



**Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority**

**HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON TASK FORCE**

**Minutes**

HJR27

Thursday, March 24, 2022

12:00 PM to 1:30 PM

Location

Via WebEx Video Conference/Teleconference

**Attendees**

<b>Task Force Member Attendance</b>	<b>Present (VIDEO)</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Absent</b>
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		

\*Dr. Quintin Williams joined the meeting at 12:16 PM

\*Mr. Yaacov Delaney joined the meeting at 12:16 PM

**Also present were:**

Miranda Gills (Proxy for Sen. Lightford), Senior Advisor and Communications Specialist

Emma Holzhauser (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  
Sharon Varallo  
Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler  
Susan Giberson

**A. Call to Order and Roll Call**

1. Chair Mayorga called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM
2. Crystal D. Johnson took roll
3. Quorum was established

**B. Motion to Approve the Agenda for March 24, 2022 (Voice Vote)**

1. Moved by Representative Carol Ammons
2. Seconded by Rebecca Ginsburg
3. All were in favor
4. No oppositions
5. No abstentions
6. Motion passed

**C. Motion to Approve Minutes for March 10, 2022 (Voice Vote)**

1. Moved by Representative Carol Ammons
2. Seconded by Rebecca Ginsburg
3. All were in favor
4. No oppositions
5. Antoinette Burton abstained
6. Motion passed

**D. New Business**

**1. Presentation: State's Efforts to Coordinate HEP: An Overview- Brian Walsh, Program Manager at Vera Institute of Justice:**

- a. Chair introduced Mr. Brian Walsh to the task force and read his bio to the members.
- b. Brian Walsh thanked Orlando for his introduction and remarked that his role is to support colleges that are in the Second Chance Pell Experiment. He stated the Vera Institute works on a range of criminal justice activities and the particular team that he is on is called, "Unlocking Potential" and they have been working on unlocking potential within Higher Education in prison since 2012.
- c. Mr. Walsh stated since 2015 they have been working on the second chance Pell Experiment. He stated the experiment was started to allow Corrections and Colleges to award Federal Financial Aid to incarcerated students and that aid had been denied to be used in prisons since 1994.
- d. Mr. Walsh stated currently the experiment allows 130 colleges to award a Pell Program mostly to incarcerated students and that another 70 colleges will join in the Spring. He stated next July the experiment will end in 2023 and regular Pell will kick in July 2023.
- e. Mr. Walsh stated the key question that we are trying to see is how do we scale high quality education programs to the level that they need to be to really serve the full population with a prison system.

- f. Mr. Walsh provided an overview of higher education in prison programs in Wisconsin, Texas, Kansas, Ohio and Virginia. He also provided an overview of Washington state and said that this program differs from other states because there exists an inter agency agreement with enrollment targets and goals for individual prisons and the colleges that will serve it. He stated that in Washington, colleges only get paid if they hit their enrollment goals.
- g. Mr. Walsh stated that, “your colleges already collect a lot of the data you need to know whether the programs are working.” He further stated, the key thing that we’re really talking about is, do students have equity and access equity and completion equity and outcome, and do we see students starting and finishing what they started. He stated we have a number of programs that grow really quickly-they get very large but we don’t have completion happening.
- h. Mr. Walsh highlighted several key happenings;
  - a. July 1, 2023-Pell is being restored for all people regardless of sentence, length, or type of offense and that means that colleges and universities can pull down Pell on behalf of those students.
  - b. FAFSA will get shorter but will still exist. The Selective Service requirement has gone away and the drug related conviction requirements has gone away.
  - c. Dependent students who are in “unusual circumstances” will not need to get their parents tax forms to complete the FAFSA.
- i. Director Jeffries thanked Brian Walsh and stated the presentation was the blueprint to which we want to follow. He asked which state had the most effective model that Illinois would like to follow?
- j. Mr. Walsh responded that Illinois would have to use multiple models. He stated the key issues to address are:
  - a. How does your adult education program connect to post secondary education program?
  - b. How do you address moving people to the right place at the right time, but also making sure they don’t move within a semester term?
  - c. How do you prioritize who gets into the program?
- k. Director Jeffries asked if there is certain data that should be pulled?
- l. Mr. Walsh responded that making sure that all students regardless of race, age and gender equity amongst both men and women at different facilities. He stated collaboration is needed because colleges will not know what to look for in their enrollments. He stated full-time vs. part-time enrollment would also be a pathway.
- m. Sarah Ross asked how did the states incorporate existing programs? And how much non-degree programs are part of the offerings?
- n. Mr. Walsh stated that some states are issuing RFP’s. He stated the programs being offered are not non-degree programs and they are certificate-degree and certificate programs. He stated one of the requirements for Pell is that it has to be a technical program or a degree program and they do not necessarily need to be completed in prison. It has to be a Pell eligible program. He stated non-degree programs will eventually be squeezed out for space for degree programs.
- o. Rebecca Ginsburg asked are you aware of any states that impose thresholds for departments of corrections to meet in terms of AED or GED completions?
- p. Mr. Walsh stated he was not aware but thinks it is an interesting idea.
- q. Ms. Ginsburg asked how does it work when not all HEP programs in a given state are part of a statewide agreement, a consortium for example New Jersey.
- r. Mr. Walsh stated he had trouble answering the question and he would get back to Ms. Ginsburg via email.

**2. Presentation: HEP in IL: Current Landscape, Obstacles & Opportunities-Ashton Hoselton, Policy and Research Director, Education Justice Project, University of Illinois**

- a. Chair introduced Ashton Hoselton and read her bio to the task force.

