STUDENT SUCCESS
WORKING GROUP DELIVERABLE

The **Student Success Working Group** will focus on identifying evidence-based and otherwise promising strategies to boost college completion at New Jersey's colleges. The group will explore opportunities to strengthen student success by scaling and replicating academic, social, and financial interventions that are innovative and effective. Specifically, the group focused on:

→ **Exploring and recommending alternatives to traditional developmental education.**

→ **Identifying creative strategies that can accelerate student progress to a degree and reduce the impact of student financial challenges.**

→ **Exploring opportunities to expand and standardize college credit for prior learning models.**

→ **Investigating multi-intervention models, such as CUNY ASAP, to see what lessons can be applied in New Jersey.from first year to graduation.**

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OVERVIEW

In March of 2019, the State of New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education released its plan for higher education in New Jersey. The plan, **Where Opportunity Meets Innovation: A Student-Centered Vision for New Jersey Higher Education**, outlines steps that institutions of higher education in New Jersey should take to ensure that postsecondary education is accessible to all students, affordable, equitable, high-quality, inclusive, and safe.

In an effort to make sure that New Jersey college students can realize their educational objectives, the state plan identifies five working groups to develop strategies that support students and lead to the overall goal that 65% of working-age New Jersey residents obtain a postsecondary educational credential by 2025. Each working group has a discrete focus and charge that aligns with the vision for the **New Jersey Student Bill or Rights** and with specific goals of the state plan.

THE STUDENT SUCCESS WORKING GROUP HAD THE FOLLOWING CHARGE:

To identify evidence-based strategies to boost college completion at New Jersey colleges, including exploring alternatives to developmental education, strategies to accelerate student progress to a degree, opportunities to standardize college credit for prior learning assessment, and possible multi-intervention models.

The Office of the Secretary selected 40 members from among those who applied to a state-wide call and two co-Chairs for the Student Success Working Group. Ph.D.. Harvey Kesselman, Ph.D., President of Stockton University and Mr. Reginald Lewis, Executive Director of the Newark City of Learning Collaborative, serve as co-Chairs. Working Group membership represents racial, ethnic, gender, age, and status diversity as well as diversity across higher education sectors in the state.

The Student Success Working Group began its work in June and delivered its recommendations to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education at the final meeting of the Working Group on October 30, 2019.

To facilitate its work, the Student Success Working Group broke into 4 subcommittees, each with a specific charge. Each subcommittee has one lead or two co-leads. This group was charged with:

1. To explore and recommend alternatives to traditional developmental education
2. To identify creative strategies to accelerate student progress to a degree and reduce the impact of financial challenges
3. To explore opportunities to expand and standardize models for accepting college credit for prior learning
4. To investigate multi-intervention models to support students from first year to graduation

The full Student Success Working Group met once a month, and the subcommittees met as needed from June to October. The subcommittee members presented their research and draft recommendations at monthly meetings of the Working Group. The co-Chairs as well as the staff from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority reviewed and commented on each draft of the subcommittees' recommendations prior to the monthly meeting. Subcommittees' final recommendations were submitted to the co-Chairs and to the staff of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education for their review by October 10, 2019.

On October 30, the subcommittees presented their final recommendations. The staff of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education will forward the final recommendations from each subcommittee to the Secretary of Higher Education, following that meeting.

The Student Success Working Group subcommittees created four documents that provide realistic recommendations for 2-year and 4-year institutions to streamline developmental education, to develop smooth pathways from high school to 2-year and 4-year institutions and from 2-year to 4-year institutions, to explore ways to accelerate time to degree, to expand and standardize prior learning assessment, and to create multi-intervention services that support students academically, financially, personally, and in terms of physical and mental wellness. In addition, the subcommittees recommend that the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education promote professional development to support faculty and administrators' sharing best practices and learning new methods for effecting reforms related to student success, provide a means for regular data collection from and dissemination to institutions of higher education, and explore opportunities for encouraging a third academic semester in the summer. The Student Success Working Group members believe that moving in the recommended directions will help students achieve their educational goals in a timely fashion while incurring the least amount debt and contribute to the state goal for 65% of working-age adults to obtain a postsecondary credential by 2025.

Recommendations for Creating Alternatives to Traditional Developmental Education

Problem Statement

Developmental or remedial[1] education courses assist students deemed to be academically unprepared prepare for college level coursework. While developmental education was designed to help improve students' skills in reading, writing, and or math, recent research shows that it is actually a barrier to college completion which impacts students, academic institutions and society (Scott-Clayton, 2018; Schak, 2017). More than 20,000 students in New Jersey are placed into developmental education at two- and four-year colleges each year.

