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THE TOWER

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF KEAN UNIVERSITY

President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. focuses on student safety at Town Hall Meeting

By Adaora Nnakwe

President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., addressed Kean students on the importance of student safety, health concerns and campus culture during the town hall meeting at Kean Hall on Dec 1.

Repollet informed students on the current state of the university celebrating the highest freshman class enrollment of approximately 2,000 students, the campus safety walk regarding lighting areas, blue light phones and the renovation of the residence hall.

pandemic at Kean from when he entered in 2020. Last year, there were concerns about the decline of college enrollment, but now the main focus is campus safety.

Students addressed concerns on the traffic safety for students walking on campus in between classes and Uber drop stops. Repollet mentioned that he noticed these issues around campus first hand.

“We need to do something in regards to the students that are entering the areas between the dorms,” Repollet said.

He mentioned that he has encountered Uber drivers parking in front of the dining

Safe Zone Training and LGBTQ+ Representation on Campus



Photo by Kean University CougarLink

Pride Festival Event

By Tyra Watts

LGBTQ+ representation is essential to those in the community. Having spaces dedicated to members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies can help spread awareness in most public settings, especially on college campuses.

LGBTQ+ representation can manifest

on campus through Safe Zone Training, created by the Safe Zone Project.

The Safe Zone Project is an online resource that provides information regarding lessons for educators facilitating Safe Zone training on sexuality, gender, and LGBTQ+ education sessions. It was created in 2013 by writer Meg Bolger and author

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President's Advisory Council Presents

**Kean University
Student Town Hall
with President
Repollet**



Date: Thursday, 01 Dec
Time: 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
Location: Kean Hall,
Room 127

[Register Here](#)

TO SPEAK AT THE
TOWN HALL:
<https://www.kean.edu/office-president/student-town-hall>

Photo by Kean_Pac Instagram page

President Repollet, Ed.D. invites students to register to speak out at town hall meeting

“We need to make sure that who we are is depicting our mission statement and we need to truly find out our values as an organization,” Repollet said.

He described this year with “sense of normalcy” as he recapped the stages of the

“We need to make sure that who we are is depicting our mission statement and we need to truly find out our values as an organization,” Repollet said.

hall. These issues have concerned staff and students at Kean due to the continuous complaints about traffic safety. Students have witnessed the speeding through stop signs around campus and it is brought to the attention of the faculty.

“There’s a lot of speeding in front of
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MLK's Library: Book Drive for MLK Day!

By Josephine Carrillo

The fall semester is coming to an end, and with the spring semester right

around the corner, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is hosting a book drive in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, on Jan. 16.

The purpose of the book drive is to provide Kean students with the possibility to access books in the areas of their interest or needs.

people to succeed shows solidarity and what a welcoming and caring campus community we have," Lester said. "As a campus community, service is one of the things that we are making one of our core values, better people, better campus, better partners, better human beings."

The preferable genres of books for MLK's library are biography, religion, self-help, multicultural authors, poetry, bibliography, romance, and kids books.

The book drive officially started on Dec. 1 and will end on Jan. 17. All books can be dropped off in Townsend Hall room T112 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays.

Erin Lester, multicultural affairs coordinator for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, who is responsible for student experience and programming regarding multicultural initiatives on campus, shared that the inspiration for this book drive was to impulse students to read for leisure and "expand their minds."

Individuals who are unable to meet during the drop-off time can also schedule a pick-up date and time with Ugochi Adibemma, project specialist, or Lester, via email.

"Practicing the art of reading is effective as far as careers go," Lester said. "The more you know and the more you're exposed to, ultimately makes you a well-rounded person."

"For me personally, most of the time reading gave me the opportunity to travel without necessarily leaving the space I was comfortable in," Lester said. "It expands your mind, your imagination, in a tangible way."

On the contrary from the Scholastic Book Fair, MLK's book drive wants to assure these books are accessible to Kean students and they don't have to worry about the cost. Since these books are pre-owned, one hundred percent donated for the cause of giving back to the community.

All books donated to MLK's library will be accessible for all Kean students on Jan.18, 2023.

If not all books are distributed among students, the remaining books, depending

"Creating opportunities for other

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"Practicing the art of reading is effective as far as careers go," Lester said.



Photo by Josephine Carrillo

MLK's Library book drive for all Kean students

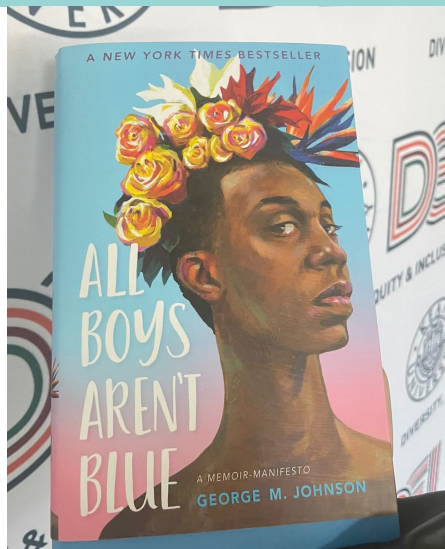


Photo by Josephine Carrillo

"All boys aren't Blue" by George M. Johnson

Kean Piloting Common App's Direct Admissions Program

By Jalen Gaynor

Kean has been announced as one of the 14 institutions now taking part in Common App's 2022-2023 Direct Admissions pilot program.

Students who have a Common App account and meet the university's admittance criteria will be offered admission to Kean before they even apply. Students then have to formally apply in order to accept the offer.

Kean announced the pilot will allow them to select students who meet the qualifications for admission to the University and contact them earlier in the application cycle. They also made it clear that they will be able to level the playing field for prospective minority and first-generation students.

"Kean University has a deep commitment to supporting students from minority and first-generation backgrounds, and this new admissions tool allows us to offer more students an opportunity to receive a college education

at Kean," Kean President Lamont O. Repollet Ed.D. said. "Through this pilot program, we will put college within reach for so many deserving students."

This is the third round of Common App's pilot program which first began in 2021. They announced the latest iteration offered admission to 18,000 students at six participating institutions, and over 800 students accepted the offer. Black or African American, Latinx, and first-generation students were found to have been affected the most.

During this current round of the pilot, Kean and the 13 other participating institutions will reach out to almost 30,000 students.

"Direct admissions is about changing the narrative of a college education from one of scarcity to one of opportunity, by ensuring students know that college opportunity is an abundant resource — and one that's available to them," Jenny Rickard, president & CEO of Common App said. "No waiting, no wondering if

the institution is looking for a specific set of characteristics. While we're still in the early stages of this pilot, we're excited about the potential of this work to help more students pursue a college education."

This pilot program is another example of Kean working to help give potential

students an opportunity to attend a university. The university previously began the Kean Tuition Promise program which provides low-income New Jersey students the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree at little or no cost and realize their dreams of a college education.

"The Common App's Direct Admissions

"Through this pilot program, we will put college within reach for so many deserving students."



Photo by Kean Website

Kean Hall



Photo by Common App Website

Common App Logo

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After 12 Years Kean Transitions Back to Academic Departments

By Anthony Reyna

Kean's School of Communication, Media, and Journalism (CMJ), will now be known as the Department of Communication, Media, and Journalism according to a statement released by the department on Monday, Nov. 21.

"Returning to a department allows for better recognition of the academic pursuits of our students and faculty," the statement said.

The Department of Communication, Media and Journalism is one of the most prominent at Kean University with 417 Enrolled undergraduate students as of the Fall 2021 semester.

The move will be followed across each of the different colleges at Kean by the beginning of the Fall 2023 semester as decided by the university senate.

Dr. James Castiglione, president of the Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT) said, "Having a faculty member within the department as opposed to a manager who is less connected to the program will benefit the students. This is a more traditional approach that most universities nationwide follow."

Kean's departments will no longer feature executive directors and will instead be replaced by chairpeople elected from within the department. According to the statement, Dr. Jack Sargent will be returning as department chair for the Department of Communication,

"Returning to a department allows for better recognition of the academic pursuits of our students and faculty"



The Kean University Senate



The School of Communications, Media and Journalism (CMJ)



The Center for Academic Success

Media and Journalism.

The move acts as a return to a more "traditional academic structure". The university originally transitioned away from academic departments in 2010, and is changing back after 12 years.

"KFT is fully supportive of the transition back to department chairpersons," Castiglione said.

Generally speaking, the term 'school' refers to a larger unit or group within a university. This transition will promote more attention to detail to the needs of each student, and faculty member as well as each academic discipline at the University. ■

KEAN'S DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES CONTINUES WITH DANA BASH

By Elaine Amico

CNN's Chief Political Correspondent Dana Bash is the newest member of Kean's Distinguished Lecture Series, a series which aims to bring prominent national leaders and changemakers to the university.

Bash's lecture took place on Nov. 15 in the STEM Building Auditorium, and offered a 30-minute pre-event for students who are on the journalism or political science track to ask Bash questions about her career.

The pre-event, moderated by Jeremiah Sullivan, director of career curriculum and academic partnerships at Kean, started with a heated question that fired up a controversial debate among students.

"Is it pork roll or taylor ham?" Sullivan asked.

Bash informed students that she doesn't eat either, and definitely doesn't have a preference for what she calls it. The question was quite fitting for Bash as she herself is a jersey girl, originally from Montvale. Bash also informed students that when it comes to New Jersey's two famous male singers, Bruce Springsteen and Jon Bon Jovi, she sees Springsteen as number one.

When asked what her most important advice would be to students in college right now, she stressed the importance of internships.

