



THE MICHELSON 20MM
FOUNDATION

College Education in Prisons: A How-To Guide for Corrections Officials

September 16, 2021 | 11:00a.m. - 12:30p.m. PDT

Mayra Lombera 00:00

Good to welcome you all. I'm Mayra Lombera, Chief Operating Officer at the Michelson 20 Million Minds Foundation, and I'm delighted that everyone is able to join us today for college education in prisons, a how to guide for corrections officials. Before we delve into today's program, I'd just like to take some time to briefly introduce our organization. Founded in 2010 by Dr Gary K Michelson and Alya Michelson, the Michelson 20MM Foundation, has been dedicated to ensuring that everyone particularly our most vulnerable populations have access to equitable post secondary educational opportunities that lead to meaningful careers. We proudly have operated at the cutting edge of higher education to help overthinking innovators, nonprofits and startups close the opportunity gap, and today we are very fortunate to bring together some of the brightest minds, and most courageous leaders working to deliver quality higher education programming for some of our most promising and talented individuals behind bars. At this time, it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Gary Michelson founder and co chair of the Michelson 20MM Foundation, who will provide opening remarks.

Gary Michelson 01:16

Good morning everyone. Thank you for joining us today. The Research has consistently shown that high quality college programs in prison, produce a significant return on investment, via recidivism reduction. What underlies that are the individual transformations of these prisoners become students, advancing quality post secondary educational programming in prisons, has been the cornerstone of our Michelson Smart Justice strategy, whose time has now come. Higher education opportunities for incarcerated students have now been expanded under three presidential administrations, via the successful Second Chance Help program. We will see an even greater expansion when Pell restoration is fully implemented in the year 2023. In prison, college does more than transform prisoners into serious students. It offers hope, and it alters the trajectories of these prisoners lives. Given this critical opportunity, there is much work to be done, especially in promoting cross sector, professional development, to advance higher education programming in prison. Today's event will highlight a seminal guide from Dr Lois M Davis, a renowned researcher with the RAND Corporation, whose work is often cited in the field, because she has been researching public safety and public health, for over 30 years. The guide "What corrections officials need to know to partner with colleges to implement college programs in prisons" is a first of its kind publication directed to training corrections officials in addressing the professional development gap in regard to building out a successful in prison college program. I would also like to recognize the late John Linton, and his vital contributions to this project. John dedicated his life to this work from the beginning of his career in correctional education as a teacher in Maryland prisons, to becoming Maryland's director of correctional education, to serving as director for the Office of Correctional Education at the US Department of Education, John, and Dr. Davis co authored the guide until his untimely passing in 2019. We extend our deepest gratitude to John and the legacy he has left on the ecosystem for higher education in prison. We extend our condolences to his family and colleagues who will continue to miss him. What John knew and what the panelists will illustrate for you today is that for high quality post secondary education in prison, to continue to take root throughout the country, corrections officials need professional development and training in support of meaningful cross sector collaboration among colleges and corrections. The guide and this event, were crafted with that end goal in mind. Thank you again for joining us. I will now hand things over to Dr. Davis, senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation, as she highlights the main takeaways from the guide. Thank you.

Mayra Lombera 04:29

Thank you Dr Michelson before we hand it over to Lois I'd love to just briefly give an introduction and welcome her. Lois Davis to senior policy researcher at RAND with expertise in correctional education, prisoner reentry and public safety. She has extensive experience in conducting program evaluations and working with agencies and organizations

involved in service provision policymaking, or the administration of programs, she also previously led the evaluation of the three state pathways from prison to post secondary education demonstration project, and the National Evaluation funded under the Second Chance Act to assess the effectiveness of correctional educational programs for incarcerated adults. So as you can see you have quite an expert in the fields and we're really delighted that she's able to join us. So welcome, Lois.

