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### Student Town Hall

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## Student Town Hall

### Abstract

Student Town Hall

### Keywords

Student Town Hall

# Fall 2021 Semester

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.

## Student Town Hall

President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. hosted his second virtual student Town Hall at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 22. Students were invited to register to speak or can view the event on this website.



## View the Recording of the Spring 2021 Virtual Town Hall



## Spring Topics

Kean students were invited to share their perspectives on the upcoming Fall 2021 semester at a **virtual Student Town Hall hosted by President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 22.**

The synopsis below outlines the issues raised by students during the event as well as their own proposed solutions. The University's leadership team is working to address these issues and will post updates as more information becomes available.

### **Cap and gown delivery**

Issue: One student, a graduating senior, expressed concern that caps and gowns would not be delivered to students in time for Commencement.

Status: Caps and gowns were delivered to graduating seniors by May 10.

## **Classroom Safety**

Issue: Several students asked questions about whether it would be safe to return to the classroom in the fall, and what measures are being taken to keep the campus safe.

Status: The University is committed to creating a safe environment for all students, faculty and staff. The President's Task Force, which has been charged with addressing the University's COVID-19 response since Fall 2020, continues to monitor all CDC and state health guidelines. A series of cleaning and sanitation protocols are in place across campus.

A subcommittee of the President's Task Force, including the environmental safety officer, the directors of Student Health Services, Human Resources, Public Safety/Police, and the assistant vice president for Facilities and Campus Planning, was established to serve as the University's ongoing Health and Safety subcommittee.

The University also continues to encourage all members of the campus community to wear a mask, practice social distancing and wash their hands frequently.

## **Course Availability**

Issue: Several students asked if all instruction would be in-person in the fall, and whether it would remain an option for students to continue with remote learning.

Proposed solution: One student suggested that one section of each course be taught via remote learning, for students who choose that modality.

Status: The University is requiring all Kean students who attend in-person classes to receive a COVID-19 vaccine before the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester. To learn

more about why vaccines are so important for our safety, visit the University's [#VaxUpKean website](#).

If you have already registered, you do not need to take any further steps to finalize your course schedule at this point. You'll receive further instructions about submitting your vaccination record in the coming weeks.

If you have not already registered for the Fall, here are two options:

1. If you are currently vaccinated or plan to become vaccinated by the end of August, or if you are [filing for an exemption](#) from vaccination, you should meet with your academic advisor if you haven't already done so and register for your courses as you normally would. This option is strongly encouraged by the University.
2. If you choose to remain unvaccinated, you should consider registering as a Kean Online student. Kean Online students do not need to be vaccinated unless they plan to come to campus for any reason.

Here's what you need to know **before** you consider Kean Online:

- Kean Online offers a limited number of [undergraduate majors and graduate programs](#), but many general education and elective courses are available for students in all majors.
- Kean Online classes are structured differently than the *remote* classes offered during this academic year. Courses offer asynchronous instruction, meaning they don't meet at set times each week so students complete assignments independently on their own schedules.

- If you choose to become a Kean Online student because you plan to remain unvaccinated, you must complete your entire course schedule via Kean Online during the Fall semester. You cannot take any classes on campus if you are unvaccinated unless you have an approved exemption.
- Once you begin the semester as a Kean Online student, you will not be permitted to switch back to in-person instruction for the duration of the Fall 2021 semester, even if you get vaccinated during the semester.
- All Kean Online students must complete a mandatory online training during the summer to learn more about the expectations unique to Kean Online courses. Details will be forthcoming.

If your request is approved, you will be cleared to register for Kean Online courses.

If you can't reach your advisor, contact the Executive Director of your academic program. Your advisors' contacts are listed in your Success Team within the Advise Student Experience platform accessible [here](#). If you have not declared a major, you should contact your Center for Advising, Persistence and Success advisor for registration assistance.

## **Dining**

Issue: Food options in the dining hall

A student who is a vegan said that she is often unable to use her meal plan to eat, as there are no healthy vegan options in the dining hall.

Proposed solution: Offer more healthy food in the dining hall, such as fruit, vegetables, plant-based foods, acai bowls and burgers without cheese.

Status: Kean is actively reviewing all food options for the upcoming academic year. The Food and Dining Services committee will continue to work with our vendor to provide healthy options for those with dietary restrictions.

### **COVID-19 Vaccines**

Issue: Some students asked if vaccines would be required and if not, how students would be safe in the classroom.

Status: As vaccines become more widely accessible, Kean joined many peer institutions in New Jersey and across the nation in announcing all students must receive the COVID-19 vaccine before the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester.

Before the Fall 2021 semester begins, all Kean students must submit a vaccination record to the University that shows they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Students will be permitted to request an exemption to the vaccine requirement for health or religious reasons. The process for submitting a vaccination record or requesting an exemption will be shared in coming weeks.

To help students meet this requirement, the University has worked with the County of Union to arrange for students to receive free vaccines on campus in Downs Hall. All students are invited to sign up for an appointment [here](#) as soon as possible. Appointments will run throughout the summer. Students are also strongly encouraged to sign up for [available appointments](#) in their home communities. Faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to receive a vaccine. Employees, regardless of where they live, can sign up for appointments on campus [here](#).



