

COUNCIL of NEW JERSEY STATE COLLEGE LOCALS AFT/AFL-CIO



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Legislative Priorities

Pending legislation in the New Jersey Assembly and Senate would create a Task Force on Higher Education Governance and Funding, providing an opportunity to strengthen New Jersey's higher education system. As policymakers consider reorganizations, such as the proposed Kean University–NJCU merger, decisions must be transparent, accountable, and student-centered, while preserving institutional missions, regional access, and the rights of faculty and staff who sustain academic quality. The Council of New Jersey State College Locals (CNJSCL) is committed to partnering with legislators to create an affordable, high-quality higher education system that serves students first.

Each of the following is detailed on the reverse side:

- **Champion Affordability and Student Success**
- **Adopt a Student-Centered, Equitable Funding Formula with Stakeholder Input**
- **Enhance Fiscal Oversight and Accountability**
- **Reinvest in Instruction and Campus Infrastructure**
- **Protect Institutional Missions and Regional Access**
- **Uphold Academic Integrity and Job Protections in Reorganizations**
- **Stabilize Healthcare Costs to Sustain Educational Excellence**
- **Protect Civil Rights and Support Immigrant and International Students**

We Want to Work with You

The Council of New Jersey State College Locals AFT/ AFL-CIO wants to work with you to achieve these goals. We represent over 10,000 faculty, NTPs, professional staff, librarians, and adjuncts at nine public colleges and universities: Ramapo College of New Jersey, Stockton University, The College of New Jersey, Rowan University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, William Paterson University, Kean University, and Thomas Edison State University. Here is our contact information:

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Champion Affordability and Student Success. Ensure that New Jersey residents have access to an affordable, high-quality education at our public colleges and universities through sustained state investment, not unfunded mandates. Increase appropriations to support tuition reduction, experiential learning, and faculty-student mentorship programs that foster academic excellence, timely graduation, and workforce readiness. Expand funding for EOF, academic support, and student counseling: programs that not only change individual lives but also underpin the social and economic health of our state.

Adopt a Student-Centered, Equitable Funding Formula with Stakeholder Input. Reform New Jersey's higher education funding model to prioritize equity and opportunity, while ensuring faculty and staff voices are represented in funding decisions. Create a fair, transparent formula that recognizes each institution's role in serving first-generation and economically disadvantaged students, improving retention and graduation rates, and driving regional development. Current inequities have pushed institutions toward unsustainable fiscal practices and rising tuition. A reformed formula will let our public colleges and universities focus on what matters most—educating students and serving communities.

Enhance Fiscal Oversight and Accountability. Promote excellence and build trust in public higher education through responsible stewardship of state resources. Implement stronger fiscal oversight to limit administrative expansion, require independent financial audits, and guarantee union representation in governance and budgetary processes. Ensure that state dollars directly support instruction, student services, and community-facing initiatives.

Reinvest in Instruction and Campus Infrastructure. Create a dedicated capital funding program for New Jersey's public colleges and universities. Modernize classrooms, laboratories, and facilities to support innovation and access, from research hubs in urban centers to regional campuses that anchor local economies and expand opportunity.

Protect Institutional Missions and Regional Access. Preserve the unique missions of each public college and university, especially those serving underserved or geographically isolated regions. From South Jersey to Hudson County, our institutions are essential anchors in their communities, driving social mobility, cultural vitality, and local economic resilience. Require stakeholder consultation—faculty, staff, and students—before any reorganization or merger. Institutions best serve their students when decisions are made with, not for, the people who teach, advise, and support them.

Uphold Academic Integrity and Job Protections in Reorganizations. Safeguard the rights, rank, and union representation of faculty and staff in any merger or reorganization. These protections preserve institutional knowledge, academic continuity, and the stability that students rely on to succeed. The Legislature should amend the *Kean University Act* to include explicit statutory language guaranteeing job security, seniority, and collective bargaining continuity for NJCU employees, ensuring that equity for students extends to the workforce that serves them.

Stabilize Healthcare Costs to Sustain Educational Excellence. Address escalating healthcare costs through cost-containment reforms, greater transparency in premium setting, and oversight of the State Health Benefits Plan. Expand access to affordable healthcare for adjunct faculty, whose contributions are vital to institutional success. Sustainable healthcare ensures that institutions can continue to attract and retain the educators and professionals who make student success possible.

Protect Civil Rights and Support Immigrant and International Students. New Jersey's public colleges and universities serve diverse communities of learners. Federal actions that target immigrants or restrict international students threaten civil rights gains, disrupt campus safety, and erode belonging for students of color and first-generation families. The State must reject discrimination in all forms and protect access to higher education.