

The Department of Education's
Experimental Sites Initiative

**Second Chance Pell:
A Conversation with the Department of
Justice Regarding Policies, Procedures and
Guidelines**

Agenda

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- Policies and Procedures

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- Understanding the Correctional Setting

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- Training and Orientation

Developing policies and procedures

- Understanding that corrections departments and education institutions are driven by different organizing principles of missions is vital to the success of the program.
- Before developing policies and procedures, the Second Chance Pell sites—college and corrections partners—should agree on shared goals.
- Coming to a mutual understanding of each partners' roles and expectations is crucial for effective partnerships.

Memorandum of Understanding

- A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is an effective method to work together and develop policies and procedures while clearly articulating partners' roles.
- An MOU will serve as a tool for partners to ensure smooth programming and operations.
- During the course of regularly scheduled meetings about program operations, partners should periodically revisit the MOU and make appropriate changes as the program evolves.

Memorandum of Understanding

- Components of an effective MOU for college-corrections partnerships may include:
 - Shared mission and goals amongst partners
 - Operating principles to promote student success and course completion (i.e. responding to disciplinary actions and limiting transfers and movement)
 - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
 - Program components
 - Guidelines and procedures for students
 - Use of technology (where applicable)
 - Data collection
 - Schedule for partner meetings to discuss challenges and highlights

Disciplinary Procedures

- As a result of disciplinary infractions, students may be unable to attend class.
- It is imperative that SCP sites and corrections partners develop a mechanism that will allow colleges to be notified should a student receive an infraction and is unable to attend class.
- Correction partners should notify colleges as to the length of time the student will be unable to attend class so that colleges can make edits to the student's financial aid.

Policies for Student Dismissal

College and correction partners should agree to terms that address the process for student dismissal, and the acts that warrant it. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Habitual cheating or plagiarism on tests or assignments
- Disruptive behavior such as verbal harassment, consistent profanity, or vulgarity
- Intimidation or stalking another member of the college community
- Violating institutional policies regarding external communication with college staff (often referred to as “undue familiarity”)
- Failure to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress, as required by Title IV

Movement and Transfers

- Normally, the term *movement* in corrections is used for the daily scheduled time periods in which incarcerated people leave the housing units to travel to another destination within the facility (e.g., school area, recreation gym/yard, cafeteria, infirmary, etc.). A *move* is used to describe the temporary or permanent placement of an individual. Types of moves include:
 - Bed move – assignment to a different bed or cell within the **same housing unit**.
 - Unit move – assignment to a different housing unit within the **same facility**.
 - Facility transfer – assignment and movement to a different prison, usually within the **same state***.
- *People incarcerated in Federal prison are often moved to facilities located in different states

Movement and Transfers

As incarcerated people near the end of their sentence, they will receive status or level changes, based on varying criteria.

These changes often result in a student being removed from the general prison population, to a housing unit outside of the main building where others have the same status.

Facility rules may not permit a student to travel from an outside unit to the academic space where college is being offered. It is important to establish guidelines that address when a student is eligible for status that requires removal that interferes with attending class so that students can complete the semester without any disruption in their studies.

Training and Orientation for College and Corrections Staff

Correctional facilities typically have mandatory training for volunteers and contractors.

Programs also hold introductory trainings or orientations for new staff.

There are also great benefits that come with hosting joint orientations for college staff and corrections staff to become acquainted and discuss the shared goals for their partnership.

Corrections Orientation for Instructors

Training of prospective instructors should cover the following key areas:

- procedures for entering facilities, including securing proper identification and communicating with appropriate program or corrections staff about arrival dates and times
- rules about restricted items and procedures for getting course materials and other outside resources approved
- rules for interacting with students
- rules about access to technology and other resources
- procedures to follow when requesting help or support from corrections staff

Program Training for Facility Staff

Training corrections staff on the goals and operations of the college program can offer corrections leadership and college staff an opportunity to build support for the program among facility personnel.

Existing programs have benefited by delivering briefing sessions that explain the value of postsecondary education in a corrections context (for example, reduced disciplinary issues and recidivism; increased staff and facility safety), as well as program goals, expectations, and responsibilities.

These messages typically come across stronger when delivered by corrections leadership.

Building an Alliance Between Instructors and Corrections Staff

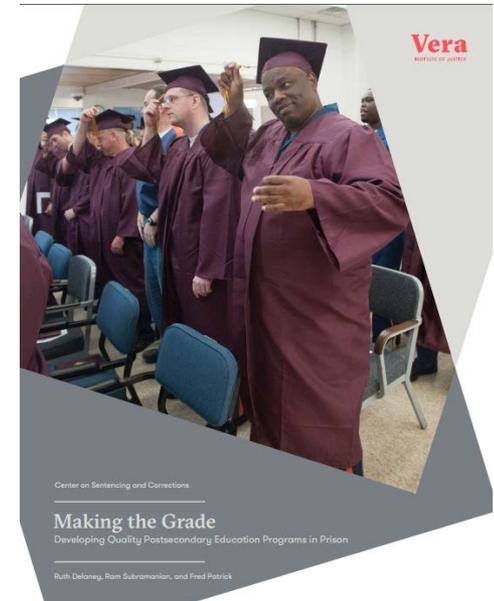
Facility-based educational staff should be consulted during the development and operation of any prison-based postsecondary education program.

Many of these staff already coordinate with community-based programs that operate in prisons and have other experience likely to benefit program implementation.

Building partnerships with these staff will help to troubleshoot problems and identify “work-arounds”, share resources, and create pathways from other educational programs within a facility or system—such as high school equivalency or adult basic education courses—to the postsecondary program.

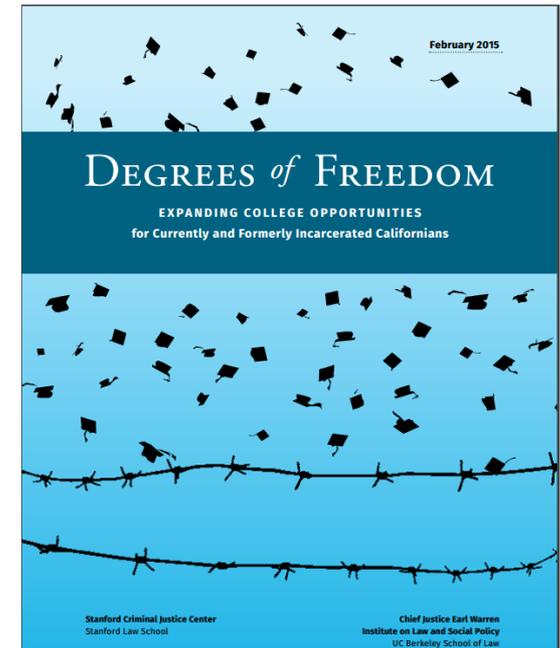
Resources

- *Building Effective Partnerships for High-Quality Postsecondary Education in Correctional Facilities*, Vera Institute of Justice
 - Could use this factsheet as a checklist when developing or reviewing your MOU
 - https://storage.googleapis.com/vera-web-assets/downloads/Publications/making-the-grade-postsecondary-education-programs-in-prison/legacy_downloads/partnerships-for-postsecondary-education-in-correctional-facilities.pdf
 - More detail is available in Vera's report *Making the Grade: Developing Quality Postsecondary Education Programs in Prison*



Resources

- *Degrees of Freedom: Expanding College Opportunities for Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Californians*, Stanford Criminal Justice Center
 - Sample MOU in the appendices
 - https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/DegreesofFreedom2015_FullReport.pdf



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Questions and Answers