Students who place into developmental education courses are less likely to complete a program of study and earn a degree or credential (Ganga, et al., 2018). Their non-completion racks up massive costs – not only in money but in time wasted. (Belfield & Bailey, 2017; Ganga, et al., 2018) The Center for American Progress estimates that placing into development education costs students and their families $1.3 billion per year, and the total cost for institutions is estimated to be about $7 billion (Jimenez, et al., 2016). There is also little return on state and federal investments made in these students.

The costs in time are just as grave as the financial challenges: placing into developmental education can mean taking three developmental education courses in one or more subjects, which could translate into three semesters of coursework without earning college credits. This entire process is discouraging; many students who begin their higher education pathway in developmental education never even complete their developmental education coursework let alone graduate. (Bailey, et al., 2010; "Developmental Education FAQ's"; Scott-Clayton, 2012).

The challenges associated with developmental education affect a large number of students nationwide. In fact, the best available national data from 2009 shows that about half of all college students in the United States and nearly seventy percent of all community college students took at least one developmental education course within 6 years of college entry (Scott-Clayton, 2018).

The two charts below show the numbers of first-time full-time students by racial/ethnic groups that enroll in developmental courses in New Jersey and the percentages of all full-time students that enroll in developmental courses in the 2-year and 4-year public institutions in New Jersey. The first chart indicates that approximately 1/3 of the full-time students of color enroll in these courses from 2016-2018. Although overall numbers of students in developmental courses decrease during this time period, more students of color than white students enroll in developmental courses.

The second chart indicates that almost every public institution in New Jersey enrolls some of its full-time students in developmental education. More than half of first-time students entering county colleges enroll in at least one developmental education course, as do roughly 15 percent of entering students at four-year institutions, on average. However, variation in developmental
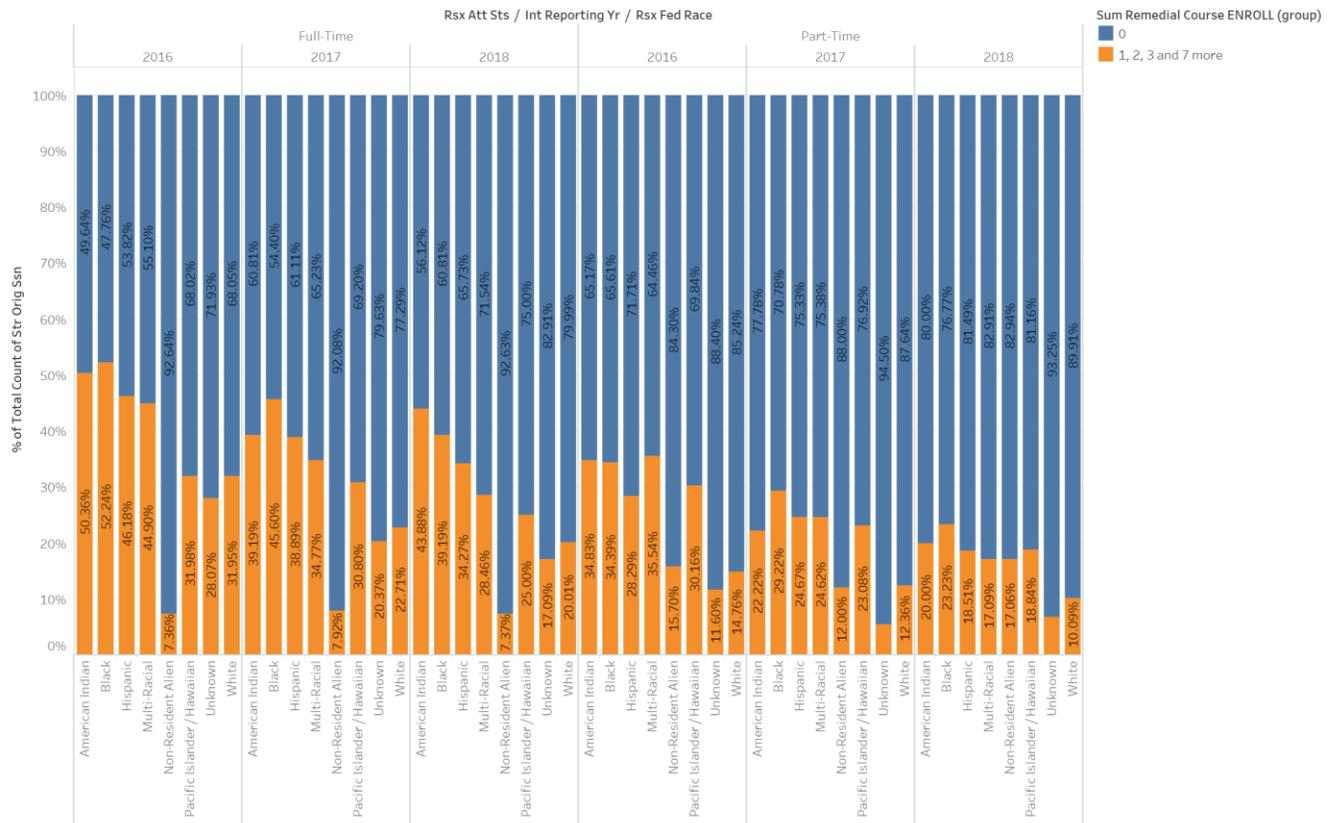
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[1] This document uses the words developmental and remedial interchangeably.