"My internships taught me what I didn't want to do, as much as what I did want to do," Bash said. "There was a time that I thought I might want to go into public relations,



Dana Bash flier

Photo by Elaine Amico

but after completing an internship in corporate communications, I knew it was not for me. It was in an office, it was very formal, basically the opposite of a newsroom."

Bash believes that learning that lesson in college was much more valuable than learning it after majoring in Public Relations, and realizing she picked the wrong career.

The main event, moderated by John Wooten, executive director of theatre management and programming, took a more serious tone with a large focus on the midterm elections that happened the week prior.

"The Democratic Party had a very big boost in what otherwise would have been a very tough election for democrats," Bash said. "They got that boost from young people."

Bash explained that while the number of young people who came out to vote didn't have a significant increase in comparison to years past, the majority of young voters voted democratic, which gave the Democratic Party an advantage in terms of keeping control of the Senate, and losing very few house seats.

When asked what news networks can do to help voters make informed and educated decisions in today's political climate, Bash believes that focusing on nonpartisan news and media outlets that are completely objective is very important.

She also believes that when it comes to local elections, make sure you take advantage of all opportunities to get to know your candidate, especially if you have the chance to

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SHOULD KEAN OCEAN OPEN THEIR OWN SCHOOL STORE?



Photo by Logan Germano

Kean University clothing in OCC Bookstore

“More apparel will increase morale on campus.”

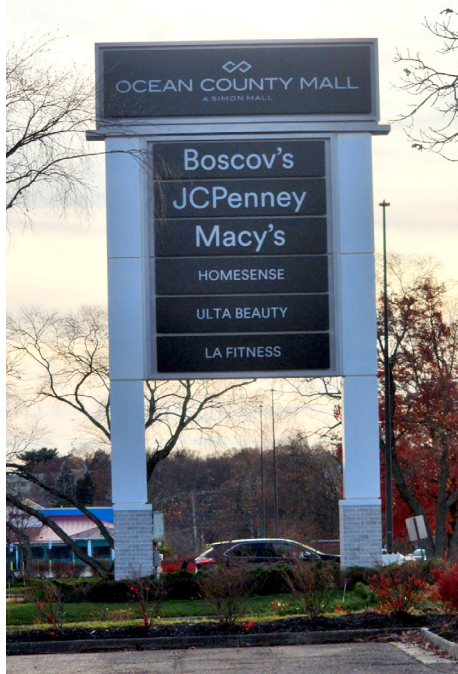


Photo by Logan Germano

Ocean County Mall sign

By Logan Germano

The Ocean County College bookstore located inside of the Jon and Judith Larson Student Center offers an abundance of OCC merchandise for the student population. However, Kean Ocean students who enter the store will only see a Kean Ocean t-shirt on the clothing racks and nothing else.

“There needs to be more Kean Ocean apparel at the bookstore,” Maggie Lambusta, a senior communication major said. “Every time I have been there I have seen Kean shirts, but no accessories like lanyards, water bottles, mugs, hats, and more. There must be more representation for Kean Ocean students.”

At Kean Ocean, there is a high demand for more merchandise to be available for students. The lack of Kean Ocean apparel at the OCC bookstore is raising concern among the student body. To address this issue, students have been thinking of ideas for more items to sell at the satellite campus to give the Kean Ocean community more representation.

Lambusta, a student assistant for Kean Ocean Campus Life, said the discussion of a small pop-up shop in the atrium of the Kean Ocean Gateway building is always being brought up. She believes this idea will help cross-promote events on campus and is an opportunity to get more students involved.

“Anything at this shop can be leftover and used as prizes for our events,” Lambusta said. “I think this strategy will significantly impact the campus’s culture because more people will take interest in finding other ways to get Kean Ocean apparel.”

Other students think a student-run initiative for a Kean Ocean school store could work. Vincent Castronuovo, a junior sociology major, suggests students can use certain companies to create Kean Ocean products and sell them at a kiosk inside the Gateway building if students are willing to set up their own store.

“If starting a student-run kiosk is given enough attention, I think it has the potential to be a big addition to the school,” Castronuovo said. “If you can get someone to operate it for a couple

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Inside Senior Forward Katie Morrison’s Rehab: ‘It was more of a mental game’

By Dorian Alerte

As she walked through the lobby of Harwood Arena and greeted her friends, Katie Morrison could not help but have a

not believe that there was a chance that she could never play soccer again.

“I refused to believe it,” Morrison says. “I didn’t understand how you could just not play.”

“Katie showed me what it meant to be a hardworking and dedicated athlete.”



Photo by Larry Laventi

Katie Morrison dribble by a defender

massive smile on her face.

It is Oct. 20, but the night before is one that she will not forget. Morrison’s friends congregate around her as she speaks about the unforgettable experience: The Junior Forward just played her first soccer game in almost a year and a half after suffering a career-threatening knee injury.

At an away game against New Jersey Athletic Conference Rival New Jersey City University, in which the Cougars defeated the Gothic Knights 4-1, Morrison logged 7 minutes played.

“Getting back on the field was surreal,” Morrison says.

It was a 17-month journey of recovery and rehab.

In the shortened 2021 COVID-19 season while warming up for a game, Morrison made a wrong step, and immediately knew something was wrong. It was not until May 3, 2021, when she received the MRI report, that she discovered the severity of her injury: A tear of the MPFL of her knee, the ligament that attaches the kneecap to the inner part of the knee, and a partial ACL tear.

When told that she had sustained a “career-ending” injury, Morrison could

Following two surgeries to repair her knee, Morrison began her rehabilitation process. She spent the next year learning about herself.

Her subsequent activities and rehab included having to relearn how to walk and she was not cleared to begin jogging and running until the summer of 2022.

Once she was cleared to work out again, Morrison started an Instagram fitness page @fitwith.mo, documenting her recovery process. She spent the subsequent months in the weight room



Photo by Larry Laventi

Katie Morrison receives a pass

and fell in love with lifting.

“I’ve never counted how many, but I would guess hundreds of hours were spent doing rehab,” Morrison said. “It’s hard not to learn about yourself and

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RAGNAROK IS UPON US

By Andrey Nalbantov

Ever since the middle of October, I have been dodging social media in order to keep myself safe from any spoilers regarding “God Of War: Ragnarok”. I wanted a blind experience while going into what I expected to be an amazing adventure in the magical realms inspired by Norse Mythology.

31 hours later, it is safe to say that this amazing experience is something that is not often seen in video games. “God Of War: Ragnarok” takes the formula of its 2018 predecessor and improves immensely.

The story of “God Of War: Ragnarok” takes us a couple of years after the events of the first game. The two main protagonists,

Kratos and his older and more mature son Atreus are navigating through the harsh snowy conditions of “Fimbulwinter” in search of answers and preparation for Ragnarok.

The lovable dwarf brothers Brok and Sindri are back, and this time they serve as combat partners throughout some of the chapters. Freya, the queen of Valkyries, is back for revenge after Kratos snapped her son’s neck in the previous game.

While at the start of GoW: Ragnarok, she is viciously hunting us to enact her revenge, throughout the later chapters of the game she ends up forming a partnership with the main characters.

GoW: Ragnarok does everything bigger and better than its predecessor,

but bigger is not always the right choice. Before I dive into all the positives, I will address the main complaint I encountered throughout the 31 hours of gameplay. At points, the game feels bloated from all the content there is.

While every side mission has a small piece of importance, it was hard for me to keep track of all the favors I had to complete for spirits scattered around the realms. While some favors had a sad background or served as a lore marker to the main story, most just felt forgetful. In the end, I could not help but feel a lack of care about completing yet another spirit favor.

Now that the only negative is moved out of the way, it’s time to discuss the positives. They will be separated into the following categories: Story, enemy variety, combat, and visuals.

Story: One of the best aspects of the 2018 predecessor was its beautiful and tragic at times story. In Ragnarok, the developers not only managed to tell yet another beautiful story but also managed to tell it in such a manner that it leaves a mark. The writing is meaningful, and

wholesomely funny at times as well. Certain events throughout the story left me emotional, and others made me angry, creating even more desire in completing the game.

What makes the story even better is the voice acting. Voice actor Christopher Judge as Kratos yet again delivers another astonishing performance. The voices



God Of War: Ragnarok on PS5

Photo by Andrey Nalbantov



God Of War: Ragnarok Loading Screen

Photo by Andrey Nalbantov

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Kean’s Nerd Culture on the Upswing to ‘Cool’

By Olivia Cornwell

Kean University students are showing an increased interest in nerd culture on campus after the pandemic, with student groups related to gaming and anime growing in attendance.

As life at Kean recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in student interests are visible in club formations and interests. Various clubs on campus formed during and after the pandemic, with many students taking an appeal compared to previous school years. These clubs follow a general theme – nerd

population at Kean plays console games and sports games. After starting the club, it was a lot easier to find friends who had similar interests as I did.”

Kean Anime Society had fallen apart due to low attendance during the middle of the pandemic, while anime grew in popularity. Anime, which was once seen negatively by society, became more widely accepted as a normal interest.

Ampere Analysis found 36 % of people across the world enjoyed watching anime in 2021, a 50% increase from 2018. Students came together in the Fall of 2021 to reestablish the club, with the club



Photo courtesy of Kean Anime Society

Nerd Culture

culture.

In the modern day, nerd culture comprises fans of obscure media, such as anime (Japanese animation), comic books, video games, and tabletop games. For Kean University, the two largest nerd-culture clubs are Kean Esports and Kean Anime Society.

Kean Esports began in early 2020 when the semester lockdown began. The student group, as of this semester, has 100 members. Beginning in the Fall of 2021, the club also established its own athletic team for Esports. Kean completed the arena used for competing in March 2022 and won an award for “Best Esports Project” by Commercial Integrator magazine.

