



A STUDENT-CENTERED VISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

To: New Jersey Institutions of Higher Education
From: Dr. Stefani Thachik, Senior Advisor
Date: July 20, 2022
Subject: Rutgers Bloustein MPP Practicum Students Release Research on New Jersey “Some College, No Degree” Student Population

Determining the Barriers to Entry and Completion for Returning College Students in New Jersey, a report published by Master of Public Policy Program (MPP) Practicum students at the Rutgers Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and supported by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), highlight key findings on the population of students in New Jersey and across the nation with some level of college credit, but no degree.¹ The report discusses how the sample population of New Jersey “Some College, No Degree” (SCND) sees an overrepresentation of individuals of color who have “stopped out” when compared to the non-SCND population. The report also identifies barriers impeding working-age adults from earning a postsecondary credential, such as meeting basic needs, financial challenges, work-life balance, and institutional barriers.

The students identified several short- and long-term solutions to re-engage this population, including utilizing the "Statewide Reverse Transfer Agreement" to grant Associate Degrees to eligible SCND adults who stopped out from 4-year institutions, developing a grant program for SCND adults, and providing a "menu" of strategies for institutions of higher education to incentivize this population to complete their degree.

These findings supplement the \$3 million state investment to advance OSHE’s SCND re-engagement initiative, as outlined in the FY 2023 Appropriations Act.² OSHE’s initiative consists of identifying prospective students, offering personalized reenrollment supports, and reducing students’ time to degree completion. OSHE aims to work with institutions to amplify efforts to re-enroll members of the SCND population close to degree completion back into higher education, ultimately advancing the state’s 65 by ’25 attainment goal established in the *New Jersey State Plan for Higher Education: Where Opportunity Meets Innovation*.

The full report can be accessed here: https://heldrich.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2022-07/SCND_Report_Final_Bloustein_Practicum.pdf

Questions regarding the initiative can be directed to Stefani.Thachik@oshe.nj.gov.

¹ [Determining the Barriers to Entry and Completion for Returning College Students in New Jersey - Rutgers Bloustein MPP Practicum](#)

² https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2022/S2500/2023_1.PDF