- b. Ashton Hoselton stated her presentation would focus on the current landscape of Illinois and the obstacles and opportunities to expanding that programming throughout our state. She stated for the purposes of this presentation HEP or higher education in prison refers to academic post secondary courses, provided by or in close partnership with regionally accredited colleges and universities this does not include vocational or career technical offerings.
- c. Ms. Hoselton shared a URL in her presentation: [bit.ly/3IXgAL](https://bit.ly/3IXgAL) to link to her report: Marsheda Ewulomi & Ashton Hoselton, *Higher Education in Prison: Understanding its Power and Fulfilling its Promise in Illinois*, Business and Professional People for the Public Interest.
- d. Ms Hoselton stated there are 12 HEP programs in Illinois; Four programs offer a bachelors degree and 1 program offers a masters degree. She stated some programs operate in multiple facilities, like North park, and Northwestern. North park, and Northwestern programs both began at Stateville in 2018 and expanded to Logan in 2021. She stated this expansion is particularly important, because these 2 programs established offerings for women incarcerated in Iraq, getting to that gender equity point that Brian brought up.
- e. Ms. Hoselton highlighted programs at Augustana College which began in 2021 and the Education Justice Project which began in 2008. She stated both offer critical, academic, support, extra curricular programming and post incarceration support.
- f. Ms. Hoselton stated that in each of the 12 HEP programs, they are no costs to students although there are program costs. She stated 2 of the 12 programs receive funding through state funded contracts and those two programs operated at Danville Correctional Facility. She stated the other 10 are funded through a combination of support from the Higher Education Institution Foundation grants and individual donors and they receive no state or federal support. She stated HEP programming is only available in 7 of the 28 Illinois Correctional Facilities.
- g. Ms. Hoselton offered a breakdown of the number of participants in each facility and highlighted the obstacles that Illinois would need to overcome:
  - a. Barrier number 1, limited resources without more resources access to and growth of HEP will remain erratic and scarce.
  - b. Barrier number 2 is inconsistent policies-the lack of uniformity and transparency that prevents the development of sustainable structures for quality, consistent programming which often deters HEP programs from getting off the ground without clear and consistent expectations. HEP programs are unable to accurately predict what's really necessary to be successful and provide quality programming.
  - c. Barrier number 3 is a lack of data informed, collaborative decision making. Currently there's no single entity collecting or reporting comprehensive data on HEP programming and there's no mechanism for engaging the full spectrum of stakeholders in policy making.
- h. Ms. Hoselton highlighted ways to overcome the obstacles and identified funding sources that are available to fund HEP programs.
- i. Rebecca Ginsburg asked Brian Walsh, “Having seen Ashton Hoselton’s presentation, does it give you a sense of where opportunities or challenges might particularly lie that we should be careful and knowledgeable about in Illinois?”
- j. Mr. Walsh stated the slide that shows where you have programs and where you need programs is key. He asked Nathan Wilson, Deputy Director for Research and Information Technology, if the information provided in the chat that he has 6,000 students participating in credit bearing programs and 3,000 in transfer programs? He stated we should have a big pool of students ready for junior/senior year.
- k. Mr. Wilson stated in Illinois we have integrated education programs that couples, adult, secondary education with credit bearing courses with an idea of fast tracking and accelerating certificates and degrees for those students. He stated that it is implemented and employed within many of our adult education programs and perhaps should be something to consider as part of this task force.

- l. Mr. Walsh stated an integrated education and training is really difficult to do in jails and that it works much better in prisons. He stated some colleges really want to have a very strong role in addressing all of the issues of the criminal legal system. He stated some of those colleges may not need a prison program what they need is a reentry program.
- m. Chair Mayorga asked the committee to keep in mind what could be the middle ground with keeping non-degree Higher Education Prison programs that are doing quality work alongside with those that do offer degree programs and have benefited greatly from the non-degree programs.
- n. Sarah Ross stated there's a space for this kind of ecology of education that is necessary to both create that kind of campus community that's important to propel people to get degrees but also the campus community that actually supports people to go out and be awesome farmers and awesome all the other kinds of jobs that people get with, or without a college degree.

#### **F. Members Updates**

- a. Rebecca Ginsburg The most productive task forces are those that work between task force meetings by setting up subcommittees that allow them to push forward their agenda aggressively. She stated she thinks that there would be a role for several subcommittees as part of this task force. She stated she hoped that those subcommittees can be working backwards from what we know our output has to be come late July and that we report to the governor and ensure that we do not miss a step.
- b. Chair Maryoga asked if anyone else wanted to discuss what Rebecca Ginsburg suggested. He stated his concern was that the July deadline was not that far away. He asked ICJIA Office of General Counsel representative Crystal Johnson to present the current timeline.
- c. Sara Ross asked if committees could be suggested?
- d. Crystal Johnson stated the proposed timeline for the task force and asked that members email her with suggestions.
- e. Dr. Lynne Mock asked members to forward their suggestions for speakers and agenda items to her and Crystal Johnson.

#### **G. Public Comments**

- a. James Pagano stated think there's an obvious need for additional input from someone from CCW who's who's actually running these programs. He stated he did not know if that's Brian Durham or or, Jennifer Wasteland, but I think that would provide a big piece of the picture that seems to have been missing from a lot of this conversation.
- b. Nathan Wilson stated he was going to reach out to Whitney Tops, our Deputy Director for Workforce Education to see who she would like to to come and speak to the group.
- c. James Pagano stated I think it would also be helpful if they could come repared to talk about how the financing works because that is a specific relationship between the community college board and there are different financing mechanisms and it would be helpful for people to have a full understanding.

#### **H. Adjournment**

1. Moved by Sara Ross
2. Seconded by Dr. Lynne Mock
3. All were in favor
4. No oppositions
5. No abstentions
6. Meeting adjourned at 1:33 PM