Lois Davis 05:22

Thank you so much I really greatly appreciate that. And what I'm going to do is I'm going to start off with kind of a short briefing that kind of gives the audience a sense of what we're, what we were trying to accomplish with this guidebook, and, and also the key points that we hope you take away, but more importantly I think what will follow is a robust discussion of experts in the field that we're very delighted to have join us today. So with that I'm going to ask them for the next slide please. So a little bit of background first. When we think about college programs in prison. Most state departments of corrections require an individual if they do not have a high school degree or reading for example in ninth grade level that they earn a GED while incarcerated, but often the rest of the education programming is not mandatory and so it's more optional, but one of the things that many people in the field are recognizing is that today, a college education is critical to compete today, if you look at for example, job postings, two thirds of them require some level of college education, but also, importantly, we're at a time when there's a real resurgence in interest in expanding higher education in prison, and particularly for programs that offer a path to degrees or industry recognized credentials. Next slide please. So part of that resurgence has been driven by two factors, so one is back in 2015, the US Department of Education, implemented a Second Chance Pell experimental initiative. And this was the first time since 1994 that Pell Grants could be used to help pay for in-prison college programs. At the very beginning we had grants to colleges in 42 states and since then has expanded. Sean Addie will talk further about that, but also another key event that that has long been awaited was recently the Congress reinstated access to the Federal Pell grants to all incarcerated individuals. This is expected to have further expansion in this area. Next slide please. Next, thank you. Just briefly when we think about correct education programs and then the range of rehabilitative programs that are provided, education programs are ones that have a real clear impact on improving employment outcomes as well as reducing recidivism. So RAND did a national study to look at this. And what we found was that if you if an individual participated for example, in any type of educational program, whether it be adult basic ed, GED prep, career technical education, vocational training or college programs, they had a 13 percentage point reduction in their likelihood of recidivating upon release, that's a significant reduction in the risk. In addition, importantly for this discussion today, those who participate in college programs are half as likely to be incarcerated upon release. We also did a very simple cost effectiveness calculation of what we're able to show and this is an underestimate of cost savings, is that for every dollar spent on these programs, you're basically saving \$5 in reincarceration costs. Next slide please. But in order for these programs to be effective, they must meet the needs of the population, and such questions as, does a college program for example, fit into the overall, Department of Corrections rehabilitative priorities, their educational plan? Who is going to be eligible? Such things as, is there adequate classroom space available? What technology rather resources are needed? What type of commitment of staff and funding is required, or what are the safety and security requirements? Next slide please. When John and I first started talking about this idea for guidebook we actually were having lunch with Steve Stewart in Maryland, and I've asked John, what he thought needed to be done next. And what he said was, corrections officials really need some guidance on how to think about these programs, and the his view was that fundamentally these, these programs should be a partnership, an equal partnership between colleges and prisons, and a recognition that they're bringing together two very different bureaucracies with different missions, visions, and values to establish these programs, thus it requires an agreement on overall goals, commitment of resources and a clear set of expectations. Next slide. But the key he also recognized was that when we look across the landscape of what has been written in this area. A lot of the guidance really is aimed at colleges, to help them understand how to establish these programs and that was, those have been important contributions to the field. However very little, has been written really in the corrections officials perspectives, to really provide them some guidance and so this particular guide that we developed was intended to be a starting point, for corrections officials who are considering a new college program or are currently have one and thinking about what else needs to be done to ensure its success, we're focusing on academic programs, we're not talking about vocational career technical education programs. Next slide. Our target audience are really correctional leadership and administrators, correctional officers as well as correctional education staff so in other words, those who have responsibility for overseeing or working closely with colleges in facilitating the establishment of these college programs. Next slide please. So this gives you an overview of what the guide book covers, and depending on the reader where they're at in terms of their knowledge about these programs or the kind of issues that they're interested in learning more about this guide that can give them a sense of which chapters to go to depending on what thing, they require. So we start off with some just basics of understanding about how college programs in prisons are run, who provides them, how are they funded, etc. We then really go through a series of questions about what types of questions should a corrections official ask himself, him or herself to think about establishing such a program and, and to get a better understanding of whether or not it makes sense for their particular facility or DOC. We then it goes through and chapters four and five of the nitty gritty of establishing the basic policies and procedures, as

