NJCU Senate Meeting

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026
Time: 2:00–3:08 PM ET
Location: Zoom (virtual)
Presiding: John Donnellan, Chair

1) Call to Order

President John Donnellan called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and welcomed attendees. A brief Zoom voting test was conducted to verify the polling feature.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Motion: To approve the University Senate meeting agenda for February 23, 2026.
Second: Noted by members (incl. Hanae).
Outcome: Adopted (no objections stated).

3) Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion: To approve the December 15, 2025, University Senate minutes.

Moved by John Laski; Seconded by Rayola Osanya.
Outcome: Adopted (no objections stated).

4) Special Orders / Appointments

Student Appointment — Community Engagement Learning Committee
Motion: Appoint Ian Astacio. (Motion and seconds voiced on floor; Hanae noted as a seconder.)
Outcome: Adopted.

Student Appointment — General Education Committee
Motion: Appoint Andrea. Outcome: Adopted.

5) Chair's Report (John Donnellan)

Open Meetings: Senate meetings will be open going forward.

Inter-Senate Collaboration: Ongoing work with Kean University Senate leadership (Chair Dr. Craig Konyk) to ensure both Senates retain voice in future governance; additional in-person meeting March 3; update expected at next Senate meeting.

Recognition: Congratulations to Professor Martha Mook on a second GRAMMY (Best New Age/Ambient/Chant; contributor to Carla Patullo's Nomadica).

6) Guest Report — Provost & SVP for Academic Affairs, Dr. David Birdsell (Kean)

Theme: Pivoting to Fall 2026 with a unified, student-success posture across campuses.

6.1 Student Success & Academic Support

Navigate advisement platform to be available to all NJCU faculty starting July 1; integrates faculty, advising, tutoring, and follow-up tracking.

Expansion of embedded tutors, standardized tutor training/certification, and stronger SI (Supplemental Instruction) model at Jersey City; aim is "more, not less" supports, with local presence on the JC campus (no need to travel to Union). Oversight by Muhammad Hassan (VP, Nancy Thompson Learning Commons); a JC lead will be installed.

Uptake goals: Address historically low follow-through on referrals by enabling direct tracking and targeted nudges.

EdSights (affective, AI-driven outreach via SMS) to plug into Navigate; cited as contributing to notable persistence gains at peer institutions; rollout planned.

6.2 Teaching & Delivery

Hybridized, synchronous cross-campus offerings: Chairs encouraged to schedule sections shareable between Union and Jersey City to address under-filled upper-division courses while preserving section caps; tech build-out to be in place before the schedule goes live (student registration toward the end of next month).

General Education (GE) Co-Teaching Outcomes at Kean:

+12 percentage points in Tutorial Center utilization.

Retention increased from 88% to 92% (semester-to-semester).

Higher student and faculty satisfaction with shared, interdisciplinary instruction.

Faculty presence & engagement: Emphasis on consistent student contact (synchronous and/or asynchronous) and rebuilding in-person campus vibrancy in JC.

6.3 Key Dates / Development

Co-Development Days: May 6–8 (details below in Dr. Baecher's report). May 8 = Faculty Research Symposium (NJCU faculty eligible to submit).

6.4 Faculty Research & Development Opportunities

Release Time for Research (RTR): Application out within a week; competitive; up to 6 credit hours in AY 2026–27 (preferably 3+3 fall/spring); expected ~25–30 awards. Tenure-track only (not NTTP) due to evaluation constraints.

Summer Activities (mini-grants): Modest funding beginning July 1 for research/teaching accelerators (e.g., short courses, software, archives, survey items).

Travel Learn (faculty-led short study abroad): Planning for 2026–27; university covers faculty travel; student fee typically modest. COIL (online international collaboration) also available.

6.5 Q&A Highlights

Writing Center & Tutoring at NJCU: Current level of supports to be maintained and burnished; student workers to be trained/certified; operations to be based in JC with remote enhancements as appropriate.

Embedded Tutors & SI: Continued support; scaling may not immediately reach the Kean-Union level in year one but will progress.

Accent/Spoken English Support: No formal "accent reduction" program planned; referrals and stand-alone online resources available; Language Resource Center at Union provides ongoing ESL tutoring (see Dr. Baecher note).

Advisement for Students in Sunsetting Programs: Using TASCELD (AI tool) to map NJCU records to Kean catalog and propose (A) shortest path in chosen major, (B) closest/adjacent faster path, (C) fastest overall path; no loss of credits (subject to accreditation constraints). 54 students identified after analysis; initial counseling underway; near-grads are a priority when the schedule posts next month.

