

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: KFT
908-623-6020

Kean faculty term Farahi retention vote 'Bogus'

Conflict and procedural objections raised in demand Trustees vote again Monday

UNION, NJ...University faculty and staff are calling on the Kean University Board of Trustees to vote again on the leadership of President Dawood Farahi after narrowly retaining the controversial President last month. The local is questioning the validity of one vote of one Trustee who is employed by the administration, another whose vote may have been recorded incorrectly and an absent third not afforded the opportunity to call in, which would be enough to change the narrow 7-4-1 vote of confidence in Farahi's leadership on Feb. 15.

The vote outraged faculty and staff who allege that Farahi falsified his resumes and applications for employment at the university by inventing publications, a deanship, an award and an editorial board position that they believe are fictitious. Student protests were ignited particularly by the Trustee's claim that the university's Academic Integrity Policy only applies to students and not to President Farahi, despite plain language to the contrary in the policy.

Student petitions and two campus unions—the Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT), which represents faculty, professional staff and librarians and the International Federation of Professional, Technical Engineers (IFPTE), local 195, which represents approximately 135 janitors, skilled-trades workers and security officers—are calling for the Trustees to remove President Farahi.

Kean Sophomore Gizeth Cruz, of Rahway, started a change.org petition calling for Governor Christie to investigate what she terms as "unethical activity of President Farahi." Cruz, who is studying biotechnology, said that students feel Farahi's mistaken priorities on campus are indications of what she terms his lack of legitimate qualifications for the position. "He does things that look good on paper in building fancy new buildings on campus, but he has increased student enrollment without accompanying faculty hiring so students are left in crowded classrooms and often unable to register for necessary classes for our majors."

"Where there are mistakes, there are consequences, but we see none here," said Cruz. "We are concerned that exceptions are being made for Dr. Farahi as far as the integrity policy goes and that is unfair," she said. "Why is an exception being made when students and faculty must abide by the rules at all times?"

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The Trustees acted improperly in retaining Farahi and the university's reputation is continuing to suffer, in the opinion of Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT) President Dr. James A. Castiglione. "The union is acting as the guardian of institutional integrity. Unfortunately, the Trustees' decision reflects poorly on the university and raises questions about board members' political allegiances and cronyism at the university." Dr. Castiglione recounted a history of how the leaders of the search committee that elevated Dr. Farahi to President were rewarded with university jobs. Additionally, Farahi supporter state Senator Ray Lesniak, who was sighted at the last Trustees meeting, has relatives on the Kean payroll.

Castiglione further noted that the law firm charged with investigating President Farahi was the same firm Farahi recommended to the board to be engaged as counsel back in 2009. "We are concerned that the Trustees' vote was based on a report from a firm recommended and hired by Farahi, another apparent conflict," said Castiglione. "That report has not been made public and we are calling for its release. What is the Board hiding?" he said.

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About the Kean Federation of Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO

Established in 1978, the Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT) is a union of approximately 500 professors, professional staff and librarians. KFT Local 2187 is a member of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the American Federation of Teachers New Jersey (AFTNJ) and of the AFL-CIO. The KFT is one of the locals under the Council of New Jersey State College/University Locals (CNJSCL), the statewide bargaining agent for more than 8,000 professional employees in 11 state college locals in New Jersey.

We protect and advance the terms and conditions of employment for our members, professional educators and staff committed to their students and to their support by Kean University. The KFT is a democratic, inclusive, strong union local with over 80% membership. We are proud of our members' work with their students and for the union.