well as what an MOU should require and one of our panelists will give you a real life example, what that process is like. Next slide please. So let's start with kind of the basic questions that the guide book addresses. When you think about who provides these college programs predominantly its Community College, if we look across the state, followed by universities. It's also predominantly by not for profit academic institutions. In terms of what types of degrees they offer, for those that offer degree pathways, most, most of them offer associate's degrees, followed by bachelor's or bachelors of arts or sciences as a four year degree, a few offer other master's degrees. Next slide please. Pre COVID most of these programs were provided primarily through in person instruction, since COVID, where we initially had a lockdown of these different people being able to come into the prison facility to prevent the spread of COVID. We see now emergence more of blended learning programs that is in person instruction combined with some reliance on, for example, the use of tablets, augment and also some online programs. But as our panelists will talk a little bit about this further, there seems to be a strong preference on the college side of returning to in person instruction, and also the correctional education side, and that many of view these that quality programs fundamentally in this area, need to have some element of in person instruction. Next slide. Now depending on what state you're in, it's important to recognize that states through legislation, but also policies may limit what type of degrees, for example, that an incarcerated student can earn f, or example one state until recently, limited by law, that only programs that resulted in a terminal Associates of Applied Science Degree could be offered, that was recently changed in 2019. So it's important to, to understand what your particular states both laws and written policies are in this regard. In addition, I want to just mention statewide articulation transfer credit agreements and why they matter. Ideally, what you'd like to have is that students will complete their college work in prison before release. However, in many cases, it just by the nature of being in a correctional setting it often takes longer than the normal age to be able to complete that coursework. And so, statewide, particularly for transfer groups are important because often these individuals may need to continue their education upon release from prison. But what these articulation agreements do is that they help ensure that that the credits and credentials that were earned while incarcerated, that they'll be recognized by other [educations], then their state. So that's a key question to ask is whether colleges offering an in person program or course that that will allow the individual to receive credit and that will be accepted by local colleges, universities. In terms of how the program will be funded I mentioned that Pell Grants are, are an important component of spurring the expansion of college programs in the correctional setting, but it's also important to recognize that they only can be used to pay for tuition, fees, books and supplies required by individuals education, that means that they do not cover the administrative costs of academic institutions nor that have departments of corrections to implement and run these programs. So that's an important part of understanding what funding is available. Next slide. In terms of determining who will be eligible for a program. There are two perspectives on that so one is that college administrators, of course, have their own eligibility requirements for a particular course or program, but at the same time departments of corrections may require for example, such things that a person be within a certain timeframe of their release, that they have a record of claim disciplinary infractions. And they also may bar some individuals, some offenders for example sex offenders, to participate in the program. Also want to emphasize the importance of education holes to the success of these programs. One of the challenges in for these students is that they may be transferred to another prison facility before they able to complete their coursework, transferred to another facility may point to a program that facility that no longer has that same college program. So basically this enrolls them for that course. That is why education holes are important for the success of these programs because they help ensure that these students can remain at their facility in order to play the college course or completed certification. Next slide. It's also important to designate correctional staff to serve as point persons, both at the headquarters and facility level for these programs, they will be responsible for example, for coordinating with the college director on this as well as doing problem solving, and we can't say enough about the importance of getting staffs buy-in in this area. For example, you may have state leadership, such as at headquarters level, the wardens assistant, wardens superintendents, who see the value of these programs, but ultimately you really need to get both correctional officers, buy in, as well as that of the correction education staff and answer their fundamental questions to make sure that they understand why this, this program is worthwhile and explains their role in making the program work. Next slide. So establishing revenue is the nuts and bolts of that. Our panel member Carroll Seron will be talking about her experience here in California, and doing so, it's, it's critical, because it really establishes the operational framework of the partnership and delineates respective roles and responsibilities, establishes such things as the ratio of the partnership, communication protocols, but also how the primer will be funded. And I want to emphasize here that it's important to understand that these programs, it varies from state to state how they are paid for, it include such things as state funds such as correction state corrections appropriations and maybe even college headcount dollars, maybe state financial aid or inmate self pay or also for inmate welfare funds for example, or philanthropy funds so it's important that that issue of how the program will be funded will be recognized ,and I'm seeing the questions in the chat and we'll be trying to address those definitely in the panel discussion. Finally, I want to. Next slide please. Clearly you then needs to establish administrative oversight of the program to be provided with by the college and then, Department of Corrections, establishing the commitment of staff and resources and our panels, talk about the commitment of college, college leadership is key as well as the commitment of DOC leadership. And then finally also establishing the eligibility requirements that are really going to be in negotiation between the college and the, and the Department of Corrections. Next slide please. So I wanted to

provide my email address in case people had corrections, questions about it also. The guidebook is available for free on the RAND website, and we're providing the link here but I'm also happy to email that to you as, as required. So with that, I'll turn it back to Mayra to introduce the panel.

