



**Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority**

**ILLINOIS TASK FORCE ON CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND REMEDIES**

**Minutes**

HJR27

Thursday, February 24, 2022

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Location

Via WebEx Video Conference/Teleconference

**Attendees**

<b>Task Force Member Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Orlando Mayorga, Chair	X		
Rep. Carol Ammons	X (at 12:20 p.m.)		
Sen. Terri Bryant			X
Sen. Kimberly Lightford			X
Yaacov Delaney			X
Director Rob Jeffreys, IL Dept. of Corrections (IDOC)	X		
Dr. Lynne Mock, ICJIA	X		
Dr. Eric Lichtenberger, IL Board of Higher Education	X		
Nathan Wilson, IL Community College Board	X		
Antoinette Burton, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana			X
Sarah Ross, Art Institute of Chicago	X		
Dr. Quintin Williams, The Joyce Foundation	X		
Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana	X		
Gwyneth Troyer, John Howard Association of Illinois	X		

**Also present were:**

Taeveon Johnson (Proxy for Sen. Lightford), Senior Advisor and Communications Specialist  
Ariana Correa (Proxy for Yaacov Delaney), Program Manager, Lt. Governor’s Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative (JEO)  
Alyssa Williams, IDOC  
James Pagano, IDOC

Maria Miller, IDOC  
Emma Holzbauer, Support Staff, Rep. Carol Ammons  
Yasmine Khoshpour, IL Board of Higher Education  
Ashton Hoselton, Education Justice Project  
Amy Mitchell, Intern, Lt. Governor's JEO  
Jaquelyn Gilbreath – ICJIA Research Analyst  
Blanca Dominguez – ICJIA Office of General Counsel

**A. Welcoming Remarks**

Chairman Mayorga begins by thanking the HEP Task Force members for their time, effort, and energy to this task force. He states that the work is critical.

**B. Call to Order and Roll Call**

1. Chair Mayorga called the meeting to order at 12:04 PM
2. Blanca Dominguez took roll
3. Quorum was established

**C. Acknowledgement of Need for Videoconference Meeting**

1. Chair Mayorga acknowledged the continuing need to convene by videoconference because the public-health challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic are still present

**D. Motion to Approve the Agenda for February 24, 2022 (Voice Vote)**

1. Moved by Eric Lichtenberger
2. Seconded by Dr. Quintin Williams
3. All were in favor
4. No oppositions
5. No abstentions

**E. New Business**

**1. Introductions**

Chairman Mayorga asks everyone to give a brief introduction of themselves by stating their name, how they feel now, and what is one thing that people in this space may not know about the member. Attendees (except for dial-in callers) proceeded to introduce themselves. Chair Mayorga thanked everyone for their willingness to share information about themselves and expressed a desire to continue having the task force build a relationship. Chair Mayorga described his professional role as an entry Policy Coordinator for JEO and stated his passion for higher education in prison.

**2. Description of the tasks set by resolution**

Blanca Dominguez highlighted the objectives outlined in House Joint Resolution 27: (a) to obtain and analyze existing data on HEP in Illinois; (b) to identify data points that IDOC should collect to allow for meaningful, statewide evaluation of HEP; (c) to assess barriers and opportunities to continuing higher education upon release from IDOC; and (d) to recommend a legislative action plan to expand access to HEP in Illinois and propel Illinois to being a national exemplar in that area. Blanca Dominguez also reminded the task force members of the

obligations under the Open Meetings Act and advised questions relating to the Act be referred to Crystal Johnson or her.

### **3. Adoption of Bylaws for the HEP Task Force (Roll Call Vote)**

Chair Mayorga referred to the draft of the bylaws that was previously sent to the HEP Task Force members via email on February 18, 2022, and asked for a motion to approve the draft as the official bylaws of the task force.

1. Moved by Dr. Quintin Williams
2. Seconded by Sarah Ross
3. Nine (9) votes in favor
4. Rep Ammons did not vote but noted her support for the passage by the task force
5. No oppositions
6. No abstentions

### **4. Education and Expanding Postsecondary Opportunities at IDOC**

Chair Mayorga opened the meeting up to Dir. Jeffreys and the IDOC team composed of James Pagano, Alyssa Williams, and Maria Miller for a presentation about education and expanding postsecondary opportunities at IDOC.