“When I started at Kean, it was very hard to find people who played games like the ones I play,” Amy Yang, vice president, and original executive board member of Kean Esports said. “Most of the

now hosting large events. Most recently, their Halloween Cosplay Masquerade.

For years, people gave nerd a negative connotation. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines nerd as “an unstylish or socially awkward person”.

The term itself appeared commonly in high school settings, with victims of bullying often being labeled as “nerds”. However, many students have reclaimed the word, and use it to describe what makes them unique.

“I feel like there's a lot of different flavors of nerd,” Allison Abney, senior transfer, industrial design/art history major, and winner of Kean Anime Society’s Halloween Cosplay Masquerade said. “Honestly, in my head it falls into if you're a business major who doesn't play football, you're a nerd for something. Like, there's math, there's academic nerds, there's art nerds, there's theater nerds. It's a whole plethora. There's [Dungeons and Dragons] nerds. There's video game

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Racism in Disguise

By Keyon Gardner

You would think in a country that is supposed to be united that we would rarely have to face any form of racism but reality shows us yet again that America is a country still divided and there are still underlying problems we need to address.

It's been over two years since the incident surrounding the death of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. These incidents in particular go beyond daily microaggression that people of color and marginalized groups already have to face.

They are prime examples of "Micro assaults" that have had a profound effect on the African American community and other minority groups.

towards people of other races, gender, age, or sexuality.

Other terms like "Microassault", "Microinvalidations" or "Microinsult" all have to do with intentional or unintentional verbal and nonverbal use of insults and discrimination.

Microaggression refers to the discrimination of race, gender, age, or even sex among a wide group of people that if accomplished repeatedly can profoundly leave anybody with permanent damages to their mental health, their self-esteem and self-awareness.

The Ahmaud Arbery incident is the literal definition of "Microassault". Not only does the killing and hate crime targeted against three innocent African Americans spark fear



Photo by Vox Magazine

Your Whitest Black girl i know

"We don't even realize how much we experience microaggressions because it's so normalized and it happens all the time"

Floyd, who was 46 at the time of his tragic death, Floyd was laid down on his stomach by an officer while the officer had his knee on Floyd's neck for approximately 10 minutes suffocating him.

Moments later Floyd passed away, and the officer continued to keep his knee on Floyd's neck. Breonna Taylor was shot eight times by police officers who responded on grounds of a no-knock warrant served at her apartment in part of a narcotics investigation happening at the time.

Dr. Chester M. Pierce specifically describes the everyday verbal and nonverbal acts of systemic racism that demean and undermine Black Americans. Though the term originated from systemic racism meant toward African Americans it has broadened and become systemic discrimination

and rage among other African Americans but it does physiological damage as well when killings like these happen in a streak.

Young African American men and women are being traumatized every day from the violent crimes committed against them.

Dedrian, who is a sophomore with an undecided major, spoke about how he went to a diverse school that was predominantly white made fun of the Mexican kids and referred to them in derogatory words.

"Everybody would always label the Mexicans as this certain word and it wasn't racism, it was a word that was supposed to be funny, but it was just disrespectful in all," Dedrian said.

The students at Kean have experienced a

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Kean Introduces Student Satisfaction Inventory Survey

By Ja'Bria Laster

There is always room for improvement or change for everything, Kean University conducted its first student satisfaction inventory (SSI) hoping to gain student input on changes that are needed so that students could have a good experience.

SSI is an assessment tool that measures students' satisfaction and priorities. It is also used to see what needs to be done to improve the quality of student life, learning, and success by looking at student satisfaction through

experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

The areas being measured would be

Neva Lozada, assistant vice president for administration, helps ensure that students are participating and giving the

want to use this tool because as a student center university we want to know what's most important to our students as well as how satisfied they are with their Kean experience," Lozada said.

The SSI looks at two different perspectives when evaluating, first is looking at how satisfied students are with certain areas with their experience with Kean as well as what areas



SSI Flyer

“Through the SSI we can identify Kean’s strengths, opportunities, and aspirations so we could continue to climb higher in the university by prioritizing our students' evolving needs,”

Photo by Kean University

academic advising, instructional effectiveness, registration effectiveness, safety and security, and campus life in all colleges.

feedback that is needed so that students could enjoy their experience here at Kean University.

“As this is our first time conducting this survey here at Kean University we

students are prioritizing.

“Through the SSI we can identify Kean’s strengths, opportunities, and aspirations so we could continue to climb higher

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KEAN UNIVERSITY RECOGNIZED FOR STUDENT VETERAN SUPPORT SERVICES

By Victoria Cifelli

Kean University has been recognized two times in the month of November for their dedication to college student veterans.

On Nov.11 in an email sent to the university faculty, staff and students on behalf of President Lamont Repollet Ed.D., which said approximately 60 students, faculty, staff and alumni walked in New York City’s Veterans Day Parade. This was a first for the university.

“University Relations, especially Joseph Moran and Ian Alfano were very

supportive in creating the marching banner and taking photos of the event. The University pulled its resources together, and we had everything we needed,” Vito

Zajda, director of the Center for Veterans Student Success said.

The process of marching in the parade on Veterans Day began long before the

before the parade.

“During the parade you could not help but have goosebumps as you watched people on the sidewalks holding signs,

Repollet is from a military family, with both of his parents having served in the armed forces.

“I am now the president of Kean, a #1-ranked Military Friendly School, and it is with great pride that I lead the University in honoring our veterans and all veterans, on and off campus, today,” Repollet said in his email addressing the university.

On Nov. 18, Repollet addressed the university again and said that Kean received a We Value Our Veterans Award from the New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran Affairs.

The Assistant Vice President for Student Retention and Educational Innovation, Marvin Adames, accepted the award on behalf of the University at a ceremony

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“We are providing the best services throughout the State of New Jersey”



Photo by Victoria Cifelli

Kean honors veterans from the campus community on Cougar Walk



Photo by Kean University

Kean University faculty, staff, and students march at the Veterans Day Parade in New York City

event took place; the Center for Veteran Student Success had to apply to march in July of 2022 according to Zajda. The center was notified two and a half weeks

clapping and waving flags. I saw a few Korean and Vietnam Veterans in uniform and I got choked up as they too should be marching,” Zajda said.

Tesla CEO has acquired the bird, but can he keep it soaring?

By Isaiah Joseph

I'm sure everyone is fully up to date on the news surrounding Twitter, who wouldn't be? It's Twitter and everyone has it.

The wealthiest person on the planet, Elon Musk stated he wanted to own Twitter, one of the most popular social media platforms until he said he didn't. In early October, he changed his mind again, saying he wanted to complete the deal.

For those who have no idea what Twitter is, read carefully as I give you my best definition of the best platform on the internet. It. Is. Hell. Just kidding, but according to the tech news site, Lifewire, Twitter is an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets.

But let's stay within the topic here, Twitter has been bought by someone we least expect. Billionaire and CEO of Tesla, Elon Musk, isn't that insane but the question that lingers in our minds is why?

I don't want to make this story opinionated but like it is hard not to voice my middle-class opinions as to why a multi-billionaire who can buy a whole island buys one of the greatest forms of media we have today. Answers were needed. And answers were most definitely found...kinda.

Kean senior and bio Quintin Dilworth gave me a very anxious stare as I approached him slightly out of breath, asking him how he feels about the new CEO of Twitter.

expressing themselves without fear of consequence."

Musk talks about free speech a lot on Twitter especially since it is our God-given right to express how we feel on certain topics, but what if free speech goes too far, what will Musk do to enforce it?

Back in April of this year Musk made a tweet about freedom of speech before he claimed Twitter.

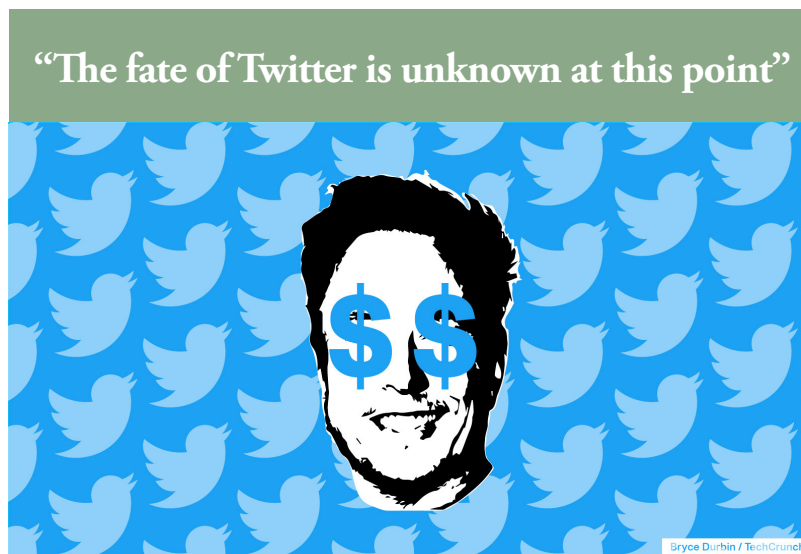
"By free speech, I simply mean that which matches the law. I am against censorship that goes far beyond the law," Musk said. "If people want less free speech, they will ask the government to pass laws to that effect. Therefore, going beyond the law is contrary to the will of the people."

If you ask me, I don't understand what the man is talking about, but again it's not my opinion here on why a man would drop billions of dollars just to rant about things he doesn't like without consequences.

