



Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON TASK FORCE

Minutes

HJR27

Thursday, March 10, 2022

12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Location

Via WebEx Video Conference/Teleconference

Attendees

Task Force Member Attendance	Present (VIDEO)	Telephone	Absent
Orlando Mayorga, Chair	X		
Rep. Carol Ammons			X
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		

*Director Rob Jeffreys joined the meeting at 12:06 PM

Also present were:

Taeveon Johnson (Proxy for Sen. Lightford), Senior Advisor and Communications Specialist

Emma Holzhauer (Proxy for Rep. Carol Ammons), Support Staff

Alyssa Williams, IDOC

James Pagano, IDOC

Maria Miller, IDOC
Ashton Hoselton, Education Justice Project
Jaquelyn Gilbreath, ICJIA Research Analyst
Crystal Johnson, ICJIA, Office of the General Counsel
Blanca Dominguez, ICJIA Office of General Counsel

A. 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

B. Motion to Approve the Agenda for March 10, 2022 (Voice Vote)

1. Moved by Dr. Lynne Mock
2. Seconded by Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg
3. All were in favor
4. No oppositions
5. No abstentions
6. Motion passed

C. Motion to Approve Minutes for February 24, 2022 (Voice Vote)

1. Moved by Dr. Quintin Williams
2. Seconded by Dr. Lynne Mock
3. All were in favor
4. No oppositions
5. No abstentions
6. Motion passed

D. Old Business

1. Discussion around HEP Task Force values and guidelines

Chair Mayorga opened the discussion by stating that he would like inclusivity to guide the task force's work. Members of the task force and some support staff stated values:

- a. Sarah Ross: transparency in communications
- b. Gwyneth Troyer: respect and belief that people are bringing good intentions to the conversation
- c. Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg: transparency as to information accessible by the public
- d. Dr. Eric Lichtenberger: avoid being deficit oriented and think of solutions
- e. Nathan Wilson: clear objectives and focus on the goals, end-product, and solutions
- f. Dr. Quintin Williams: respect the complexity of thoughts offered by task force members and recognize everyone is on the same team
- g. Director Rob Jeffreys: transparency and being able to show the efforts of what the task force is trying to achieve
- h. Yaacov Delaney: inclusivity and making sure to include the voices and perspectives of system impacted people and formally incarcerated people who have obtained higher education inside the prison system
- i. Alyssa Williams: enlightenment for the group and others as to the importance of higher education in prison
- j. Maria Miller: follow through to make sure that policies created are implemented
- k. James Pagano: specificity to assist in making recommendations actionable policies

- l. Dr. Lynne Mock: innovation in trying new things to address challenges of funding
- m. Emma Holzauer: acknowledging effect of COVID in providing higher education to people in prison
- n. Ashton Hoselton: the courage to think broadly about how the goals of the task force are accomplished

2. Continued discussion regarding data and/or sources

Chair asked for continued discussion about the data sources the task force should use in the preparation of the final report; stated that he would like to have the group consider qualitative data as well as quantitative and believes it is important to hear the stories of incarcerated students, their family members and the impact of higher education.

- a. Dr. Lynne Mock: expressed desire to get as much data as possible on this topic, such as how many people are enrolled, what are the course offerings, what is the average, what are expansion plans, how are people impacted once they leave prison, how does it impact their lives/family's lives, etc.; reminded group to focus on what an exemplary program look like and what data is needed to show Illinois is providing a quality and comprehensive program.
- b. Dr. Quintin Williams: any data that might indicate how people did after leaving the facility
 - i. James Pagano responded by stating that IDOC has not conducted a longitudinal study but that the Community College Board may have information
 - ii. Dr. Williams suggested that this type of information would be helpful and this might be a recommendation because how people do once they leave prison is an important measure and has many implications; suggested looking at employment attainment, continuing education, etc., and try to isolate what the effect of this type of program is.
- c. Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg: endorsed generous and inclusive submission of data to create robust library; noted that the Education Justice Project has an evaluation protocol directed by students and will share with the group when completed; suggested looking at data-driven by questions developed by the group
- d. Nathan Wilson: confirmed that the ICCB has a robust data system, variable data marker for correctional students that collects hundreds of variables, such as what curriculum they are in; they can isolate a subgroup for correctional students; noted the Illinois Longitudinal Data System as an added resource.
- e. Sarah Ross: cautioned against replicating data that is already available and noted there is already a lot of data on the value of higher education in prisons; noted group may want to focus on data specific to Illinois and what is specific to delivering programs in a comprehensive manner
- f. Dr. Lynne Mock: reminded the group that cannot conduct a study in the short time available to meet and would like to focus on what is going on right now and where does the state want to go; how does the group assess what is going on right now.
- g. Director Rob Jeffreys: concurred with Dr. Mock; would like to focus on what are the outcome measures and establish what is the baseline data to show success, improvement; would also like to see what is the national standard of collection data because would like to compare Illinois with other states and how those others measure success
- h. Dr. Eric Lichtenberger: suggested compiling a list of research evaluation questions that may serve as a roadmap; noted that the group will need quantitative data but that there should be a way to tell stories with numbers.

