



NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF

**HIGHER
EDUCATION**

INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY TO PROTECT
STUDENT AND STATE INVESTMENTS:
A NEW JERSEY CASE STUDY

SHEEO POLICY CONFERENCE 2023

INTRODUCTION:

BRIAN K. BRIDGES, PH.D.

SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION



- Dr. Bridges currently serves as Secretary of Higher Education for the state of New Jersey where he is responsible for policy development and coordination of higher education activities for the state.
- Previously served in leadership roles at nonprofit organizations and at institutions of higher education.
- Committed to equity-building and expanding postsecondary opportunities for New Jersey students.

INTRODUCTION:

SUCHIR GOVINDARAJAN

SPECIAL ASSISTANT & POLICY ANALYST



- Govindarajan helps advance key college affordability policy initiatives and assists the Secretary of Higher Education in coordinating special projects, while providing support in various administrative, communications, and policy functions.
- Graduated from The College of New Jersey with a B.A. in English and minors in Public Health and Russian Studies.

SECRETARY'S VISION FOR NEW JERSEY HIGHER EDUCATION



To accelerate upward mobility for all New Jerseyans, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, through equitable pathways to postsecondary and career success.

NEW JERSEY'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Strengthen Institutional Fiscal Health

Colleges should continuously evaluate their academic programs for viability, eliminating programs that are no longer useful and moving resources into those that need to be strengthened to better align with institutional, student, and state needs.

Ensure High-Quality Academic Program Standards

Every student in New Jersey should have high-quality, career-relevant academic programs that will prepare them to succeed in the global economy.

NATIONAL AND STATE TRENDS

COLLEGE CLOSURES

Top Reasons for College Closures



ROAD TO ACCOUNTABILITY

**PHIL MURPHY
ELECTED GOVERNOR**
2017



**FEDERAL GAINFUL
EMPLOYMENT RULING**
2019



**NJ GAINFUL
EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS**
2022



**CONVENED INTERAGENCY
WORKING GROUP**
2018



**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW &
INDEPENDENT FISCAL OVERSIGHT REGS**
2021



**NEW FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY
LAW FOR PUBLICS**
2023



TIERED APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY

P.L. 2021, c.21

New Academic
Program Review
Standards

P.L. 2022, c.76

NJ Gainful
Employment
Standards

P.L. 2023, c.115

HIGH-QUALITY
ACADEMIC
PROGRAMS

Fiscal Monitoring
for Independent
Institutions

Fiscal Accountability
Package for Public
Institutions

FISCAL
ACCOUNTABILITY

NEW JERSEY'S APPROACH: ASSESSING DEGREE PROGRAM QUALITY



- Conducted Research and Analyzed Data
- Drafted Quality Proposals for Input
- Sought Stakeholder Feedback
- Established Legislative Buy-In
- Gained Legislative Adoption and Began Implementation

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

P.L. 2021, c.27 increased OSHE's oversight on academic program development



The new regulations focus on three mutually reinforcing goals:

1. The state applies quality and student outcomes data to decisions on program review, expansion, and approval.
2. Programs are appropriately aligned with labor market demand.
3. Both students and institutions alike have access to the data and information needed to make more-informed decisions about academic programs and their alignment to careers.

NJ GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

P.L. 2022, c.76 raises academic program quality standards and strengthens consumer protections



SCAN ME

The new law focus on maximizing the students and families' awareness of:

1. Costs associated with enrollment in the institution.
2. The institution's success in ensuring the graduation and employment of its students.
3. The composition of the teaching faculty that a student will encounter in his coursework.

FISCAL MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Fiscal Monitoring of Independent and Proprietary Institutions (P.L. 2021, c.27)

- ✓ Requires institutions to submit annual fiscal monitoring reports to our office.
- ✓ Requires contingency and teach-out plan for institutions determined to be at risk for imminent closure.

Fiscal Accountability Law for Public Institutions (P.L. 2023, c.115)

- ✓ Requires institutions to submit annual fiscal monitoring reports.
- ✓ Authority to conduct comprehensive audits of a public institution's finance and governance operations.
- ✓ Authority to appoint a State monitor, if needed.
- ✓ Requires training for chief financial officers.
- ✓ The Secretary defines CFO duties and holds them accountable for violations of fiduciary responsibilities.

MINI- DISCUSSION:

- ❖ How is your State or system defining accountability: to students? To taxpayers? To State priorities?
- ❖ How has your state approached fiscal accountability between different sectors or types of institutions?
- ❖ Which means of fiscal monitoring have been most effective in looking at immediate and long-term concerns for sustainability?
- ❖ How did you engage with your stakeholders (institutions, legislators, etc.) when developing these measures?
- ❖ What are some persisting challenges you've encountered and how have you approached them?



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