

Kean University Board of Trustees Meeting March 7, 2005 Remarks by Richard Katz

Good afternoon, members of the Kean community, the Board of Trustees. I am Richard Katz, a member of the English Department, an elected Faculty Senator and member of the Senate Executive Committee, [former President of our campus union, the Kean Federation of Teachers, and current member of our union's Executive Council and delegate to the New Jersey State Council].

I want to speak about the disheartening results of the university's budget priorities which shifted in 2000 from academic support toward marketing, public relations, campus beautification and its maintenance, and the expansion of administration.

In 2000, Kean's overall operating budget was about \$106 million; today it is nearly \$120 million, primarily the result of increases in enrollments and big increases in student tuition and fees.

Despite increasing revenues, student retention rates have dropped as the accompanying [graph](#) makes clear. Another [graph](#) shows that over that same four-year period, full-time faculty numbers fell from 383 to now 363, while adjunct numbers increased from 433 to a startling 784 this past fall. Adjunct instructors now teach the overwhelming number of courses in the freshman and sophomore years. Forcing full-time faculty to add office hours will not solve this problem. Look at the attachment comparing Kean's faculty and librarian ratios to our sister universities. The comparison is embarrassing.

Clearly, the increasing size of the operating budget and the bullying power of the leadership are being misapplied. Power, after all, is not just an expenditure of energy. There must be results. And the results are damaging for our students who now pay more for less.

This administration's plans for Kean's future are outdated and uninformed by current thinking. More graduate programs, more marketing, and more peripheral expenditures will only make the situation worse. We will need even more adjunct instructors, further eroding our central mission, which is educating first generation undergraduates in increasingly diverse New Jersey.

Chancellors and presidents at City University of New York, the State Universities of New York, of Virginia and Mississippi State Universities, the presidents of Temple, New York and Harvard Universities are moving their institutions in the opposite direction. They have, or plan to, cut back on graduate programs and demands for scholarship as they put their resources into undergraduate teaching by increasing full-time faculty and cutting back on adjuncts.

You will see in the attachments that in response to increasing undergraduate enrollments, Chancellor Goldstein at CUNY has just testified before the New York State Assembly Ways and Means and Finance Committees that he has cut adjunct faculty numbers and increased full-time faculty by more than 10 percent in the last two years. Their retention rates are increasing while ours are declining.

In New Jersey, we are turning our backs to our students, the majority of whom are minorities.

Recent books about the future of undergraduate education (see attached short reading list) all make a similar point about the dangers of peripheral expenditures while marginalizing undergraduate education.

I hope what you, the Board members, hear today will cause you to explore the administration's budgetary waste and consider ways to get Kean back on track.

The first step must to increase full-time faculty size by 10 percent in the next two years with special administrative support for recruitment of minority faculty.

We have a great mission. We have highly qualified and dedicated employees. Now, we need an administration willing to put its money where its students truly are, in the classroom. We who teach and work here need to be supported not devalued in our work.