Mayra Lombera 20:55

Thank you so much, Lois, I appreciate everyone's enthusiasm and questions already on the chat. We did share a link to the guidebook, please know that we will also be sharing out all the slides that that Lois has shared, most of that via email. And, and I see that there's already been some requests for sample MOU so I'm sure if we can aggregate some of those we'll be including those in the post event email so thank you again, and it's now my pleasure to welcome today's four panelists, just brief introductions for everyone as I'm sure you've read their extensive bios and you'll have more of an opportunity to get to hear from them directly, but first off is Sean Addie, who is the director of correctional education in the Department of Education's Office of correctional education. He is in the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education, welcome Sean. Next we have Heather Gay who is the state Assistant Administrator for prisoner education. She sits within the offender success administration, and began her career in the Michigan Department of Corrections. So welcome Heather. Todd Butler, who serves as the Dean of Arts Sciences and business administration at Jackson College in Jackson, Michigan. Pleasure to have you, Todd. And last but certainly not least we have Carroll Seron who is the Associate Director of the LIFTED initiative at the University of California, Irvine for those of you unfamiliar that LIFTED is an acronym that stands for leveraging inspiring futures through educational degrees, and it's the first in-prison BA completion program that's offered by the University of California system, so welcome Carol.

Lois Davis 22:39

Thank you so much. So, for the audience participants when I'm going to do is I'm going to start off asking a question for each of the panel members, and then we're going to turn to answering the questions you all are posing on the q&a and chat so we will definitely get to those, but I wanted to just start off with them giving an overview of their perspective on on different topics I'm going to begin with Sean Addie and, and, and one of the questions that I had for Sean was really to give us an overview about why what Pell reauthorization is, why that matters and what it means for the field. So Sean?

Sean Addie 23:17

Sure, so first off I'd like to thank the Michelson Foundation and Lois for sponsoring and putting together this panel, it's, it's an honor to be here and to contribute to what was one of John Linton's passions really high quality education for, for people who are in prison. To sort of provide some background, in December 2020, Congress passed the FAFSA Simplification Act, and one of the provisions included in this act was the reinstatement of Federal Pell Grant eligibility for students who are incarcerated in federal and state penal institutions. So this new provision allowed students who were incarcerated to receive Pell Grants, it created a new definition of prison education programs. And it also required the Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Justice, as well as other stakeholders to ensure accurate implementation of these provisions in the act. When the Act was passed it stated that the department had until July 1, 2023 to implement Pell reinstatement. And we announced back in July, that we intend to implement these changes to allow eligible students to access Pell Grants, beginning on July 1, 2023. We had the option of implementing earlier but due to just the work that has to go into implementing this and doing it correctly, we're choosing to do it until July 1, 2023. Already the department has taken steps to implement changes to the FAFSA for students who are incarcerated. We've removed the consequences. The consequences questions around Selective Service registration, as well as requirements around drug conviction. We knew through a second chance Pell experiment that these had tripped up a lot of students early on in the process, we're interested in participating in post secondary education through our Second Chance Pell experiment. We are also exploring ways to help students to have loans in default and figuring out ways to help them re establish eligibility for federal student aid, that stuff we're working on, just in the interim, before July 1, 2023. We've also announced plans to publish regulations on prison education programs, and Pell reauthorization, or Pell re-instatement prior to implementation. We held public hearings in June of 2021 as part of the negotiated rulemaking process. And we've also announced that there will be a rulemaking Subcommittee on Pell Grant eligibility for prison education programs. This subcommittee is going to be meeting in October and November, and the subcommittee will work with the department to draft and amend the language around prison education programs, and, and really what this means for the field is that in less than two years, incarcerated students will be able to access Pell Grants, pursue post secondary education, and improve their lives and their families lives in their communities. And it also means that, you know, the reason for this webinar, back in the guide is that correctional practitioners and educators, if they have not done so already, will need to start thinking about what full implementation looks like.

