As part of the federally funded College Access Challenge Grant, the NJ Commission on Higher Education has funded Kean University’s AIM High Academy Initiative Mathematics Program (NJAHA). Mr. Jose Caceres, Director of Project Adelante at Kean University, will serve as the Project Director. Dr. Shweta Gupta, Assistant Professor at the NJ Center for Science, Technology & Mathematics Education at Kean University, will serve as assistant Project Director.

NJAHA is a three-week residential program that will provide a group of high-achieving high school students with exposure to college through an intensive summer experience.

The primary goal of the Kean NJAHA program is to increase academic performance in mathematics for a minimum of forty Hispanic/Latino high school rising seniors from the Perth Amboy school district and to motivate them to attend college. Perth Amboy Public Schools and Kean University have a long history of collaboration. Since 1988, Kean University has implemented several highly successful pre-college programs targeted specifically to Hispanic Bilingual students in grades 6-12. Two of these existing programs, Project Adelante and Adelante Scholars, have residential components and both are directed by Mr. Caceres. The newly-funded NJAHA program is modeled on the strengths of these successful programs.

The NJAHA students will spend three weeks on the Kean University campus, living in the residence halls. They will participate in a project-based, highly analytical mathematical immersion program with enrichment activities. All classes will be held in Kean’s New Jersey Center for Science, Technology and Mathematics (NJCSTM) building. Dr. Gupta will teach the mathematics classes and labs. Dr. Gupta’s current and past research deals with learning mathematics via problem solving and technology. The student’s projects will focus on in-depth reasoning and problem solving strategies to solve complex real-world mathematics problems and will help students develop team building, leadership and effective communication skills.

The NJAHA students will also participate in English language arts enhancement classes with a focus on communication skills for academic success, including ESL instruction. College students from Kean’s McNair Scholars and LSAMP programs and NJCSTM majors will provide mentoring. The enrichment activities include field trips to colleges, science sites, and corporations, as well as college admissions workshops, financial aid information delivery, college freshman orientation and residence hall experience.

Finally, Mr. Caceres and Dr. Gupta will review pre, ongoing, and post evaluation data to determine if modifications are needed to improve the NJAHA program. The results of this evaluation will be shared with the staff, teachers, counselors, tutors and partnership districts for further review and suggestions for improvement.