"Do I believe speech should be limited? No. I believe people should have the ability to speak their mind but when something is blatantly wrong, I do believe they should be held accountable," Dilworth said

Maybe to break it down Musk was probably talking about how free speech is censored and limited which can

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Musk bought Twitter for \$44B, he didn't have a choice

"On god dude, it's f****ing ridiculous, excuse my french," Dilworth said. "But honestly my initial reaction to Elon Musk finally claiming Twitter was that there was going to be an influx of people who were going to feel comfortable

425 Magazine Showcases Creative Work

By Steven-Ross Bugayong

If you have been on campus at Kean Union, you have probably seen stickers and flyers with the logo 425. You might have thought to yourself, what does this mean? What is 425? What do they do? What they are is Kean's newest club, with a primary purpose to promote their new student-created magazine, 425.

The club's origins started in the 2022 spring semester, as most founding members were in the same graphic design class. The inspiration for the club arose when members wanted a new way to highlight the creative side of Kean students, and what they came up with was an idea to create a magazine.

Kristen Goble, a junior graphic design major and co-president of 425 says the magazine's primary purpose is to showcase creativity.

"The idea was a group effort," Goble said. "We came up with the idea of a magazine that didn't limit the creativity of students, but instead encouraged it."

The magazine's name, 425, was inspired by Michael Graves, who the college of design at Kean was named after. The title refers to the 425th Avenue building Graves designed in New York City.

Like any new club at Kean University, the members of 425 magazine have had their ups and downs. From a successful outing at Kean Day to the retention of the club, minimizing. The stress of managing a budget and planning fundraisers is a daunting task, even for any club, new or old.

Olivia Heyer, a junior graphic design advertising major and co-president, says that being in a club is not always fun but has taught the members a lot.

"There's a lot that comes with it," Heyer said. "It's just inexperience because this is the first time we are creating a magazine for all of us. It's everything from the magazine's layout, what size it should be, how to print it, and contacting a printer. This aspect is an added element to our club that we have to deal with."

With all the stress that has come with

"I think the overall goal of the magazine is to show that anyone can be creative," Goble said. "425 is an outlet for them to showcase it."



425 logo



Co-Presidents Kristen Goble and Olivia Heyer

the magazine's planning, there have been some positives. For Goble and the other members of 425, they emphasize at the end of the day, the creation of the

magazine is a passion project.

"Yes, it's been very stressful," Goble said. "But that's the good of it too. Now there are

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Kean University Eateries

By Brittany Fuentes

Food services at Kean University provide a range of food options, from meals at the dining hall to several eateries that are available for students across campus. However, the pandemic caused some of the eateries on campus to shut down in 2020 and many of those have not reopened.

Limiting the eating options students have as they seek a quick bite in between their classes.

The dining options offered in the Miron Student Center are especially beneficial to commuter students. Providing students with various dining options such as Auntie Anne's, Smashburger, Jersey Mike's, a convenience store, and Cougar's Den where students can order and pick up food through the boost mobile app.

Additionally, there are campus eateries such as a Starbucks that is located in the Nancy Thompson Learning Center as well as a cafe located on the campus' Barnes & Noble in the Green Lane Academic Building.

Meal plans are not needed for

located on the third floor of the Center for Academic Success building and was one of the eateries that closed down during the pandemic.

Shanel McKenzie, the retail manager at Kean said, "It closed down because of lowered student registration.

Afterwards, it was never reopened because the university extended the hours of operation for the Starbucks in the Nancy Thompson Library."

Similarly, the cafe located in the North Avenue Academic building was

also closed down due to lowered student registration during the pandemic.

There is also a residence dining hall provided for resident students located on the first floor of the new upperclassmen residence hall, that is open to commuters

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"The goal of the university is to have customer satisfaction, to give students a variation of foods to choose from. Above all they want to keep students satisfied and happy."
said Shanel McKenzie



Smashburger Eatery

Photo by Kean website

these places and students can swing by before their classes, in between their classes, or even right before their commute back home.

Making it convenient and accessible for students to nourish themselves even on their busiest academic days.

However, there was previously a Starbucks kiosk

The Content Creation Club's Rug Tufting Workshop

By Justin McDaniel

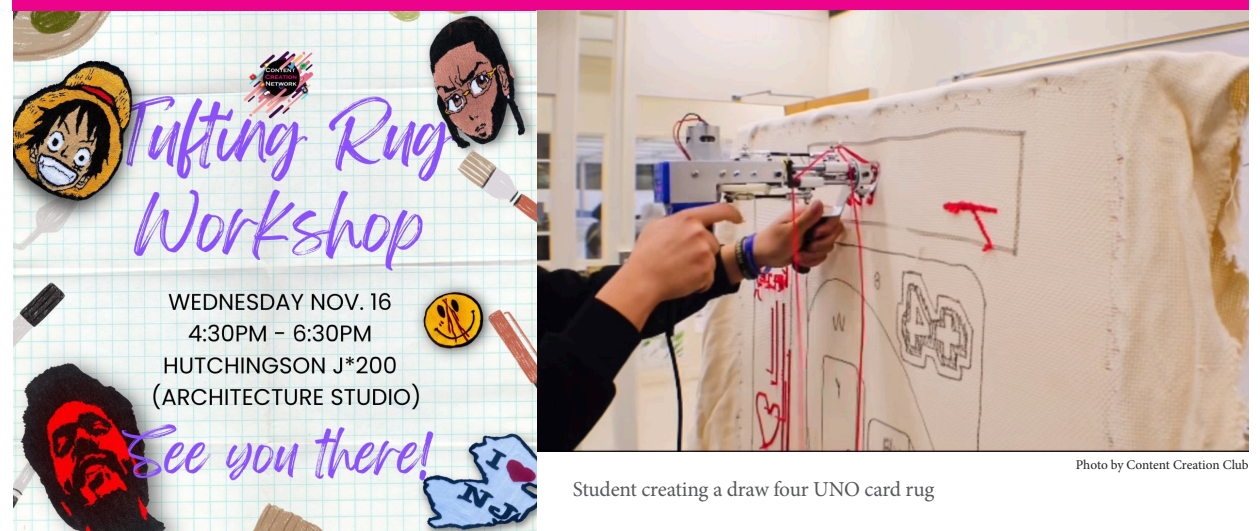
Growing your club and finding new creative ways to stay engaged with the community are always positive ways to have an impact at school, and the Content Creation Club has been the perfect place for students to show off their talent.

Stephan Argent, secretary of the Content Creation Club, hosted his first event, a Tufting Rug Workshop. In which he showcased his talent custom making a unique rug, which had been worked on by everyone attending the event. Each person put their own touch and signature on the rug while also resembling a draw four UNO card.

During the workshop, Argent demonstrated how he created his rugs, and participants were allowed to help in the creation of the new UNO-inspired rug. Argent also had his other creations on display.

"Initially I had come across some TikTok's of creators making rugs of simple patterns and logos and I thought to myself that if I were to tap into this medium, I can do way better than what I was currently seeing," Argent said. "I decided to make a self-titled project, STEPHAN 300. That consists of 10 rugs consisting of symbols, artists, and anime all pertaining to myself as an artist."

Rug Tufting with the Content Creation Club



Flyer for the event

Photo by Content Creation Club

Student creating a draw four UNO card rug

the rugs he made including rugs that featured famous rappers or anime characters.

Segun Ologundudu, president of the Content Creation Club said, "He's always doing more, and he's always trying to get better. His creativity was already very high

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Safe Zone Training and LGBTQ+ Representation on Campus

continued from cover

Sam Killermann.

According to the Safe Zone Project, their online resources contribute to the movement and spirit of Safe Zone, a term that they consider to have many different meanings.

“For some of us, a Safe Zone training means a day-long intensive. For others, it’s a 45-minute vocab lesson,” The Safe Zone Project stated on its website. “While there is one “right way” to do a Safe Zone training (yay for more LGBTQ+ inclusion education!), there is a lot of confusion and mystery around where all this stuff came from, and what it means.”

Safe Zone training is common across many college campuses, including Kean University. The university had a university launch of Safe Zone Training on Nov. 15, 2022, in Townsend Hall.

Kean’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion hosted the event, and Mariah Jones, a graduate student of LGBTQIA+ Programs, ran the training.

The event was primarily for the LGBTQ+ and Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC) communities, and individuals who were interested in completing the Safe Zone Training.

The event included a presentation that discussed topics such as sex, gender, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Jones, who had completed her first Safe Zone Training during her first year of undergrad, explained that she took part in the training because she wanted to train others. She also believes in the importance of the LGBTQ+ community being supportive of one another and having allies to support the community.

“There is strength in numbers,” Jones said. “I enjoyed going through the training because I think every time I participate in it or conduct it, I learn something new. It is ever evolving.”

When it comes to training others about the LGBTQ+ curriculum, Jones explained that it was important to her because although the LGBTQ+ community is more accepted than it was years ago, there is still a lot of work to be done and the LGBTQ+ community still faces challenges and hate.

Despite this, Jones added that part of the training is recognizing and understanding that we are all human.

Before becoming a graduate student

and Safe Zone certified, Jones worked full-time back in her home community with youth that identified with the LGBTQ+ community and connected them to resources such as affirming therapists, mentors, and much more.

When Jones came to the Kean campus, she did take part in incorporating LGBTQ+ representation on campus, such as the Pride Festival event that took place at the Clock Tower on Oct. 10, 2022.

Although Jones participated in the event, she stated that she does not think her experiences are much different from any organization trying to thrive on campus. However, she added that it does require a lot of research and collaboration.

safe space for all members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies, as well as people who have a passion for raising awareness, educating, and enacting change on LGBTQ+ issues.

