



## **KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS**

*An Association of Professors, Professional Staff and Librarians*  
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### **Report Exposes Damaging Financial Stewardship at Kean University**

*New University leadership needed, according to faculty, librarian and professional staff union*

**UNION, NJ**...Millions diverted from core academic programs has equated to cancelled classes, lowered admission standards and failing graduation rates for Kean University students, according to Kean Federation of Teacher (KFT) President James Castiglione. “New revelations show Kean University President Dawood Farahi used taxpayer funds, student tuition and fees and massive bonding to fund ill-conceived and misguided initiatives that do not help students, said Castiglione. “The mismanagement has left the University with rising debt service costs and declining enrollment.”

A *Star-Ledger* expose revealed questionable financial decisions including:

- \$2.5 million spent to build a gourmet restaurant on campus,
- Hundreds of thousands of dollars lost in a failed scheme to take out high-premium life insurance on wealthy donors,
- Debt so large that 13 percent of the budget went for debt service last year, and
- Hundreds of thousands spent on a China branch campus to educate Chinese students.

As a result, Moody’s Investors Services “downgraded” the university’s credit rating.

The article also details on-going political interference at Kean University involving local State Senator Ray Lesniak. Senator Lesniak acknowledged recommending Thomas Bistocchi, a board member of the parent organization overseeing the Middle States accrediting agency, to replace a Kean Trustee who voted against retaining Farahi last February when the president faced allegations he lied on his resume.

Bistocchi’s appointment to the Board of Trustees occurred just as Middle States was preparing to review Kean University’s accreditation status after having placed the university on probation earlier that summer. To shore up political control of the board a trustee who stood up for integrity was removed, alleged Castiglione, and the senator recommended Bistocchi because of his influence with Middle States.

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The report acknowledges the university is coming off of a disastrous year under Farahi's leadership in which its accreditation was placed on probation by Middle States, all 13 of the University's athletic teams were placed on four years of NCAA probation, and the Trustees were forced to investigate allegations that Farahi had misrepresented his academic credentials on multiple resumes over decades.

Castiglione agreed with the *Star-Ledger's* characterization that Farahi-led initiatives "cost a lot of money and many appear to have little direct impact on the school's core mission — an affordable education for New Jersey's low-income and middle-class college students." The union previously voted "no-confidence" in Farahi's leadership and called for his removal, but Castiglione said the problems raised by the report, strengthen the argument that new University leadership is critical now.

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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 9,000 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.*