Lois Davis 26:47

So much Sean, I appreciate it. I'm gonna turn next to Heather Gay, who's on the Michigan Department of Corrections and Heather as education manager I want you to talk a little bit about your experience in terms of implementing both the Pathways Program as well as these programs in general. And what you see as some of the kind of key lessons learned or things that corrections officials may need to consider as they're as they're also thinking about implementing these programs.

Heather Gay 27:19

Great, thank you, Lois and thank you Michelson Foundation for having me. Any, any tribute, John Linton, I'm very excited and honored to be part of, a mentor, a leader for sure. Going back to the days of the state educational directors and he was one of the first men I met, and was a quiet great leader so I wanted to say that. I'd like to first start by talking about correctional leadership. One of the main things that worked for us in Michigan is we early on identified a stakeholder, a champion, someone who served worked for corrections but could be the liaison between our post secondary partners. Leadership has got to give this person this champion, the knowledge, the support so that they can learn what's happening nationally, or from power restoration and also what's happened locally with their college partners and what they need to do. Another point of reference I would make is collect data, find out what your, your incarcerated population needs, what communities are they paroling to, what higher ed needs are there out there for your population, so then when you start to engage with partners and post secondary folks you can have those very candid conversations about what the data is telling us. What diverse offerings, do we need to make sure our population is paroling with because ultimately our population wants to be employed. They want to have higher education degrees so that they can get better paying jobs to support their families post release. One other point I would make too is communication. One thing we learned and Dr. Butler will talk about this with our Pathways Program was communication was key. We had regular conversations, we've talked everything out. I encourage you to do it in person or through COVID now doing it on Teams, email, sometimes can you don't get the trust, you don't get that connections to your higher ed folks doing things on email, or the telephone, so I would encourage you as you start out right from the gate to ensure you're having these candid conversations and making sure you're expressing what corrections needs are as well. Your Higher ed partners will listen and they will help you brainstorm solutions to solve the problems. Another point that I'd like to share that we learned through Pathways also is make sure you're engaging your corrections folks that are working in the housing unit, that are working at the facilities, that are working in the gates, at the front desk, make sure you're having conversations as a corrections official, when we go into tour and we go in to figure out where we're going to put our post secondary program, we're talking to those folks right from the beginning. They have such great insight, and they can really make your program successful, make sure you set up that that line of communication, where hey if you have a problem, shoot me an email, call me let me know. We will solve it, we will get it fixed. So that's one thing that I would end on, is making sure that the communication, both with your higher ed partners as well as the line staff and Corrections is very, very valuable.

Lois Davis 30:25

Thank you so much, Heather, I, I really strongly agree with that statement. To provide the college perspective is Todd Butler, Todd is dean of Jackson college and and Todd from the college perspective, what are some of the lessons learned that you have seen in partnering with Heather and her team in implementing programs?

Todd Butler 30:50

Thank you, Lois and thank you to the Michelson Foundation for bringing and hosting this really important conversation today. I'm gonna ask for three things to think about, one is patience. What Heather talks about direct communication, staying in contact please on the correction side, stay patient with your educational partners, our world could not be more different than the world you live in every day. And we are not trying to be obstinate. We're not trying to be obtuse. We literally live in different worlds, and sometimes the things you're asking or the things you're requiring of us, we just, it's not how we operate. And it's, it's, it's just important to know that our intent is good. And if you stay patient with us and you help us through the practices which is what I want to talk about next, we will get there together. It takes a lot of trust building, takes a lot of time together, and sometimes it just takes you repeating yourself a number of times before we understand it. Heather and I have been partners in this for eight years. And I say, often about corrections. You know how when you were getting older, the older you got, the smarter your parents became. That's how I feel about corrections, if the longer I'm in this business, didn't take us eight years, but the longer I'm in this business, the more we understood why you were asking us to do things. We saw what can go wrong. We saw how well it can go when we follow things you're asking of us, and I know Corrections has grown and learned on their own about what higher ed is about, so be patient with each other. The second thing is to form some really good practices. When we first started this process, we, we were just a square peg in a round hole we didn't quite fit anything and we were put through the volunteer orientations at the facilities and those were meant for maybe somebody who comes in once a month for a half hour an hour religious service, or something like that and we have faculty that are going in, you know, three or four times a week, maybe hours at a time. Our staff are going in constantly. And we just, we weren't getting quite the training we needed, we were running into problems, we were creating some of our own problems,

