After a nationwide competitive review process, the United States Department of Education has funded a continuation of Kean University’s established Upward Bound project that will serve 75 eligible secondary school students in northern New Jersey. Veronica Jackson will continue to serve as the Project Director of this successful program.

Through an intensive and rigorous academically sound creative curriculum, counseling, academic/career advising, and mentorship in a nurturing environment, participants will gain the skills and motivation necessary to succeed in high school, college and beyond. Upward Bound participants and their families will receive workshops regarding financial aid, financial literacy, post-secondary application processes and balancing schedules.

Many of New Jersey’s schools are in crisis. Two hundred and six schools are listed as Persistently Lowest Achieving. As the schools are in crisis, so then are the students who attend these schools. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education’s Fact Sheet: High School Dropouts in America (2009), nearly 19,600 students did not graduate from New Jersey’s High Schools in 2009; the lost lifetime earnings for that class of dropouts totals nearly $5 billion. Furthermore, if all of New Jersey’s students graduated from high school ready for college, the state could save over $95 million a year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings.

This Upward Bound program will serve Elizabeth High School, East Orange Campus High School, Campus 9 School in East Orange and the Cicely Tyson School for the Performing Arts, also in East Orange. All of the target schools have a high percentage of minorities, low-income and prospective first-generation college students. Students new to the project will be recruited as they complete the 8th grade for inclusion in the program beginning in the 9th grade.

Upward Bound at Kean University will address competitive preference priorities, Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making, and Improving Productivity. Services to be provided to address these priorities are: instruction in math, science, English, foreign language, test taking skills, tutorial services, supplemental instruction, career and college mentorship, technology base instruction, individual and group counseling, financial aid and financial literacy workshops, along with assistance with the post-secondary education process.