



Sabbatical Proposal: Fall 2023

Submitted By

Linda Webb, General Counseling Counselor

Prison-to-College Pipeline: Incarceration to Graduation

Project Title: Prison-to-College Pipeline: Incarceration to Graduation

Project Description

In Fall 2020, Oxnard College established a partnership with the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facility, Ventura County Probation and Parole, and the Ventura County Office of Education, to implement a prison-to-college pipeline which services incarcerated youth at Providence Court School. This partnership, burgeoned the Providence Scholars Program which enrolls high school students via Dual Enrollment as first-year OC students. The overarching program goal is to encourage this population to pursue a higher education and complete a Certificate, Associate Degree or Associate Degree for Transfer.

This proposal evaluates the efficacy of counseling, support services, and basic needs of the growing number of currently and formerly incarcerated students enrolled at Oxnard College. I will assess and evaluate the best practices amongst this population within the institutional practices of servicing incarcerated youth.

The majority of the students at Providence Court School are low-income, socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, first-generation Latinx. Upon released from the criminal justice system, this population has no foundational support systems to provide Guided Pathways to higher education and matriculation. Subsequently, community college is poised to accept this population to create the educational launch pad for this group of students. The outcome of this proposal will provide a better understanding of the diversity, equity and inclusive needs of this sub population.

My sabbatical proposal aligns with the College's Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles of a **students-first approach** and **social justice and equity**:

MISSION, VISION, and GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These guiding principles reflect our values. They are the foundational landscape from which all our efforts emerge. As with a physical landscape, the state of our foundation is dynamic—changing with the environment. In order to preserve its vitality, parts of our landscape require attention and renewal from time to time. In this Educational Master Plan (EMP), we have set renewal goals for several of our guiding principles. We affirm our commitment to these principles by this renewal.

In order to optimally serve our students, we commit to:

- 1. A students-first approach.** Our decisions will be primarily guided by what is best for the students we serve. Our efforts will support students' achievement of their academic goals, and enhance their interpersonal skills and professional competencies.
- 2. Social justice and equity.** Acknowledging the historical context of exclusion in higher education, we accept the responsibility to make our college a model of access and inclusivity. We will:
 - a. cultivate a welcoming culture that recognizes the advantages diversity brings to our classrooms and offices,
 - b. harness our experiences as a Hispanic Serving Institution to equitably deliver resources and support to all underserved and marginalized students, and
 - c. empower all underserved populations to achieve their full potential.

Your background as it relates to the project and to your role at Oxnard College

I possess over twenty years of experience in higher education providing comprehensive educational, career, vocational and personal counseling, specifically servicing at-risk youth, probation, and dismissal students. I have been employed at Oxnard College for eight years and this is my first sabbatical request as a non-instructional faculty. My related professional work includes previous positions as the Probation/Retention Counselor at Oxnard College, Pasadena City College, and Caltech. Responsibilities included implementing intrusive advising to improve retention and student success, probation and orientation workshops, curriculum development, campus-wide programming, and specialized support services which are of particular relevance to the success of this sabbatical proposal. Additionally, I initiated the implementation and authored the title of OC's probation online workshop: PG R820 - *Reaching Excellence in Academics & Challenges (REACH)*.

I am presently assigned as the Oxnard College Providence Scholars counselor and my role is to provide academic, career and personal counseling to incarcerated students via Zoom or in-person, enrollment and matriculation assistance, registration, develop comprehensive student educational plans, and referrals to virtual on-campus resources.

Recently, I collaborated and provided specific details for the Rising Scholars Network 2.0 Grant via independent research and development that I sought and recommended into the grant proposal. This grant offers funding to serve incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students at California Community Colleges.

My role as a counselor is to ensure persistence and matriculation which overall increases enrollment and FTES generation to the college campus. My goal as the Providence Scholar counselor is valued and focused on assisting current and formerly incarcerated students to maximize their potential and develop the habit of intellectual inquiry, preparation for career pathways, and academic ethics and leadership skills that will facilitate the achievement of their educational goal. On the academic trajectory, I have always viewed social and restorative justice as an integral component of academic pursuit.

Project Objectives

- To examine and evaluate key services and program development for currently incarcerated students at Providence Court School and formerly incarcerated individuals, to create pathways to academic success and completion.
- To support juvenile justice students by providing them with the academic skills and support services to overcome barriers in an effort to increase college persistence, completion, graduation and transfer, to overall mitigate recidivism.
- To address this disproportionately impacted group by providing them with Guided Pathway education and student services that will ultimately reduce the equity gap.
- To provide in-service training to counselors, classified staff, and faculty designed to deepen their understanding of justice involved students; increase cultural competency and dual perspective; and provide student service needs.

