new life to our institution and in my opinion, the beginning of the most influential era of Kean University yet,” Pleitez said. “I speak for the entire student body when I say that we are overjoyed to stand witness to Kean’s new legacy forming.”

Repollet earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in communication from The College of New Jersey, his master’s in educational leadership at Kean, and a doctorate in education from Nova Southeastern University. He also served on the Kean Board of Trustees from 2011 to 2018.

He began his career as a math teacher and coach in East Orange.

In his address, the president described growing up in Carteret, where he was raised by extended family and saw his parents struggle with unemployment after leaving the military. But he said his parents were “stern when it came to school,” pressing him to do well and instilling a love of learning.

He also quoted Bible scripture, in particular citing the faith of his grandmother, Lola.

“As an adult reflecting on my lived experiences, I now understand and appreciate the meaning of, ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’” Repollet said.

An invocation was offered by the Rev. Dr. DeForest B. Soaries Jr., Repollet’s pastor. The *Star-Spangled Banner*, Kean’s *Alma Mater* and a musical interlude were performed by Kean graduates and the University Gospel Choir.

Repollet shared his deep affection for the University he now leads.

“I have loved Kean fiercely since I first arrived on campus as a graduate student and later as a member of the Board of Trustees,” he said. “I loved it because I instantly felt a connection. I felt like I belonged. I’m determined to make sure each and every student feels the same way.

“I’m determined to build a team and a culture where we lift each other up and catch each other when we stumble.”

PHOTOS: Kean Installs President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., as 18th Leader



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