but we didn't know what that meant. Someone in the corrections office, not Heather, had decided that we would be bumped to a different category and they, they took a new group of faculty members to be trained, and put them through a two day seminar where they literally had to act out hostage situations, and were asked to grab somebody by the arm and flip them over their head and throw them onto the ground. At the end of the day I had the members quit, they just called me and quit and said this is not what I signed up for. And I'm on the phone with Heather, how did we get here, what happened? And it was just terribly confusing. Finally we got to the point where we were working with each other on, not what the rules are, but why are there rules, why does this thing exist, what can happen? And once we started going behind the scenes and educating educators, right. So don't just list a whole bunch of rules for the educational institutions, don't do this, don't do this, don't do this. It's saying, here's what we're trying to protect you from, here's what we're trying to protect the program from, right, because if things go wildly wrong the program is in danger and certainly human lives are in danger. And here's what we're trying to protect and here's how to do that. So when you get those practices lined up, And you're able to communicate with each other. We just completed a training, a couple of weeks ago, virtually, for probably 70 or 80 people just really high caliber stuff. And it was done as partners, not done as, here's what I'm mandating of all of you and just do it. It was a real conversation and educators could ask questions, be engaged and come out better. The final thing is I know, it just absolutely know you're gonna see start seeing performance changes in your incarcerated population, and housing units was really big for us. Once we started doing housing units, we hit a critical mass of people making a positive impact at a facility, but also that individual levels, watching people were scared to death and acting out in their first couple of months. Really go on to change and become leaders and become repatriated citizens, not just as changed peoples but people who are going to go back to their communities, they were going to go back to their families, and be leaders of change there. So Lois has documentation on ticket levels and behavioral incidences and things like that that go down as Prison Education increases but please believe us when we educators say we believe in the power of education to be transformative. That's what we believe. That's why we do what we do. And please allow us to bring our gifts to your mission and your work that you're doing inside.

Lois Davis 36:08

Thank you so much. Todd. I really strongly agree with that. I wanted to know, I should say that you're also having on this panel a lot of old timers here because we were talking about how the four of us really came to know each other many years ago when we start first started working on the Pathways Program in Michigan, so it's it's nice to hear everybody's perspective now. I wanted to turn next to Carroll and then we'll open it up to the questions I've been monitoring kind of what you've been putting in the q&a and chat. Carroll's experience here in California is important because it's recent and it's really the nuts and bolts of how do you both develop those relationships with the Department of Corrections, negotiate establishing a new program, and thinking about establishing MOUs, so with that I'd like for Carroll to kind of talk about her experience.

Carroll Seron 37:09

Thank you very much Lois, and I think I'm sort of the newbie on the block here, but let me first say thank the Michelson Foundation, both for inviting us to speak, I'm representing a group with us, and also for the seed money that they provided to get our project off the ground. I'm speaking to you from kind of from the ground up, I'm a faculty member here at the University of California, Irvine, and so the question I'm going to address is how did a working group of faculty move from a commitment to extend access to incarcerated students to earn a BA from the University of California to implementation. So I'm kind of coming at it from a slightly different framework, I think. Anyway, so there are three foundational pieces that we inherited that are key for the success I think of our, of our program. The first is the California master plan for higher education. And it's three tiers, the University of California, the state colleges, and the open access to community colleges. So the community colleges in California are all over the state, there are about 135 of them and they offer both vocational and academic degrees that allows students to transfer from a community college to either the UC or the CSU, the students who transfer to the UC need to have a 3.4, GPA, so the bar is pretty high. But it also includes a series, to go back to what Lois said, a series of articulation agreements about the courses that are required and so forth. So there's a very well articulated process in California to move between an open access. Second Chance Community College for all citizens in the state to either the CSU or the UC. The second foundation is that in 2014, the governor signed legislation that allocated resources to community colleges to teach face to face courses in prison, and receive the same reimbursement as they did for courses taught on campuses. And it kind of rolled out, and then in about 2016, the Chancellor of the community colleges intervened to incentivize the community colleges to focus on transferable degrees, and to that and he focused on an AA degree is what we call it, that's transferable to UC or CSU in sociology, psychology, or communications. So those three pieces were in place when my colleagues and I began to think about how to move forward, to go from an AA degree to a BA degree. And our goal here is, and I guess this is the sociologist in me, a degree translates into concrete human capital, and it mitigates the stigma of a criminal record, as one of the students has commented, no one can take your degree away from you and when you meet incarcerated or formerly incarcerated students, that is kind of a linchpin of why this is such a powerful experience. So with that, our first step of course was to identify a community college to partner with, and a prison, and we identified a