education usage is much higher at four-year institutions, ranging from 3 percent to 69 percent of entering students. On average, 34.4% of the students enrolled in New Jersey public institutions enroll in developmental courses.

This data may underestimate actual numbers of all students, full-time as well as part-time, that enroll in developmental courses. In addition, some students take a single developmental course and other students take more than a single developmental course in a given semester. Unfortunately, the data does not reveal how many developmental courses an individual student takes in a given semester.

First_Time_First-Year_Remedial-Developmental_Course-by_Race/Ethnicity

% of Total Count of Str Orig Ssn for each Rsx Fed Race broken down by Rsx Att Sts and Int Reporting Yr. Color shows details about Sum Remedial Course ENROLL (group). The data is filtered on Int Reporting Mth and Rsx Reg Sts. The Int Reporting Mth filter keeps 9. The Rsx Reg Sts filter keeps First-Time. The view is filtered on Int Reporting Yr, which keeps 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. Percents are based on each column of each pane of the table.

Fall 2017 Enrollment in Remedial Courses at New Jersey Colleges and Universities

NJ Colleges and Universities	Full-Time 1st-Time		
	Full-Time First-Time Undergrad	**In 1 or More Remedial Courses**	**% in Remedial Courses**
College of New Jersey	1,541	42	2.7%
Kean University	1,760	701	39.8%
Montclair State University	3,004	0	0.0%[1]
New Jersey City University	950	652	68.6%
N.J. Institute of Technology	1,082	46	4.3%
Ramapo College of N.J.	918	208	22.7%
Rowan University	2,458	110	4.5%
Rutgers, The State University	8,342	1,835	22.0%
Stockton University	1,564	72	4.6%
T Edison State University	0	--	--
W Paterson University of N.J.	1,311	203	15.5%

[1] This institution reported that 11.4% of first-time full-time students enrolled in developmental courses in 2016 and 0.0% the following year. The differential may result from inconsistent interpretation of definitions and reporting requirements.

TOTAL, SENIOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	22,930	3,869	16.9%
Atlantic Cape Community College	876	560	63.9%
Bergen Community College	2,312	1,153	49.9%
Brookdale Community College	1,908	1,144	60.0%
Burlington County, Rowan College at	1,564	664	42.5%
Camden County College	1,488	786	52.8%
Cumberland County College	662	288	43.5%
Essex County College	1,249	951	76.1%
Gloucester County, Rowan College at	1,757	642	36.5%
Hudson County Comm College	1,735	1,141	65.8%
Mercer County Comm College	967	442	45.7%

Middlesex County College	1,967	864	43.9%
Morris, County College of	1,114	664	59.6%
Ocean County College	1,654	893	54.0%
Passaic County Comm College	611	396	64.8%
Raritan Valley Community College	1,287	643	50.0%
Salem Community College	158	14	8.9%
Sussex County Community College	388	163	42.0%
Union County College	1,348	579	43.0%
Warren County Comm College	213	10	4.7%
TOTAL, COMMUNITY COLLEGES	23,258	11,997	51.6%
TOTAL, PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	46,188	15,866	34.4%

On the other hand, while large numbers of students place into developmental education, it may not be necessary for all of them. Research by Scott-Clayton and others demonstrates that many students in developmental education could have succeeded in college level coursework had they been given a chance. The process of assessment (typically a single test) for placement in developmental education is frequently inaccurate. (Scott-Clayton et al., 2014; Scott-Clayton & Stacey, 2015).