- a. Dir. Jeffreys: Stated that the purpose of the presentation was to provide a snapshot of the IDOC population, the great work of the IDOC team, and the baselines used by IDOC as the agency moves forward. Discussed the population base set, indicating that there is an intake of 20 to 23,000 each year so the need is great. Provided a snapshot of the existing postsecondary education at IDOC, noting previous conversations regarding the fact that education was centered in the greater Chicago/upper parts of the state with about 120+ students. IDOC has expectations to build more relationships with community colleges and universities and to bring consistency across the state. IDOC has hired personnel to standardize IDOC policies and implemented a strong policy review process intending to bring consistency across the entire state.
- b. Alyssa Williams: IDOC has worked with individuals like Dr. Ginsburg and Sarah Ross despite COVID. IDOC has grown its university partners (North Park, Northwestern have joined efforts at Stateville and Logan). There is also an increase in partnerships for the southern part of the state, with most of that work being virtual but some partners do drive down to southern facilities (big Muddy River), working with Augustana and continued expansion at Logan. Alyssa is working with Maria Miller and just started communications with Knox College. Expressed intent to continue work to expand opportunities to all facilities (27 main facilities) and all individuals in custody.
- c. Dir. Jeffreys: Reiterated that one of the main IDOC objectives is expansion into the southern part of the state. IDOC was able to acquire video conferencing equipment with a grant in 2020 which allowed for an opportunity to expand programming in the south despite COVID. IDOC has also added Maria Miller as the new education administrator. IDOC continues to work on its policy creation and review process using national best practices and ACA standards to be consistent in all 27 facilities. Noted that there are still challenges but hopes to receive assistance to increase postsecondary education in prisons.
- d. James Pagano: IDOC administrative staff have been working on drafting a postsecondary education policy that will address many of the concerns that have been raised by providers. IDOC would like feedback from the HEP Task Force. Reiterated that IDOC has been working to incorporate national best practices into its policy. The policy intends to articulate responsibilities and expectations around delivery of postsecondary education, allow greater and consistent access to facilities by faculty and clarify faculty role to IDOC staff. IDOC also hopes to clarify user

transfer holds. Requested feedback from HEP Task Force on the draft policy and expressed confidence that concerns will be addressed by the policy. Noted various appendices in the slide deck to demonstrate the complexity of issues, who IDOC is trying to serve, exits each year, and length of stay. Noted appreciation for analysis provided by John Howard Association.

- e. Dir. Jeffreys: Stated that IDOC is committed to meaningful reform as it centers around education and higher education which incentivizes the population and reduces recidivism. Intends for work to be a collaboration that will bring about the most meaningful change that meets the standards of the community and to have transferable credits or degrees.
- f. Chair Mayorga: Thanked IDOC team for the presentation and stated that the presentation highlights the importance of inclusivity and IDOC's desire for input from the HEP Task Force.

## **5. Discussion around values and guidelines for the task force**

For the next meeting, Chair Mayorga expressed a desire to hold a robust discussion about the values and guidelines that will help the task force provide input into what postsecondary education opportunities.

## **6. Discussion about data to be used in preparing the final report**

Chair Mayorga asked to hold a brief discussion about the data sharing within the HEP Task Force, expressing the importance of collecting as much data as possible to ensure that the task force's recommendations are based on research and anything that is offered by the task force.

- a. Dr. Eric Lichtenberger: Noted group of state agencies that participate in data sharing agreements such as the Illinois Longitudinal Data System Governance Board and proposed the idea that IDOC considers joining the group to better facilitate data sharing amongst agencies.
- b. Sarah Ross: Asked about the type of data that will be collected; suggested collecting alternative data sets that support education in prisons that are not being tracked such as classes without credits, pre-college programming, etc. Also suggested that other outcomes besides recidivism be considered especially for people that have been incarcerated for a long time and that might not have an out date and how it impacts families and communities as well as similar soft data. Sarah noted that soft data does not have numbers like headcounts, but she believes it is critical to the bigger picture of the value of education programs.
- c. Nathan Wilson: Building on Dr. Lichtenberger's point of promoting the Illinois Longitudinal Data System which has become a more centralized data system in the last 2 years. Noted that the sharing data is secure and legal staff are establishing data use and access agreements so it would be worthwhile to consider that option. Also noted that in community colleges, there is a very robust data system that has information for individuals and state correctional facilities that contains data at the curriculum and course level and that they are the administrative agency for data of high school equivalency. Stated he believes there is a good foundation in terms of analyzing the target population.
- d. Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg: Stated she understood one question to be how those who have data share it with the HEP Task Force and ensure that all have access to it. Noted that the task force will be looking at different forms of qualitative and quantitative data and that it seems the task force is looking for some sort of depository for data that will be made accessible to the public. Commented that ICJIA may already have such a depository.
- e. Dr. Lynne Mock: ICJIA has a lot of data and it also has a system for collecting large data sets and making them available to the public. Noted that ICJIA does not currently have data on higher education in prison. Dr. Mock stated that if any task force members are willing to share data, ICJIA would appreciate it and would work to prepare it and share it with the public.
- f. Dr. Ginsburg offered to assist ICJIA to organize relevant data.

## **7. Discussion regarding future meeting dates**

Chair Mayorga would like to hold at least 2 meetings soon. Noted that the resolution states the task force must meet at least 6 times but believes the task force will have more than the minimum number. Proposed further discussion at the next meeting on future dates and the possibility of meeting on a bi-weekly basis. Proposed the next meeting date of March 10, 2022, from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM. The task force members agreed to meet on March 10, 2022.

Sarah Ross asked for clarification about providing feedback to IDOC on the draft of the postsecondary education policy. James Pagano stated he would provide the draft to the Chair, Dr. Lynne Mock, and Blanca Dominguez who would, in turn, send it to the entire HEP Task Force. James Pagano asked for written feedback before the next scheduled HEP Task Force meeting to facilitate verbal discussion in future meetings.

### **F. Public Comments**

No public comments.

### **G. Adjournment**

7. Next meeting will be held on March 10, 2022, from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM.
8. Moved by Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg
9. Seconded by Dr. Lynne Mock
10. All were in favor
11. No oppositions
12. No abstentions
13. Chair adjourned meeting at 1:08 PM