community college that's relatively close to Southwestern College in San Diego that has a very strong commitment to social justice programs, excellent leadership in this area and has established a firm foundation with the prison in the area, Richard J Donovan Correctional Facility (RJD). One of the key building blocks of our program, of our project which is kind of guided us from the beginning, is that all students, whether a student is at RJD, or at the University of California, Irvine campus, they must meet the same standards, the same academic standards. In other words, we would not take a student with a 3.2 unfortunately, we're not making any exceptions, we're simply building on the master plan, vision, established in the 1960s and extending it to a new site, and if there are questions about why we're, we're so keen on that we can come back in the q&a. We envision this is a three year demonstration project to test its viability. And then our goal, moving forward is twofold. One is to roll out additional majors, and the other is to demonstrate that it's scalable across the entire University of California, to build what we call these triangles between a community college, a prison, and a UC campus. So I want to talk a little bit about what we did to build support on campus, even before we went to the CDCR, the California Department of Corrections. We presented our ideas to the deans, at their monthly meetings. We then followed up with those teams and asked them to make a commitment that they would contribute to courses releases towards the launch of the program. We then met with every, all the senior administrators below the chancellor, not including the chancellor, the Executive Vice Chancellor, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Vice Chancellor for equity inclusion, the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management the Academic Senate, the registrar. In other words, we got all our ducks in a row, about what this program, how it would work, we got support from these various groups. And then we did a lot of outreach to faculty to form an advisory committee. So all of that was designed to like build support on our campus. And then we went to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The first person I met was a Brandt Cho, and I know, Shannon's here in the, Shannon I have followed Heather's advice and got to know each other even in the midst of the pandemic. We actually had lunch in my backyard once when Shannon was down here so we reached out to the California Department of Corrections. and I'm kind of proud to say that every question that Brandt or Shannon kind of threw at us, did you do this, did you do that, we could say yes, we had really done the homework on our side of the fence that we needed to do before we even approach them, and what Shannon and Brandt shared with us, is that they would not go forward with any kind of an agreement without support, clear articulation of support from the senior officer on our campus and our campus happens to be a chancellor. So that meant we had to go and work with our chancellor to secure his support. And so we did that, and we were then ready, we mapped out the MOU. In California the memo of understanding is kind of a loose document, someone asked to have it shared, I'm happy to send it to Rachel ,we can send it on, share at a later point. It's the memo of understanding is a memo of understanding. So the first step in this process is that we're agreeing to work together, I'll come back to that in a few minutes. Of course, in the midst of all of this COVID hit, and everything went on hold, and the most important impact it's had as we were supposed to launch in the fall of 2021, and we probably won't launch until the fall of 2022. But we continue to work, we didn't really let COVID get in our way. And we wanted to make the MOU signing as splashy as we could, even though it was going to be in a virtual environment like we are right now. So we secured the support of our Chancellor Howard Gilman and the Secretary of corrections and CDCR to appear in a virtual signing. We secured the support of the President of the University of California Michael Drake, who sent notes of congratulations, and thanks to the Michelson Foundation. We had a wonderful video sent by Senator Cory Booker who's been in the trenches on prison education for years, and then our press office here, and the press office in the CDCR sent it out to staffers in the state legislature, the LA Times, The San Francisco Chronicle newspapers, potential donors, a point I'll come back to in a minute. And we had a fun, it was a very moving moment, we had two formerly incarcerated students who are now PhD students here speak. And I sent the video, we can circulate the video and we have a short five minute clip of the highlights. And it did get a fair amount of attention so it had the effect that we were hoping, we wanted to create a buzz. And so now moving forward, we are moving from the MOU which is sort of this vision statement, though it's all in legal language and don't get me wrong, to the contract and the contract is more than nitty gritty, I can't share, I'll be happy to share it when it's signed, it's not at that point yet. But the contract really spells out the obligations of the University of California, and the obligations of the CDCR to provide classrooms, space, technology which is kind of a sticking point for a lot of reasons, not that we don't want to see it happen but it's just slow, and the monetary arrangements, so Lois touched upon this. But I want to raise the issue of fundraising, I mean that's a huge piece and kind of, I'm actually retired professor so I have the time to write so I spend a lot of my time writing grant applications, we just sent one off yesterday, the University of California is very lucky because we have a program called Blue and Gold, which allows for students whose families earn less than \$80,000 and their California residents, their tuition is waived. RJD and Southwestern were Pell Grants. Thank you, Sean. And we have support from our Executive Vice Chancellor, we estimate that we need about \$350,000 a year to launch this demonstration project with the goal of eventually convincing the state legislature, that for the reasons Lois pointed out in the beginning, this just makes a lot of sense financially to do. This is a lot less expensive than a year in prison. So, our vice chancellor has committed half the budget per year for the three years of the demonstration project, and we're fundraising from largely from Orange County family foundations have been our biggest source of support. And we're grateful to the people in our office development who have identified those family foundations that are particularly interested in the kind of work that we're trying to do. We're also working out the concrete program of courses that we'll be offering, keeping faculty informed of these where we stand, and