Developmental education placement policies and practices have important equity implications as well. Students of color, adult learners, first-generation students, and those from low-income backgrounds are disproportionately placed into developmental education. Black and Hispanic students in particular complete developmental education courses at a lower rate than their white and Asian counterparts (Chen & Simone, 2016; Ganga, et al., 2018)

Yet there is also good news. Colleges have explored strategies that accelerate developmental education and even avoid it altogether, which researchers find to be broadly effective (Scott-Clayton, 2018). States and institutions are using this emerging body of research and practice to reform developmental education. Some of these innovators are here at colleges and universities in New Jersey. Innovations include testing acceleration strategies for developmental education, using student supports like tutoring and pedagogy with digital tools to assist students who struggle with writing and math, partnering with Complete College America to reform developmental education, and exploring the use of CUNY's ASAP model of accelerated developmental education.

This work is promising and exciting, but more must be done. Developmental education reform is needed at all institutions in the state in order to ensure that New Jersey serves all its students well and prepares its skilled workforce to meet labor market needs both now and in the future.

Below we have detailed some of our recommendations for this work. Note that we have not recommended any particular strategy. A rich body of evidence from researchers throughout the country points the way to a number of effective approaches. Instead, we are proposing efforts to understand the status quo, create awareness of the problem and make policy and practice change.

Recommendations
State-Level Activities
- Collect information on current practices and policies in the state to better understand the status quo of developmental placement and offerings. OSHE should then collect brief reports from institutions annually to track change, including reporting on student progress and outcomes.
- Create awareness and encourage adoption of effective assessment and placement practices and strategies at institutions. California's multiple measures placement system is an example of high-quality work in this area (Bahr, et al, 2019; Ganga, et al., 2018; Scott-Clayton, et al. 2014)
- Create awareness and encourage adoption of strategies by institutions to accelerate students' progress into college level coursework and to reduce attrition. Selected focal areas should be driven by research and could include:
  - Avoiding entry into developmental education coursework by co-requisite education. A recent study at CUNY using rigorous methods showed very positive outcomes for students. (A.W. Logue et.al, 2015; Schak, et al., 2017; Daugherty; Ganga, et al., 2018).
  - Providing clear and structured pathways through developmental coursework (Hartzler & Blair, 2019; Liston, 2019; Khudododov & McKay, 2016;).
  - Providing student supports including tutoring, digital learning tools, and mentoring. (Schak, et al., 2017; Daugherty).
  - Compressing or accelerating developmental education sequences (Khudododov, & McKay., 2016; Michael & McKay, 2015; Schak, et al., 2017).
  - Streamlining course content by removing material that may not be needed in future courses.
- Host periodic or annual professional development events for institutional faculty and staff on implementing developmental education and student success best practices. Organizations such as the NJCCC Center for Student Success (https://www.njstudentsuccess.org/) may be helpful in facilitating such convenings.
- Engage a third party to evaluate the impacts of changes in developmental education over time at the institutional and at the state levels.

Institutional Activities
- Document and analyze developmental education policies, practices and programs regularly. This should include examining placement, completion of developmental

education coursework, and completion of credentials. These analyses should closely scrutinize questions of equity. This information should be reported annually to the state. OSHE should provide parameters for this analysis to ensure uniformity.

- Implement better assessment and placement practices such as multiple measures. Institutions should also work to create awareness among incoming students about the consequentiality of placement test-taking. Additionally, supports should be provided to help prepare students for placement tests, and students should be permitted to retake tests if they desire.
- Incorporate data-driven developmental education reforms into the institution's strategic planning process.
- Provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff who teach developmental education courses. According to the Kentucky Association for Developmental Education, teachers of developmental education should have broad-based pedagogical training on a regular basis to ensure that they are skilled in the most up-to-date teaching methods relevant to developmental education ("KADE Faculty Training Outline").

Starting Points for Institutions

1. Gather a committee of faculty, staff, and administrators to reform the developmental education policy. The committee should assess internal operations to identify what developmental education is taking place on the campus and conduct secondary research to understand national trends and best practices (Khudododov & McKay, 2016; Michael & McKay, 2015).
2. Use existing tools to help support reform efforts and institutional analysis. One example is the NADE Self-Evaluation Guide: Best Practice in Academic Support Programs.
3. The committee should draft a map for change that includes a mission and vision for developmental education reform, steps in the reform process, one or more pilot of reform actions, and report deadlines. All items in the map should have a timeline and identify a lead office, committee, or individual.

Selected Resources

"50-State Comparison: Developmental Education Policies." *Education Commission of the States*. Accessed on October 10, 2019: https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-developmental-education-policies/

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"Guided Self-Placement." *ASCCC Online Handbook for Guided Pathways.* Accessed on October 10, 2019: https://ccconlineed.instructure.com/courses/2634/pages/guided-self placement?module_item_id=187875

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