3. Subject matter experts

Chair asked the group to email names of possible subject matter experts to Dr. Lynne Mock; Chair mentioned Brian Walsh of the Vera Institute as a possible candidate to speak on this topic.

- a. Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg brought up a new business agenda item relating to subcommittees and suggested forming subcommittees to help plan the agenda and determine what materials/data is needed to support a robust discussion on agenda items (Sarah Ross asked if what was being considered as an administrative subcommittee to which Dr. Ginsburg said yes)

4. Meeting Dates

Chair asked the group to confirm that meeting bi-weekly on a Thursday at noon was still the best time to convene; the group asked to extend the meeting time to 90 minutes; the group concurred. (Discussed clarifying OMA rules relating to quorum and ability of proxies to attend or remain at the extended meeting).

E. New Business

1. How programs get started and challenges

Sarah Ross stated that most higher education programs in prisons started with one or 2 colleagues teaching and growing the program from there (e.g., Northwestern, North Park University, DePaul and P+NAP (Prison + Neighborhood Art Project) and Know College if they start); noted that the majority of programs in Illinois prisons are not degree programs at the moment; stated that it is challenging for a university to take on the full responsibility of a degree program in prison; would like the group to consider how these programs get started and try to build on their work; also remarked about the challenge of consistency across programs and restrictions to access, i.e., based on the crime, length of stay; would like programs to be more accessible; mentioned effect of transfer holds and other rules on delivery of courses; remarked about the work of the Illinois Coalition for Higher Education in Prison.

- a. Chair remarked that he would like to see access to education is more than just luck; noted he was fortunate to have access at Danville or that people in Stateville lucked out with P+NAP; asked for continued discussion on not leaving access up to luck.
- b. Sarah Ross further noted that Illinois has diverse models and would like to build on the strengths of that diversity.

2. Illinois 2022 Programs Directory

Dr. Ginsburg provided a history of the beginning of higher education in Illinois prisons and noted that the current program is the second generation; noted that there are PELL programs and so education programs in prisons rely on the donation of university and foundation funds; noted that community colleges are an exception since there is a contractual agreement between ICCB and IDOC; referred to the program directory she provided which contains information about the number of programs in the Illinois prisons—currently, there are 12 HEP programs, with 5 at Stateville; noted that full copy also contains maps to show the proximity of prisons and educational institutions.

- a. Dr. Williams asked if there was information or reports about the first generation of programming in prisons; Dr. Ginsburg confirmed there is.

3. IDOC policy draft discussion

James Pagano presented follow up information regarding the task force feedback provided; asked if the group could clarify if they were going to focus on a 4-year degree program when referring to higher education; noted that while there are fewer participating community colleges, it is because Lakeland has figured out how to do it at scale so there may not be a direct correlation between the number of participating community colleges and the opportunities provided.

- a. Nathan Wilson: stated that ICCB maintains that a community college education falls within the realm of higher education; associate degrees and certificate programs (short- and long-term) yield considerable earning gains and the group should decide on including those.
- b. James Pagano continued discussion on the feedback received relating to the draft of the IDOC policy; overarching goals is to be prepared for the return of the Second Chance PELL, to be consistent across all facilities, and to be realistic about the constraints, whether budgetary, personnel or space; pulled common questions from the feedback: (1) corrected typo—career and technical education courses are covered by the policy; (2) rationale for limiting concurrent enrollment—want to avoid instances where a single person is enrolled in multiple courses of study while others are not able to sign onto one; (3) as to questions related to FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) will be referred to IDOC

legal team; (4) disciplinary action of course removal—language is meant to be serve as consistent guidance across facilities and how about how discipline and course removal should relate to enrollment opportunities; language is meant to better control spurious treatment and provide a process for submission of complaints by providers; IDOC will continue working on incorporating all feedback.

4. Subcommittee

Chair asked for this item to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to continue the discussion commenced by Dr. Ginsburg.

F. Members Updates

None

G. Public Comments

No public comments.

H. Adjournment

1. Moved by Dr. Eric Lichtenberger
2. Seconded by Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg
3. All were in favor
4. No oppositions
5. No abstentions
6. Meeting adjourned at 1:10 PM