The President of Kean PRISM, Rashaad Couloote, stated that LGBTQ+ representation on campus is a necessity, especially for those who don’t know how to discuss or don’t know much about the LGBTQ+ community.

Couloote joined Kean PRISM back in the Fall 2019 semester, where he created a connection with the E-Board and its members. From there, he decided to become an E-Board member. His first position was rainbow chair in the Fall 2020 semester, and

around campus about their meetings, and they try to make any tabling event they can, and just overall make sure that they’re mentioned as much as possible.

Couloote wants those who are outside of the LGBTQ+ community to know that whether they are an ally to the community or a part of the community, they are always welcomed and that they are free to come and visit them at their events and general body meetings. He also wants them to know that they are always loved and cared for.

One of Couloote’s goals that he hopes to achieve during his time as Kean PRISM’s president, is to assist in Safe Zone training. Couloote is Safe Zone certified and stated that Vice President of Kean PRISM, Hana

Abouhaib, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Coordinator for Student Affairs, Erin T. Lester, were the ones that administered the training.

“It was nice,” Couloote began. “It helped confirm a lot of things that I had known. A lot of what Safe Zone Training has to do with is LGBTQ+ education and certain things such as biases, and also obviously respect and boundaries and stuff like that.”

Couloote also mentioned that the training involved conversation and the way of wording things, as well as different sexualities and

romantics. He was overall glad that he was able to know this information and how it added to his knowledge.

The biggest takeaway for Couloote during his Safe Zone training was that there is a lot of wording that you have to consider when it comes to talking about people’s preferences and biases.

“I was having a discussion recently about preferences, and the Safe Zone training helps alleviate certain things,” Couloote said. “So like people could have preferences, but it’s also a matter of checking preferences as to why certain people have those preferences. So you’re checking yourself on why you have certain preferences for various things.”

Overall, Couloote agrees with the idea of people on campus taking part in the Safe Zone training, if they have the time.

Although he believes that it would be difficult to administer something like Safe Zone training in a mandatory way, Couloote believes that people who want to get Safe Zone trained should be Safe Zone trained. ■

“I enjoyed going through the training because I think every time I participate in it or conduct it, I learn something new. It is ever-evolving.”



Photo by Mariah Jones
Kean University Safe Zone Logo



Photo by Kean University CougarLink
Kean PRISM Logo



Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Logo



Photo by Kean University CougarLink
Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Logo

“It takes a team to pull things together. There is a challenge with balancing entertaining students and educating them,” Jones said.

For those who are not members of the LGBTQ+ community, Jones says it is important to educate yourself rather than to assume or take one person’s experience and make it the face of their understanding of the community.

Jones goes on to explain that it is more than just the pride we see in June that is all fun and rainbows and that there are a lot of challenges, backlash, and a continuous fight to be equal.

During her time as a graduate student, Jones hopes to bring more awareness to the intersectionality of the LGBTQ+ population.

Another way that LGBTQ+ representation can manifest on campus is through clubs and organizations that specialize in the LGBTQ+ community. An organization on campus that exudes this is Kean’s PRISM.

The purpose of Kean PRISM is to create a

then secretary in the Spring 2021 semester.

During his time as Kean PRISM President, Couloote’s goal is to assist in an LGBTQ+ center on campus and Safe Zone training. His overall goal is to create a safe space on campus that everyone knows about so that if students need it, they can always come.

For people who are outside of the community, Couloote explains that they can show up and support the LGBTQ+ community by providing honest and genuine support. He states that a lot of it has to do with believing in what you’re saying and how people can be performative and not genuine.

“We prefer people who are genuine and not performative,” Couloote said. “Because when you’re performative it leads to a lot of issues and it’s not helpful to anybody, honestly, but our major thing is to just keep doing what you’re doing and be supportive.”

Kean PRISM makes itself known by word of mouth and through social media. Couloote states that they usually put flyers

President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. focuses on student safety at Town Hall Meeting

continued from cover

Harwood after it gets dark,” Chief of Staff Audrey M. Kelley said.

Kelley suggested that like most campuses, there should be dedicated Uber drop stops similar to charging stations where students can pick up their uber delivery or pizza delivery.

Anthony Monticello, director of Public Safety said, “If you go around campus, you see the speed zones going on. We’re doing a whole campus survey of speeding and signage. We just have to approve it to a campus plan.”

In addition, students had questions about online classes and requested for more courses. Online courses have been on a rise since the start of the pandemic, but some students expressed their concerns on more staffing for more online courses. Students mentioned that there is a lack of staffing especially for those who minor in africana studies at the university.

Joseph Youngblood II, Ph.D., J.D.,

joined the podium to inform students on the current state of Kean online and encouraged students to utilize the resources that Kean has to offer regarding



Photo by Adaora Nnakwe
President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. at Kean Hall town hall meeting

online courses.

“This is our opportunity to build these programs to make them more accessible and to also allow our students that are in

Kean online to experience the same cougar experiences to the extent in the virtual context primarily that you all experience on a regular basis,” Youngblood said.

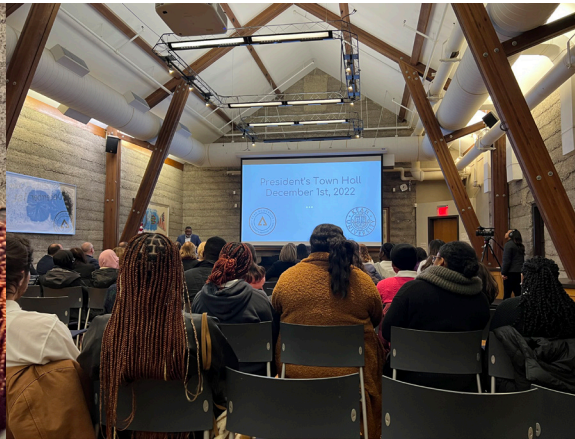


Photo by Adaora Nnakwe
Students attending the town hall meeting

Youngblood further addressed the opportunity for students to earn a bachelor’s degree online and other certifications to help with their future

careers after graduation.

“The president has made a tremendous investment in growing Kean online and that’s going to be growing programs, we’re looking at programs to see what areas interest you,” Youngblood said.

Repollet encourages students to take charge and reach out to Dr. Youngblood and Dr. Barbara George Johnson with important issues to implement and put them into action. Adding that the university community should look at the past, access it and use it to determine the future.

“These town hall meetings are just as important as the work that we’re doing on the administrative side because it gives us a window into what you’re experiencing on campus and that’s important to me,” Repollet said. ■

MLK’s Library: Book Drive for MLK Day!

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Photo by Josephine Carrillo

Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Kean University

on their content, will be donated to elementary schools, prisons, etc.

Even though this event is mostly to give back to the Kean community, if given the possibility to give back outside of the campus community, these books will be donated to other organizations and give the chance to others to expand their horizons and their knowledge.

“We would give to the community just like Martin Luther King Jr. did back in his time,” Ugochi said. “We invite all Kean students to stop by, and support by donating books they no longer use.”

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion expects to gather over 80 books by Jan.17, hoping that they will collect a broad number of diverse books that will meet the needs of all students. ■

Kean Piloting Common App’s Direct Admissions Program

continued from page 2

Program coupled with the Kean Tuition Promise create a powerful combination for New Jersey’s most needy prospective students to help them envision a future with a college degree, and that Kean may be a debt-free option for them,” Kean University Vice President of Enrollment Services Marsha McCarthy said.

Around 1,200 students are expected to receive an offer of direct admission to Kean according to Melissa Maiorino, director of the Office of Enrollment Services. ■



Photo by Kean Instagram

Kean Campus

Kean Introduces Student Satisfaction Inventory Survey

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in the university by prioritizing our students’ evolving needs,” Lozada said.

On the survey, you can rate items on a scale of how satisfied you are as well as how important that area is to you. Once all results are collected, an analysis is conducted alongside the Buffalo Know

Elevenths, the organization that created SSI.

In terms of the areas that they’re not satisfied with, the SSI will develop long term and short term goals to respond to those needs. As plans are being implemented after the results, the SSI

communicates with the students to improve weak areas.

The survey was open from Nov. 7 to Nov. 28, in which all data was collected and will be further analyzed within the upcoming days.

“We encourage participation through

weekly raffles so some students have the opportunity to win Kean flex dollars, kean gear, lunch with the president, and also designated parking for the academic year,” Lozada said. ■

KEAN'S DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES CONTINUES WITH DANA BASH

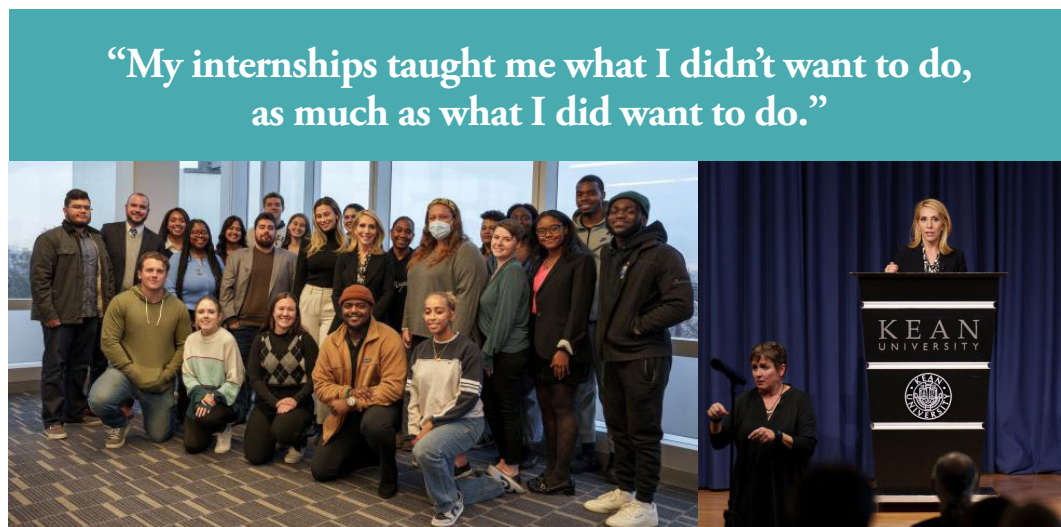
continued from page 3

meet them.

