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Subject: Middle States Accreditation

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Kean University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, as it has been since 1960. After undergoing a comprehensive self-study, Kean hosted the Middle States Visiting Team in April, who submitted their report to the full Commission shortly thereafter. On June 23, 2011 the Middle States Commission on Higher Education announced that Kean University remains accredited.

The Middle States Visiting Team report, which is the basis for the decision of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, is clear about the facts and the university's progress and commitment to access and educational excellence. Here is what the report states:

“Kean University presented a comprehensive and forthright self-study providing extensive documentation and data to support the self-study's analysis of its strengths, challenges and recommendations. During the Visiting Team's visit to Kean University, from April 17-20, 2011, the University community demonstrated an overall commitment to the continuing transformation of the institution consistent with its mission of excellence in a student-centered environment.

This report acknowledges the many significant accomplishments, progress, and exemplary and innovative practices achieved by the University. The University has achieved growth in student enrollment, diversity of its student population, academic programs, student support programs, faculty teaching and scholarship, and campus beautification and site improvement efforts. Growth in these areas is remarkable considering the fiscal challenges faced by the University in terms of over two decades of decreased state funding.”

One of the primary reasons to participate in the voluntary accreditation process is to identify areas in which the University can improve upon the world-class education that it offers. It is an opportunity to candidly assess our programs, services and curriculum and improve the quality of our educational system.

During our self-study (prior to the Middle States visit), we identified two areas, both dealing with assessment, in which the University needed to improve. The Middle States Visiting Team agreed with us and reported:

“This report also finds, which the institution has acknowledged in its self-study report,

deficiencies with institutional and student learning assessment. Essentially, the University lacks a systematic and integrated institution-wide assessment process that generates tangible evidence to measure the extent to which the University is meeting the aspirations of its mission, student learning outcomes, and other outcomes for program improvement.”

After identifying the areas that needed improvement, the University took action to address the issue and establish a comprehensive system to measure institutional and student learning assessment. These measures were put into place prior to the Middle States Visiting Team's arrival on campus and the team immediately recognized that the university had taken the actions necessary to ensure compliance:

“The Visiting Team was impressed that the University, in coordination with the Middle States reaccreditation process has moved quickly and decisively to organize and implement effective responses to the challenge. The report recognizes momentum and evidence that an institutional assessment scaffold is being constructed which will contribute to establishing a University-wide culture of evidence and documentation.”

Kean University will continue its march toward world-class education, its student-centered focus and its commitment to access and affordability. We have taken the appropriate measures to address the areas of assessment that we must improve upon and will provide regular updates to the University community regarding additional measures that we will implement in order to continue the progress that the Middle States Visiting Team witnessed. At Kean, we do what we say. As the visiting team stated, *“Kean University operates with a high level of integrity.”* We have raised the bar in many of our programs and our assessment will soon catch up in all areas.