LMS Transition: Canvas likely to replace Blackboard Ultra on or about July 1 (possibly by Sept 1); goal is to avoid running dual LMS environments; Canvas training will be provided.

7) Guest Report — Dr. Laura Baecher, Associate Provost for Faculty Development (Kean)

Faculty Development Hub comprises three centers:

Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE); 2) Center for Community Engaged Learning; 3) Center for Faculty Scholarship & Impact. Programming is largely faculty-to-faculty via Faculty Fellows; NJCU/JC faculty are encouraged to apply (seats reserved). Weekly "Monday Memo" (opportunities & PD) to be shared jointly with Jason Martinek.

Key Dates & Opportunities

May 6 (in person, JC): "Welcome Wagon" kickoff; quick-start on Canvas, Navigate, and Simple Syllabus; deans/chairs present. Lunch provided.

May 7 (virtual): Orientation to the Faculty Hub on Canvas (asynchronous modules; badging/certification), plus topical breakouts.

May 8 (Union): Faculty Research Conference — proposals welcome from NJCU faculty.

May 26–27: Course Design Institute for GE learning communities (thematic, co-taught, with excursions).

June 1–3: Course Design Institute (active learning & engagement); Day 1 open to all, then tracks (GE, Community-Engaged Learning, COIL, Career-focused, etc.).

Week of Aug 24–27 (Faculty Integration Days):

Aug 25 (Tue): Half-day trip to Ocean campus (busing from Union & JC).

Aug 26 (Wed): All-faculty PD at JC (Union & Ocean faculty visit JC).

Aug 27 (Thu): University Opening Day at Union (President Repolette; college/department meetings).

Language Resource Center: ESL tutoring in the library (Union) operates daily; supports multilingual students (incl. Wenzhou and Spanish-speaking populations).

Availability: Dr. Baecher will be on the JC campus every Tuesday; faculty encouraged to book 30–40 min meetings (in person or remote).

8) Committee Reports

Faculty & Professional Staff Affairs Committee

Mini-Grants: Received 15 applications; available pool $4,800 (12 × $400). Due to some requests under $400, 13 of 15 were funded. Two were ineligible (adjunct status and/or activity beyond June timeline). Appreciation extended to Provost's Office for support.

Emeritus Status & Distinguished Service Award: Call for nominations delayed pending clarity on privileges post-transition to Kean Jersey City (e.g., ID/library access). Updates are to follow.

9) New Business

Resolution: Celebration of Extraordinary Faculty
 Motion: Hold a Senate-sponsored celebration recognizing extraordinary faculty contributions at the May Senate meeting (preferably in person), including certificates.
 Second: Bill Calathes.
 Outcome: Adopted.

Amendment: Extend the above celebration to include Professional Staff (with attention to those not continuing after July 1/2).
Motion: Joseph Moskowitz; Second: noted by the Chair (incl. Dr. Laski).
Outcome: Adopted (as an amendment to the prior resolution. Executive Committee to consider appropriate recognition for A. Harry Moore staff as well.

10) Announcements

Weather/Operations: University operating remote the following day due to snow.

Inter-Senate Meeting: March 3 in person with Kean Senate counterparts.

Action Items / Follow-Ups

Clerk/Secretary: Enter the two student appointments into official committee rosters and notify appointees.

Executive Committee: Continue negotiations with Kean Senate; prepare update for next Senate meeting; consider recognition for A. Harry Moore staff within May celebration plans.

Provost/Faculty Dev.:

Circulate RTR and Summer Activities applications (due dates ~10 days after release).

Publish details and registration for May 6–8 PD events and May 8 Research Symposium (proposal window).

Share Canvas/Navigate/Simple Syllabus training resources.

IT/Academic Tech: Confirm LMS cutover timeline (Canvas) and communicate migration/training plan.

Advisement/Student Success:

Complete TASCELD mappings for the 54 students in sunsetting programs; notify students and advisors of individualized pathways.

Set up EdSights + Navigate integrations and training.

Senate Officers: Plan the May in-person celebration (venue, certificates, program), ensuring inclusion of Professional Staff.

11) Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Joseph Moskowitz; Second: John Laski.
 Outcome: Adopted. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:08 PM ET.

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Respectfully Submubmitted by

Moitrayee Chatterjee, PhD