"When you're talking about local elections, look and see what your candidate's schedule is," Bash said. "See if you can meet with them and ask them questions. While it may sound time-consuming, it is possible."

The event ended with an opportunity for audience members to ask Bash questions. A gentleman inquired about the future of the Democratic Party, and asked Bash who she felt might decide to run for president in 2024, if President Joseph Biden decides not to run.

"The way to answer that question is to look at the numerous democrats who ran against Joe



Dana Bash and Jeremiah Sullivan at the pre-event offered to students on the journalism and political science track

Dana Bash beginning her lecture

Biden in 2020. Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar, Gavin Newsom, Gretchen Whitmer," Bash said. "They exist, but I don't think you have been able to see or hear them as much because we have a democratic president."

The next Distinguished Lecture Series will continue with James McBride, who is both a writer and a musician on Feb. 9, 2023, at the Liberty Hall Academic Center. There will be a book signing immediately following his lecture. More information regarding this lecture, and future lectures for the spring semester is available at <https://www.kean.edu/lectureseries>. ■

Kean University Eateries

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through meal plans offered by the university.

Students have the option to purchase meal plans at the beginning of each

semester which makes it easier for them to pick up food without worrying about paying at the moment.

be obtained through refunds from the University if students choose the option.



Auntie Anne's Eatery

If students are not satisfied with the eateries located on the Kean University campus, there are many more options available near and around the campus. More diverse options can be seen, where students can go to enjoy meals with friends or on their own.

Flex dollars and Cougar Cash can be used at most eateries off campus due to a partnership between the eateries and Kean University. Providing even more accessibility to food options for students.

While there are currently no set plans for opening new eateries on campus, the cafeteria is currently doing rotations on the food being served to offer different options.

Shanel McKenzie said, "the goal of the university is to have customer satisfaction, to give students a variation of foods to choose from. Above all they want to keep students satisfied and happy." ■

The Content Creation Club's Rug Tufting Workshop

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when I first met him."

Having students engaged in an activity you don't see often like this before helps

myself introverted and I don't really like to be involved with social events due to school load and self-doubt until I decided



View of 2 of Stephan's custom pieces

Photo by Content Creation Club

with giving them a new experience. Everyone got to work on the rug created and got to leave their mark on the project by adding their own name to the project as well.

"I feel that this event was a big step for my business and most importantly for me as a person," Argent said. "I consider

to get involved with the Content Creation Club. Ever since then, it's been all love and support from every member."

Argent and the rest of the Content Creation Club plan on having more Tufting Rug events and hope to be able to show off other talents students in the Content Creation Club have. ■

RAGNAROK IS UPON US

continued from page 5

behind Odin and Thor, give the characters identity and weight, creating impactful moments all throughout the game.

Enemy variety: One of the biggest complaints I had about the first GoW was the lack of enemy variety and mainly the fact we had to face the same troll boss fight, only in different colors in multiple encounters. In Ragnarok, this has been improved immensely. The regular enemies have a bigger variety, from raiders, and clingy reptilians, all the way up to Einherjar (the best warriors in Asgard).

Boss fights have been improved greatly too. While trolls and dragons from the last game are back as occasional mini-boss battles, the big boss encounters are bigger and better. From a massive wolf that keeps coming back to life to multiple encounters against different Aesir gods. The big boss encounters are creative and filled with adrenaline, one of which was also pretty annoying - Heimdall I'm looking at you.

Combat: The combat in Ragnarok has received a big improvement too. It's faster and more diversified. Companions have

different skills and benefit the combat in various ways. Kratos is faster and more nimble, and his fight movements feel refreshing in comparison to the 2018 processor.

Weapons have new abilities, and we finally have a new weapon added to the arsenal - the Draupnir Spear.

Finally, let's talk about visuals. The visuals of GoW: Ragnarok are incredible. Santa Monica has crafted a beautiful world that pushes the graphical boundaries. Characters are immensely thorough to the most minute detail. Emotions on characters are incredibly animated. Environments are beautiful and make you feel like you are surrounded by the world created in Ragnarok.

God Of War: Ragnarok is not only a prime example of a sequel video game well done. Big and better with some small gripes. But, a video game worthy enough to be considered a Game of the Year contender, but also quite possibly a Game of the Year winner. ■

KEAN UNIVERSITY RECOGNIZED FOR STUDENT VETERAN SUPPORT SERVICES

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that was held on Veterans Day.

"The award means we are providing the best services throughout the State of New Jersey and Military Friendly, number 1 Gold Standard in the nation for a large public college," said Zajda. "It is a pat on the back that recognizes the hard work we perform for our veterans and a standard we must maintain."

The Center for Veteran Student Success helps support Veterans with admission, advising, employment, recruitment, and tuition. The office provides support and seamless transitions from Soldier to student, as well as meet the needs of

those who have served our country.

"[Our goal is] that we are living up to our mission in providing the most comprehensive transition services to veterans, service members, and to their dependents. We pride ourselves on the services offered and the support of the University and VA," Zajda said. ■



Photo by Kean University's Official Twitter Page
Kean honors veterans with banners on lamp posts around campus

Kean's Nerd Culture on the Upswing to 'Cool'

continued from page 5

nerds, and a lot of them intermingle."

Clubs continue to establish and grow with engagement, with new clubs forming next semester fitting into nerd culture. For example, the United Nations Association expects to form next semester.

"[United Nations Association] is a club where people come together to compete as well as engage in nerd activities," Dominic Jones, freshman, secondary education english/special education, and Jordan Newland, freshman, biology major, said. "Such as taking over countries and engaging them in all sorts of strategies."

At Kean University, nerd has become a norm. More and more students are happy to label themselves as nerds, and engage with students similar to them on campus. With this, social life and engagement has the opportunity to grow more and more in the coming semesters. ■

425 Magazine Showcases Creative Work

continued from page 8

people apart of the club who don't design, but have become interested in it since joining. Plus, it's made all of us closer and has helped us in our careers.

The club accepts creative work, drawings, designs, short stories, and poetry and plans to have the first magazine printed by the spring semester of 2023 and a full-on launch the next academic

school year.

The future of 425 magazine seems bright as there are potential plans to



425 secondary logo

Photo by 425 Magazine

expand the magazine past a print version. Eventually, the club wants to do a digitally animated online magazine version that can include student-created GIFs and videos. But no matter how much the magazine may change in the future, the goal of 425 magazine will always be clear.

"I think the overall goal of the magazine

is to show that anyone can be creative," Goble said. "425 is an outlet for them to showcase it." ■

Tesla CEO has acquired the bird, but can he keep it soaring?

continued from page 8

give off socially unacceptable views on something. This can be an example of former President Donald Trump being banned from the platform because of how he exercised his right to free speech.

Therefore, another perspective on Twitter and Musk was needed but where and who?

Inside the quiet halls of Vaughn Eames there he was, standing at 6 foot 3 inches, dreads down to his back dyed at the tips, staring at the abnormal unique art in the exhibit.

Kean junior, theater major, and light technician, Phillip Thomas was the man I was looking for.

Thomas was very transparent about his thoughts on the controversy and was open-minded on why Musk owning Twitter is a terrible move.

“So I don’t want to think Elon Musk claimed Twitter, I feel like it was more of an acquired thing,” Thomas said.

In late October he finally did it, Musk acquired Twitter

at his original offer price of \$54.20 a share at a total cost of roughly \$44 billion.

“I only have terrible expectations for people who are rich with no experience and that Elon Musk’s entire story is that he doesn’t know how to be rich,” Thomas said.

The fate of Twitter is unknown at this point,

platform’s subscription service.

Many Twitter users are aware that the blue check on Twitter is a symbol for verified accounts, this symbol is specifically seen on celebrities’ and public influencers’ profiles. Now it is widely seen throughout the app, spreading like a virus.

Users are now able to purchase a blue check verified badge for \$8 a month, can you imagine paying to be cool?

“I think Twitter is going to go through a revamp due to the process of all the employees quitting and he can’t hold up a company like that on his own you know,” Thomas said.

At this moment we are unsure about the future of



Photo by @Sachee via Twitter
Musk fires more Twitter staff after spying on private slack chats criticizing him



Musk posted popular tombstone meme as users wondered if it is the end of Twitter

Photo by The Indian Express

many events happened within the time Musk took the throne.

According to ABC news in the following days, Musk terminated top executives, laid off half of the company’s staff, assembled a content moderation committee that will review account reinstatements, and revamped the

Musk’s Twitter, but is it interesting to see what happens over the next few months?

“At the end of the day dawg, I’m there for the memes, Black Twitter, terrible sports fans with dumb takes, and watching white women embarrass themselves on the internet,” Dilworth said. “This is going to be a s*** show.” ■

Racism in Disguise

continued from page 6

moment in their life where they felt they were a victim of microaggression or simply misjudged for looking a different way. Other students also experienced that other groups of races get treated poorly than others.

Amina, a senior majoring in communication/ film and media said that the races including African Americans, Latin Americans, and white people all fail to talk with each other to understand one another better.

