To: NJ Institutions of Higher Education
From: NJ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
Date: June 25, 2026
Subject: Resources Now Available from Virtual 'Some College, No Degree' Convening

On May 29, 2025, the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) held its second statewide 'Some College, No Degree' (SCND) convening virtually, with partners ReUp Education and Ithaka S+R. The recording of the convening is available to revisit or share with colleagues, and includes:

- Opening remarks from Secretary Bridges
- 'Coaching: Supporting Learners, Driving Results' Session by ReUp Education
- 'Addressing Enrollment Barriers for Students with SCND: Data, Policies and Solutions' Session led by Ithaka S+R.

New Handouts Available

In addition, three breakout sessions were held highlighting best practices and lessons learned from colleagues at institutions across the state. **A brief summary of insights from each of these sessions is now available.** The sessions included:

- From Pause to Progress: Engagement Supports that Contribute to Student Persistence
- Unlocking Insights: Data Collection, Analysis, and Sharing Strategies for Adult Learners
- From Stagnation to Success: How Policy Adjustments Can Support 'Some College, No Degree' Students

For any questions regarding the convening or the SCND initiative, please reach out to Stefani.Thachik@oshe.nj.gov.

Please the resources attached to this broadcast.

E-MAIL: LOCATION: WEBSITE:
oshe@oshe.nj.gov   1 John Fitch Plaza Trenton, NJ 08625   www.nj.gov/highereducation
New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

STATEWIDE SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE
FROM PAUSE TO PROGRESS: ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STUDENT PERSISTENCE

SESSION BREAKDOWN

Students returning to college need supports to re-navigate their new academic environment and with the help of specialized programs and coaching, they are persisting. Read about the promising practices that are contributing to student progress.

ACCESS TO DESIGNATED SUPPORT STAFF

- Providing extended staff hours on weeknights and weekends allows for more flexible accommodations for students who may have work or personal conflicts, and can encourage personalized connection at times more useful for those in need of supports that fit their lifestyle [1]
- Dedicating assigned advisors who can check in, monitor, and guide returning students through their new academic journey find greater success with student persistence when the advisor knows the student more personally

RE-ORIENTATION ASSISTANCE

- Providing vouchers for students to earn credit for what they know through the CLEP exam or other assessment methods can expedite their persistence to degree completion [2]
- "Re-orientation" sessions can provide meaningful academic and technological resources and updates for those who may feel things have changed so much since they were last in college
- Real-time CRM software can track and monitor the status and progress, allowing staff to proactively intervene and support the learners

ENCOURAGING READINESS AND DIRECTION

- Provide returning students with an opportunity to complete a career assessment upon their return to college to evaluate interest and direction in programs of study [3]
- Peer influence makes a positive difference in recruitment, mentorship, motivation, and persistence for returning students to finish their degree

CONSIDERATIONS

- Summer population of returning students often feel stuck behind financial barriers with limited funding opportunities, thus institutional support may be helpful to maintain persistence motivation
- Periodically evaluate student needs and adjust as needed. At Montclair State University, childcare vouchers were underutilized, so they adjusted to a basic needs fund that had greater usage

1: Felician University - Adult Undergraduate Admissions
2: Montclair State University - CLEP
3: Hudson County Community College - Hudson Scholars

To view the full convening insights, watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xbrehiXSOk

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

STATEWIDE SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE
UNLOCKING INSIGHTS: DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND SHARING STRATEGIES FOR ADULT LEARNERS

SESSION BREAKDOWN

The discussion included best practices for data collection and analysis, as well as provided insight into how to strategically communicate their findings on the adult learner experience to various stakeholders.

COLLECTING AND COMMUNICATING DATA WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Hold monthly cabinet meetings to inform campus stakeholders about the returning learner population
- Utilize Clearinghouse data to pinpoint whether students are stopping out or transferring
- Strategic enrollment meetings should focus on adult learners as a subset population

CROSS-DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION

- Use of Customer Relationship Management software facilitates faculty alerts and connects advisors, financial aid, and counseling teams
- Sharing of the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement survey data insights allows for better, more targeted advising
- Data-driven discussions amongst campus leaders contribute to policy review and adjustments
- Engagement with returning students has also informed policy changes

STATE AND NATIONAL DATA SOURCES

- Utilize databases such as IPEDS, the American Community Survey, and the Student Unit Record's Enrollment and Completion for differing data points
- NJ Statewide Data System provides longitudinal data housed through public records, research briefs, and dashboards

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Evaluate staffing for increased capacity for new analyses and services
- Execute exit surveys to measure and communicate upward mobility findings
- Target outreach to specific stop-out students who are close to conferral to increase completion

To view the full convening, watch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xbrehiXSOk

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

STATEWIDE SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE
FROM STAGNATION TO SUCCESS: HOW POLICY ADJUSTMENTS CAN SUPPORT 'SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE' STUDENTS

SESSION BREAKDOWN

This panel explored how institutions have reviewed and adjusted policies to better support SCND students by enhancing access, flexibility, and opportunities for success. Key insights and examples provided during the session are summarized here.

UPDATING POLICIES TO BE ADULT FRIENDLY

Examples of common policy actions include:
- Streamlining enrollment processes to simplify workflows and remove documentation hurdles [1]
- Updating transfer credit and credit expiration policies [2,3]
- Updating academic forgiveness policies [2,3]
- Reviewing policies on administrative holds and past due balances

CULTIVATING BUY-IN FOR POLICY CHANGES

- Supporting adult learners requires understanding the student's journey and should include review across functional areas
- Increase awareness of changes for all on campus through communication and professional development
  - Consider providing faculty/staff compensation, if able
  - Be prepared for resistance and start with a smaller coalition of the willing or a pilot of a policy change
  - Utilize data in advocacy efforts whenever possible

LESSONS LEARNED

- Reflect on the policy and processes from other point of views, especially those of impacted students
- Get students involved in intentional ways - tell and celebrate their progress and stories
- Be mindful of language used, especially when speaking to across departments or to other stakeholders
- Keep collecting data to help advocate and monitor the policy from development to implementation

OTHER RESOURCES

- "Opening Doors in Higher Education: Transforming Four-Year Institutions to Better Service Adult Learners," by Dr. Kara Rabbitt, Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives and Adult & Professional Studies, WPU - https://evolllution.com/opening-new-doors-into-higher-education-transforming-four-year-institutions-to-better-serve-adult-learners

1: Atlantic Cape Community College - One-Stop Welcome Center
2: Georgian Court University - Academic Policies
3: William Paterson University - Academic Policies

To view the full convening, watch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xbrehiXSOk