My proposed project objectives closely align with the following two ***Vision for Success*** goals:

- To reduce equity gaps across all of the above measures through faster improvements among traditionally underrepresented student groups
- Increase the number of California Community College students annually who acquire associate degrees, credentials, certificates, or specific skill sets that prepare them for an in-demand job

Criteria for Evaluation of Program Efficacy

1. Student learning and engagement in a prison environment
2. Counseling and Educational Planning
 - a) Educational planning unique to the student to be able to enroll in online courses only until released
 - b) Educational planning that incorporates the student the ability to work towards or earn an Associate degree, Certificate, or Proficiency Award while incarcerated
 - c) Comprehensive student education plan that includes the student's primary educational goal, transferrable courses, and continuing education upon release
3. Challenges and Barriers
 - a) Common challenges and barriers faced by formerly incarcerated students
 - b) Institutional operational logistics for the college in starting an incarcerated program
4. Student Success Indicators
5. Student Support Services in working with the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated student (Financial Aid, EOPS, EAC, etc.)
6. Guided Pathways
7. Prison-College Collaboration and Relationships
8. Availability of resources on-campus and off-campus
 - a) Academic and non-academic needs
 - b) Mental Health

Project Methodology

Research

Conduct an analysis of formerly incarcerated student support programs on other college campuses. According to my preliminary research, there are several different support programs for incarcerated/formerly incarcerated students across multiple UCs, CSUs and Community Colleges in California. During this sabbatical project, I plan to engage and collaborate with (1) UC, (1) CSU, and (4) California Community Colleges to evaluate and examine their best practices and programs which will include:

- University of California Los Angeles, Bruin Underground Scholars Program
- CSU Fullerton, Project Rebound & Rebound Scholars
- College of San Mateo, Project Change
- Santiago Canyon College, Project RISE
- Rio Hondo College, R.I.S.E. Scholars
- Shasta College, STEP-UP Program

Exploratory Interviews

Conduct focus groups of incarcerated college students at Providence Court School, and interview formerly incarcerated students, Probation Officers, and Correctional Educators to collect qualitative data and fieldnotes that will contribute to understanding personal experiences, identifying barriers, challenges, and understand how Oxnard College can increase the academic preparation of incarcerated students.

Educational Development

I will participate in professional and educational development opportunities that exclusively focus on programs, best practices, and developmental theory of this population of students. The information I will secure will be used as a foundational template to provide programming recommendations and improvements for Oxnard College's incarcerated services campus-wide. Resources currently identified include: webinars, conferences related to the California Community College's Rising Scholars Network, Center for the Study of Correctional Education, Center for Community Partnership Scholars Program, and Prison Reentry Education Program.

Skill Set Building

In an effort to strengthen the foundational knowledge and skill set of this population, ongoing engagement will occur with the following entities to learn about community justice impacted organizations: Ventura County Juvenile Justice and Corrections, expungement and legal services, re-entry services ranging from social services to transitional housing.

Schedule Timeline

<p>Research</p> <p>Site visits and observation of incarcerated Student Support Programs at college campuses.</p>	<p>August - September</p>
<p>Educational Development</p> <p>Participant and attendance of incarcerated student educational workshops, webinars, and read a variety of academic publications and journals.</p> <p>Peer reviewed articles and journals that are evidenced-based research in correctional education and the incarcerated student population will be reviewed and incorporated throughout the project.</p> <p><u>Publications/Journals:</u></p> <p>The <i>Journal of Higher Education in Prison</i> Website: https://www.higheredinprison.org/journal-of-higher-education-in-prison</p> <p>The Journal of Correctional Education Website: https://ceanational.org/journal</p> <p>RAND Digital Library: www.rand.org I will utilize RAND, a renowned research corporation that provides rigorous research and systematic analysis that help address the effectiveness and challenges in Correctional Education and prison-based college programs. Their standards are framed with quality attention to the following areas: engagement, inclusion, rigor, legitimacy, transparency, and relevance. I will access their publications and journal articles from their digital library.</p> <p>Chesnut, K., Taber, N., Quintana J. (2022). <i>Second Chance Pell: Five Years of Expanding Higher Education Programs in Prisons</i>. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.</p> <p>Smith, L., Digard, L. (2020). <i>From Corrections to College in California: An Evaluation of Student Support During and After Incarceration</i>. New York: Vera Institute of Justice.</p> <p>Erzen, T., Gould, M., Lewen, J. (2019). <i>Equity and Excellence in Practice: A Guide for Higher Education In Prison</i>. St. Louis, MO: Alliance for Higher Education in Prison: Prison University Project</p> <p>R. Delaney, R. Subramanian, F. Patrick. (2016). <i>Making the Grade: Developing Quality Postsecondary Education Programs in Prison</i>.</p>	<p>August - November</p>