“I feel like there is a separation between communication that African American people don’t go out of their way to talk to white people more, and white people don’t take the initiative to talk and get to know African American people,”

Amina said she was uncomfortable to talk to a person of non-color because she thinks they might not know how to communicate with her. She also referenced an incident of “Microinsult” that happened in a classroom with her and a white student

where the student made a comment about African American people’s hair which made her feel uncomfortable, a form of “microinvalidation.”

Hannah, a freshman and Spanish education major, heard a student disclosing to their friend inappropriate feelings towards black people.

“I was on the sidewalk and I experienced this girl in front of me saying these really horrific things about another black girl on my floor,” Hannah said. “She looked around and looked at me and said oh thank god there’s no black people around, I can talk freely, I looked at her and said “what is wrong with you?”

I have also experienced a form of microaggression while I was an employee at The Home Depot in South Plainfield. I can remember a time I was working there and was approached by a customer and police officer who were under the impression that I was selling marijuana.

The customer who approached me asked if I knew where to get marijuana. Mind you, I am working at a home appliance store minding my business and I was asked a middle age White American that question. I ignored them and continue to do my job. I felt misjudged in the moment but then later shrugged it off.

A few months later, I was approached by a Black police officer who was looking for lighter fluid. The officer asked me if I knew where the drugs were. I paused for a second and looked at him. seconds later he laughed and went

“I’m just playing with you man, you should’ve seen the look on your face” the Officer said.

No where is it funny as a police officer to approach a young black man in America and try and poke fun at having drugs.

I felt yet again, so misjudged as to why anybody would perceive me as the type to sell or do drugs. My feelings and

experiences are shared with countless of other black men in America who are often misunderstood, Dr. Kisha Dasent, a communication professor explained that microaggressions “are small indignities but have a larger impact when being expressed in a verbal or nonverbal way.”

She said Microaggression will come to you in the most harmless and subtle way but will have long-lasting psyche damage to a person. If used by the wrong person, it can be used to break down a person’s confidence leaving them with mental health effects.

“We don’t even realize how much we experience microaggressions because it’s so normalized and it happens all the time,” Dasent said.

Microaggressions are so common and ingrained in today’s society that we can experience a form of insult and it wouldn’t process in our brains until we evaluate it from a different perspective. ■

SHOULD KEAN OCEAN OPEN THEIR OWN SCHOOL STORE?

continued from page 4

of hours each day, it will definitely attract business.”

At the neighboring Ocean County Mall, located approximately three miles from campus, the search for Kean Ocean apparel is not promising. In the small college section of the Boscov's department store, shoppers will encounter clothing that promotes NCAA Division I colleges like Monmouth, Rutgers, and Seton Hall.

Dylan Orlando, a cashier at this store, agrees that the lack of Kean gear is concerning and thinks the mall should find ways to support local community college students.

“Every local business, big or small, should be contributing to its community in any way it can,” Orlando said.

For most businesses in the Ocean County Mall, licensing is the reason why they cannot sell any Kean University products. Joseph Ulinski, a Kean Ocean alumnus and store manager of Gameday Sports, is all in favor of a Kean kiosk situated in the center of the mall. He states however, that Gameday Sports can only sell college apparel from the schools they have a contract with and unfortunately, they don't have one with Kean.

“A Kean kiosk would give college students and their family members access to more clothing and accessories, especially since Christmas is coming up,” Ulinski said. “It is always good to expand out no matter where your market is.”

Kean Ocean students believe a school

store is essential to the community without having to browse other stores for any type of goods.

“More apparel will increase morale on campus,” Castronuovo said. “A lot of people will be happy.” ■



Photo by Logan Germano

Ideal area for Kean Ocean school store



Photo by Logan Germano

Boscov's college wear section

Inside Senior Forward Katie Morrison's Rehab: 'It was more of a mental game'

continued from page 4

your body in that much time. It was more of a mental game than anything, and I definitely learned the small goals are sometimes a lot better to have than just one big one.”

A major steppingstone in her recovery happened on Aug. 19, 2022, when for the first time since her injury, she was able to plant her injured leg and shoot a soccer ball.

Although rehab was rigorous, Morrison fell in love with the process that would not only get her back to playing soccer but back to being herself.

“Once she got here [for preseason], I was pleasantly surprised,” Women's Soccer Head Coach Brian Doherty says. “That was a really big surgery for someone to come back from, especially with the pandemic. I was happy to have her back around the team. Regardless of playing, Katie's energy for the team is really good and she was a real leader for us, whether she was playing or not.”

Morrison was able to participate in much more practice than initially anticipated, proving that she made significant progress in her recovery.

“As her teammate and one of her best friends it was really hard to see her struggle mentally and physically, especially when I was able to play the sport we love and she had to watch from the sideline,” Senior Midfielder Celine Brady says. “Katie showed me what it meant to be a hardworking and dedicated athlete. There was not one practice, meeting, game, or session Katie wasn't at cheering on the entire team.”

On Oct. 11, Morrison played in a scrimmage and finally felt like herself.

“I got off the field and said ‘wow, that felt normal,’” Morrison says smiling. “The trainer told me, ‘yeah, you look like a soccer player.’”

All of this led to Morrison ultimately playing in two games this season, including one start in which she recorded one shot on goal. She played a total of 76 minutes this season and was honored on senior day.

When Morrison was inserted into the game against NJCU, it was not only a big moment for her but everyone in attendance.

“The energy on the field changed entirely when she went,” Brady says.

“Players on the sideline, girls in the game, and parents in the bleachers all screamed and celebrated seeing her play again. After all the hard days I've seen her go through, being able to be on the field with her again was one of the best moments of my career.”

Morrison did not let fear stop her from stepping into the

moment. At that point, statistics were secondary. The hard work that she put in to get back to playing and the progress she made were enough for her.

“Just not even being able to run in the beginning of preseason, and now I'm playing soccer games, it's crazy,” Morrison says.

Morrison's return was 17 months in the making. The process was a lesson in learning about herself and ultimately life after sports.

“As crazy as it sounds, I think getting injured really helped with the transition to the ‘real world,’” Morrison says. “I learned how to define myself not just as a college athlete, which is something a lot of people struggle with post-graduation. I lost a part of my identity for so long that I know who I am outside of sports. Now I can focus on getting better in every aspect of life, not just sports.” ■



Photo by Katie Morrison

Katie Morrison on Media Day 2022

SPORTS

Women's Volleyball Wins Back-to-Back ECAC Championships

By Hector Morales

The Eastern College Athletics Conference Division III Championship was very emotional for Kean Women's Volleyball seniors Morgan Hall, Gwen Hangey, Sian Seeger, and Sedona Gaard, as it was the last time they all would share the court together.

The Cougars have been playing together since Fall 2019 and have made so many memories throughout their volleyball careers. They reminisce on one of their favorite moments together traveling to different states such as California in 2019 and Chicago this season.

"These four years went by way too fast, and I wouldn't change it for the world," Hangey, a senior setter said. "I would do anything to play one last game with them, to just relive those memories and feelings all over again."

finals 3-1.

In his 14 years coaching the team, this win marks Head Coach Don Perkins' third ECAC Championship.

"It was a fun week at the ECAC," Perkins said. "We knew we had a good shot of making the finals and it made the season a little better by going out and getting the win."

Hall, a senior right-side hitter was named MVP of the tournament with 23 kills, 1 block, and 2 aces in the three tournament games.

"It was such an honor I was so shocked," Hall said. "It was great to have my team by my side supporting me and helping me on the court to win that award."

Seeger, a senior libero and defensive specialist accumulated 36 Digs in the three games she played in during the tournament.

"Assisting the team in winning their second ECAC championship is a wholesome feeling, especially to end the season. It was a fun tournament and the team's hard work and sacrifice paid off in the end," Seeger said.

Hangey assisted on 29 points against Brooklyn College to secure the win and Gaard, also a senior libero and defensive specialist, recorded 3 service aces in the finals against Cabrini.

"It feels good to end the season with a win, especially in my senior year," Hangey said. "I know we didn't win NJACs to make it into the NCAA tournament, but the ECACs had



2022 Kean Women's Volleyball Team

Photo by Kean Women's Volleyball Instagram

"I would do anything to play one last game with them, to just relive those memories and feelings all over again."



Kean Women's Volleyball Wins ECAC Championship

Photo by Kean Athletics



Seniors Morgan Hall, Sedona Gaard, Sian Seeger, and Gwen Hangey

Photo by Kean Athletics



Seniors Morgan Hall, Sedona Gaard, Sian Seeger, and Gwen Hangey winning the ECAC Title

Photo by Kean Athletics

Hall, Hangey, Seeger and Gaard have been her best friends since the moment they first stepped on the court during the preseason of their freshman year.

To end their senior year, and their last game together, the Cougars once again won the ECAC Championship for the second season in a row. That is, after losing the NJAC Championship to the Rowan University Profs, 3-1.

On Nov. 11, they swept the Brooklyn College Bulldogs 3-0 in the ECAC Quarterfinals. The following day, they swept their New Jersey Athletic Conference rival, the New Jersey City University Gothic Knights, 3-0 and defeated the Cabrini University Cavaliers in the

a good amount of competition."

The four Cougars have one semester left until they graduate together at the Prudential Center in May. Hall and Hangey are going for Elementary Education, Seeger for Global Business, and Gaard for Communications-Public Relations. Their moments as Kean volleyball players will be cherished for the rest of their lives.

"Playing with Morgan, Sedona, and Sian for the last time was super emotional for me," Hangey said. "They are and always will be my best friends and I'm so thankful that I can truly call them my sisters." ■

CROSS COUNTRY IS BACK AFTER 15 YEARS

By Wayne Dawes

Danielle Todman is the head coach for the men's and women's cross-country team and has brought her years of experience with her.