# Fall Topics

Kean students were invited to share their perspectives on the Spring 2021 semester at a **virtual Student Town Hall hosted by President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 19.**

The synopsis below outlines the issues raised by students during the event as well as their own proposed solutions. The University's leadership team is working to address these issues and will post updates as more information becomes available.

**January 2021 Update:** The University continues to address student feedback. Every semester, students are asked to provide feedback on the courses in which they are enrolled. Based on 36,789 responses received at the end of the Fall 2020 semester, the data show most students felt the workload, pace and difficulty of their courses were about right. Less than 1 percent of students reported that their courses were very difficult or very fast. The data are comparable or better than results from Fall 2019.

## **Discussion Questions**

Issue: Several students raised concerns about class discussion questions. Many said that while the questions are intended to spur class participation, they instead create a heavy work burden.

Proposed solutions: A student suggested limiting the number of questions to two to three per semester, per class.

Status: The University has established clear guidelines for the use of discussion questions in both Remote and Kean Online courses. In **Remote** courses, discussion questions are not required but may be included at the discretion of the instructor to meet the weekly time required for virtual or in-person classroom interaction. If used, the requirement will consist of one initial discussion post during a week and no more than three responses to other students to be posted within a timeframe determined by the instructor. Discussion questions may also be included in **Face-to-Face** and **Hybrid** classes to meet the weekly time required for virtual or in-person classroom interaction. Students will be informed of requirements through the course syllabi and/or within the course in Blackboard. **Kean Online** courses include required discussion questions in each unit/week. Those questions will contain an initial response and five posts to peers. This is a standard part of all units in Kean Online courses. Discussions will be listed in each learning unit within the course on Blackboard. Visit the [Registration Information page](#) for more details on the differences between Remote and Kean Online courses.

## **Blackboard**

Issue: A student who also serves as a mentor and Gen Ed co-teacher said Blackboard can be tricky and complicated for faculty to use.

Proposed solution: The student suggested surveying faculty about any issues they've encountered during the semester to address them in a second round of training prior to the Spring semester.

Status: Training and technical support are available to all faculty members through the Office of Computer and Information Services (OCIS) and the Nancy Thompson Learning Commons (NTLC).

### **Campus Life and Safety Protocols**

Issue: A student said many events are only for residential students, not remote students, and expressed concern about a lack of information about commencement and senior portraits.

Proposed solution: The student suggested inviting all students, especially seniors, to come to campus for events and improve communication about events.

Issue: A resident student asked why the dining hall and Starbucks are still closed off, and noted that since students are barred from visiting friends within the residence halls, there are few places to gather with friends.

Proposed solution: The student suggested opening the dining hall and Starbucks to students, with social distancing and mask-wearing required when not eating or drinking.

Issue: A student said she understands why the University is not permitting outside guests or those from other residence halls, but she would like to know why can't students visit with others on the same floor, or in the same dorm. She also noted that students are told to socialize outside, but it's getting colder and others outside may pose a COVID risk.

Proposed solution: The student suggested the University permit students to have one or two visitors at a time from within their building to help students' mental health.

Status: The University will continue to put safety first and exercise all necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of the Kean community and remain in compliance with all applicable Executive Orders. The administration is constantly monitoring public health data and will loosen restrictions and open events to all students as soon as possible. Students are encouraged to take advantage of virtual events and opportunities to participate in campus life. Kean communicates important information to its students, including details about commencement and issues specific to graduating seniors, via email and social media.

### **Health Insurance for Students**

Issue: A 29-year-old student who is also a parent asked that Kean make health insurance available to students who need it.

Proposed Solution: The student suggested that the University make health insurance available to everyone who is not covered by other plans.

Status: Student Health Services has partnered with the nonprofit organization The Family Resource Network to help students navigate the Health Insurance Marketplace. There is no charge to access the group's certified insurance navigators and their services. The Family Resource Network has dedicated time slots for Kean students only seeking to apply through the New Jersey Insurance Marketplace website, [Get Covered NJ](#), before the open enrollment deadline of January 31, 2021. They are:

- Thursday, December 10 from 2 - 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 22 from 2 - 7 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 12 from noon to 8 p.m.

Students can make a virtual appointment or arrange a more convenient appointment time by calling (800) 355-0271. Spanish speaking-insurance navigators are available.

### **Pass/Fail Deadline**

Issue: A student asked why the pass/fail deadline was September 22, and said it was not enough time to make a decision about all courses.

Proposed solution: The student suggested offering a longer academic grace period.

Status: Due to the continued disruptions caused by COVID-19, the University has decided to extend its optional "pass/fail" grading for up to two courses per student at Kean USA and Wenzhou-Kean University for the Fall 2020 semester.

All students will have from the end of the semester until February 1, 2021 to request this option.

Students are encouraged to raise any questions about the pass/fail option during remote advisement sessions with their academic advisors.

### **Accessing Kean Resources**

Issue: A student said it's difficult to access Kean resources during remote learning.

Proposed solution: The student suggested that the University should find ways to help students access resources more easily.

Status: The University has updated the [Cougar Restart Guide](#) with the latest hours and contact information for all services. The University community was notified

about the updates to the Cougar Restart Guide via email and social media.

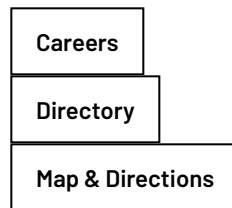
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