<p>Exploratory Interviews and Focus Group Development</p> <p>Create interview questions, schedule interviews and focus groups, contact formerly incarcerated students by conducting phone calls and email outreach.</p>	<p>September - October</p>
<p>Exploratory Interviews and Focus Group Project</p> <p>Interviews of formerly incarcerated students, Providence Court School Educators, Correction Officers, and conduct focus groups of incarcerated college students.</p> <p><u>Interviews:</u> 9</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leah Velador, Senior Deputy Probation Officer 2. Michelle Larson, Juvenile Probation Officer 3. Monica Roman, Induction/Transition Specialist, Ventura County Office of Education 4. Teresa Vega, Assistant Principal, Providence Court School 5. Nicole Garr, Counselor, Providence Court School 6. Cinthia Ramirez, Formerly Incarcerated Student, OC Transfer Student, and OC Alumni 7. Victor Arredondo, Formerly Incarcerated Student, Former ASG Senator, and OC Alumni 8. Ignacio Cruz, OC Formerly Incarcerated Student 9. Carlos Vargas, OC Formerly Incarcerated Student <p><u>Focus Groups:</u> 2</p> <p><i>Recording conducted only if consent is given by Providence Court School Administrator.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providence High School students enrolled as Oxnard College Dual Enrollment students (5 to 7 students) 2. Juvenile minors enrolled at Oxnard College (5 to 7 students) 	<p>October</p>
<p>Skill Set Building</p> <p>Engagement to community organizations, corrections, and legal services</p>	<p>October</p>
<p>Fieldnotes Transcription and Analysis</p>	<p>November</p>
<p>Writing Framework</p> <p>Outline of findings: incarcerated college programs, retention services, re-entry services, best practices, student success and related prison-based college activities.</p>	<p>November</p>
<p>Proposal Summary Development</p> <p>Creation of Program Summary: PowerPoint</p>	<p>December</p>

How do I plan to share my sabbatical results at Oxnard College?

I will share my sabbatical results and findings via presentations or group discussions to the following campus constituents:

- Student Equity and Success Committee
- Student Leadership Team
- Academic Senate
- Associated Student Government Board
- Counselor In-Services and Division Meetings
- New Counselor Trainings
- Departments that serve this special population such as EOPS & EAC

Value of Project

Value to the Incarcerated/Formerly Incarcerated Student

The value the project will have for incarcerated students is to support the transition to Oxnard College and be welcomed into a secure, equity and student-focused learning community where they can access post-release personal and academic services, complete their educational goal and enable greater access to career or professional opportunities and the workforce. The social justice impacted students will also gain personal development and rehabilitation through an effective guided process, thereby increasing their self-worth, confidence, and lifelong learning.

Value to the College Community

The outcome and findings of this proposal project will serve to provide recommendations to Oxnard College so it can examine its practices, measure effectiveness, and evaluate institutional goals to expand services and secure a strong foundation to better serve incarcerated students. Additionally, as a non-instructional faculty member of the Student Equity and Success Committee, I will advocate and address the issues and obstacles of student success for incarcerated/formerly incarcerated students.

Value to Myself as a Counselor

This project will benefit me, personally and professionally, to better understand the rapidly growing specialty of higher education in the juvenile facilities and prison setting. I would like to further support my passion in servicing this sub population and be well versed in evolving models, theory, practices, and success strategies. I will then be able to in turn provide comprehensive training to counselors, faculty and staff as it relates to incarcerated system impacted students. I believe that this sabbatical project is a chance for me to make a difference in the lives of our incarcerated students.

Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students by nature have higher social, emotional behavior, academic needs, and have a more difficult time setting goals and thinking about their future. Therefore, providing “access, equity, and inclusion” to justice-involved students of our community is essential to opening the Condor doors of educational opportunities to those affected by the system. Although we have started to bridge this student population to enroll at OC, there will be a lot more work to be done. We will need additional resources to expand current and proposed services, and the college’s commitment to invest in justice impacted students’ long-term success. I look forward to the outcome of this proposal project to benefit Oxnard College’s incarcerated student population through the construction of best practices in student services, support programs, counseling strategies, and intervention.