Before Kean university Todman coached at Essex County Vocational Technical High School for six years and six years with Department of Defense High schools in Italy and England. What she emphasizes to her runners is that you can't have promise without process.

"The promise is in the process. The small investment we put in everyday to see our large return," Todman said.

The 2022 season recently concluded and for Todman she is humbled and blessed to be a part of something special. Building trust with her runners was one of the highlights of the season and seeing greatness with everyone she coaches.

"They chose and trusted me to be their coach, I got

to witness their improvements week after week, watch them set personal records, and watch them persevere through some of the toughest courses," Todman said. "[I'm] blessed to witness their greatness."

Kean has brought back cross country for the first time since 2007 and Todman is honored that Kean selected her to be the coach of the team and build a new legacy within the sport.

"[I'm] humbled that Mr. Kelly and Jay chose me to not just be the coach, but to build up the champions and build the program," Todman said. "[I'm] honored that I get to build a legacy alongside some of the greatest people, my team."

Kean's cross-country team concluded their season in 2007 and was inactive until Todman organized a team 15 years later.

The men and women's cross-country team started the Fall 2022 season on Sept. 2 with 37 runners and concluded the season on Nov. 5.

William Mitchell, a freshman majoring in finance, a runner on the men's cross-country team, thanks Todman for his "mental toughness" and for motivating him and holding him accountable during

his meets.

"It feels awesome to help bring back this sport and it will be nice to see the program grow year after year," Mitchell said.

Cross country takes a lot of hard work, practice, and dedication. Staying motivated can be hard but in the end it is satisfying seeing their hard work pay off.

"Even though practices and meets

Nancy Martinez-Maldonado, a freshman majoring in Elementary Education/ Bilingual K-6 Mathematics expressed her passion for the sport.

"I found more passion in running long distances," Maldonado said. "I decided to go to Kean and was a bit disappointed knowing they didn't have track or cross country." Maldonado said when she found out Kean was having a cross country team

runners when it is time to compete.

Maldonado said as a commuter, waking up at 6 a.m. for practice is a hard task especially knowing that her training may include a hard and painful workout.

"While people are out sleeping in the morning, we are making history during that morning practice to improve," Maldonado said. "I'm glad to have stumbled into the cross-country team and meet talented runners like my teammates"

I love running and feel a sense of success when I improve my time running," Maldonado said. "Plus, all the teammates are great motivators for me to continue running because we are all in the same shoes trying to get better and fighting through the obstacles."

The team usually meets on Saturdays and during the week they would have "light days" where they would not run a lot, that is "so everyone is light

of their feet to run during the meet," Maldonado said.

The team also has yoga twice each week to assist them in loosening up and releasing stress. They do yoga to stretch their bodies and aid in the healing process in preparation for their next meet.

Eating right is also an important part of staying fit and motivated to run long distances as you have more energy by drinking a lot of water and eating a lot of protein. Maldonado said the team encourage each other and to rid the team of any nervousness and reminds each other to drink lots of water and protein.

Everybody's experience on the cross-country team is different but Todman makes sure her runners have fun along with being pushed to their limits as she believes in everyone she is coaching.

"Being on the cross-country team was a different experience than high school, yet I had so much fun being part of the team," Maldonado said. "Even when Coach Todman pushed us to our limits, she did it because she believed in each individual and knew we were capable." ■

"While people are out sleeping in the morning, we are making history during that morning practice to improve."

RANK	TEAM	FIRST PLACE VOTES
1	STOCKTON	(5)
2	TCHJ	(3)
3	ROWAN	
4	RAMAPO	
5	MONTCLAIR STATE	DARK HORSE
T-6	KEAN	(1)
T-6	RUTGERS-NEWARK	
8	NEW JERSEY CITY	
9	RUTGERS-CAMDEN	

Photo by Keanathletics.com

Mitchell and Martinez-Maldonado selected NJAC Rookies of the Week

Women's Cross Country chosen sixth in NJAC pre-championship poll

Photo by Keanathletics.com

are very difficult, success outweighs the struggle," Mitchell said. "Later in life, I'm not going to remember how much practice hurt but I am going to remember how good it felt succeeding with my team."

The cross-country meets are a memorable and intense experience. Mitchell said the runners love to participate in the meets not only because they are fun, but the atmosphere is euphoric, especially those at the bigger meets.

"[It] was really cool to be a part of," Mitchell said.

On the women's team, the experience is similar, and the runners are no stranger to cross country as they have experience in the sport since high school.

this semester, she knew she wanted to join as she was eager to continue running and improving her skills.

Cross country practices consist of a lot of drills and running so the runners can perform well at the meets, even waking up early in the morning adding to the grind of excelling at cross country.

"Coach Todman usually has everyone warm up doing drills together as a team," Maldonado said. "After that, we begin our actual practice workout, which is divided into two groups; one is the long distance, and the other is the short distance."

Waking up early in the morning can be a tough task and takes some getting used to, especially for student athletes. The end, the early practices benefit the



Photo by Keanathletics.com

Cross Country competes at ECAC championships

Kean Men's Basketball Red Hot Start

By Kervin Coleman

The goal of athletic competition is to win at any cost. The Kean men's basketball Cougars have been doing that. Every team's goal is to go undefeated throughout their season and so far the Cougars are almost a third of the way through to achieving that goal.

The Cougars were ranked fifth in the NJAC preseason poll but are currently a blistering 8-0 (3-0 in NJAC play) and now ranked first in the conference. This hot start can be attributed to Head Coach David Turco finding his footing in his third season, the veteran returning seniors as well as upperclassmen that are new to the team from the transfer portal making an immediate impact.

"Turco is very calm and strategic, he's always looking for ways to improve and focuses on preparation of our opponents and shooting," senior Letrell West spoke of the coaching style of Coach Turco.

The Cougars have already accomplished winning some gold early on in the season by winning the LaFrance Hospitality Tournament Title. Senior and accounting major Griffin Barker was named MVP of the tournament. Barker plays center and has been a main catalyst for the Cougars success so far this season.

Barker is a transfer student athlete from Seattle, Washington. The previous school he went to was Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, California. Barker is a 6-6, 225 lb. center swiss army knife that can score at all three levels.

"The biggest difference between being at Kean in comparison to my last school is the environment around campus," Barker said. "It's a good feeling when you have faculty, administration, and the student body supporting you on and off the court."

Barker so far this season has five double doubles as well as averaging one with 20 points per game which is second in the

NJAC and also leads the conference with 10 rebounds per game respectively. He's also been tabbed NJAC Player of the Week twice already to begin the year as well as being named to the D3hoops.com Team of the Week after a dominant 20 point and 22 rebound game versus William Paterson in the NJAC opener.

"My biggest approach when it comes to the game is to control what I can control,"

his averages across the board into career highs.

"Mentally I've definitely improved this year and I'm in a much better place, it's allowed me to be better and continue to get better," West said.

Currently, the all-NJAC second teamer is putting up a stat line of 18.6 points per game, good for fourth in the NJAC but it's his shooting splits that is caused to be

our success, running scout teams and competing with us every day helps us improve," West said.

Basketball is a team effort, even past the starting five; the entire rotation has to contribute and that's exactly what the Cougars have been displaying during this undefeated start.

Jamison has been a steady contributor to the Cougars from the day he stepped foot into the locker room.

A reliable guard that brings a scoring spark whether starting or coming off the bench.

"There's an emotional feeling this year," Jamison reflected on it being his final campaign. "Every game means something and there's no next time, so that's been keeping me on my toes."

Jamison has been a spark plug in his new role as the team sixth man. Currently, he averages 11 points per game along with 3 assists and 4 rebounds per game.

Turco looks to Jamison to control the pace of the game for the second unit but also runs him with the starter plenty for his experience factor.

"The group we have this year is very unselfish and buys into our coaches' game plan. We've learned to put the team before ourselves and trust one another," Jamison said.

Other roundabout contributors are seniors JD Daniels and Corey Thelisme as well as juniors D.J. Alicea and Heem Burno, with all of the other players that help

fill out the roster. The Cougars have been climbing and expect to continue roaring towards climbing higher for the rest of their season.

"This team has much better chemistry, together as one unit. Not knocking any previous teammates but we have made improvements to the roster that has also been key to our success," West said.

West, Barker, Jamison, and the rest of the Cougars all have common goals of finishing strong; #1 in the NJAC, win the NJAC, be ranked within the Top 25 nationally, and compete in the NCAA Tournament. ■

"This team has much better chemistry, together as one unit"



Jailen Jamison attempting an acrobatic layup



Letrell West inbounding the ball



Griffin Barker at the scores table, awaiting to be checked into the game



Coach Turco addresses the Cougars in a timeout huddle

Barker said. "The biggest key for us to stay successful is for the team to buy into what Coach Turco is teaching us".

Jailen Jamison, senior guard, and business management major stated that so far Barker is the hardest working player on the team.

"Griff is definitely the hardest worker on the team for sure, the guy's a machine," Jamison said.

Barker's efforts have shined bright early on, but others don't go unnoticed. Letrell West, senior forward, has been making his presence felt as he's improved upon his statistical performance, increasing

marveled at.

West is a wing with high volume shot attempts and has been dialed in with his shooting efficiency, his splits are 46% from the field and 38% from the three-point line; both are career highs as well as maintaining a respectable 83% at the free throw line.

West's best performance to date is a 27-point performance versus Penn State Harrisburg, where he drained four three pointers along with dishing out nine assists.

"All the guys who don't play a ton of minutes are all key contributors to