we're beginning to also work with transfer students on the process of preparing their applications for the University of California, so we're also working on mentoring them on that transition process. I've gone on probably too long but I just want to wrap up by saying that, while COVID posed an enormous challenge, when working with prisons as Todd pointed out, there's going to be ups and downs, we speak very different languages. There are going to be setbacks and successes and failures, and challenges, but the goal is to keep your eye on the prize, and there are people like Shannon Swain, and Brandt Cho who get it inside California and prison systems across the country. So I guess I'll just close by saying that I've worked on many projects over the course of my career, I've been at this for a long long time, but this has been the most gratifying, by far. Thank you for your time.

Lois Davis 51:20

That's terrific. Thank you so much Carroll. Carroll referred to both state legislation as well as the, the Gold program. In other words, California is pretty rich in terms of how it, it has resources in place to support these programs. Unfortunately that's not going to be the case in many states, California is a really good case study to understand what other states might be able to do but I think it's important for everybody to recognize that that that funding issues have big issue, and it has to really be considered and thought of in the context of what's happening within your particular state. Um, with that said I wanted to, you touched about COVID. And I wanted to just open it up to the panel members to talk a little bit about what has COVID, how's that impacted for example in Michigan, your programs, both Heather's perspective and Todd's perspective and how might it change moving forward how we think about providing these programs within correctional settings?

Heather Gay 52:31

Thank you Lois. I'd like to talk about COVID. COVID has impacted our entire nation. We were shut down as a state for our educational programs for quite a long time. Our director was extremely supportive. One of the first programs we started to bring back were our college partners. As soon as we started to see a little reprieve, engaging our college partners right away. I think it's really important also for those correctional leaders out there that are going to begin to build under this COVID model to really understand when you're creating educational opportunities for incarcerated folks you really, it really has to mirror to the best of our ability, what the educational experience will look like in the world. So I think that's really important. One thing that COVID did was lit a fire for us around technology, what were we going to do to engage our college partners and also for educational, whether you're working on GED classes, whether working on vocational classrooms. What does technology look like when you can't have, in person, 20 students in a classroom, you know, six hours a day anymore. We just can't do that. So one of the things that we're looking at Michigan is a learning management system. We'd like to we're piloting one now, we'd like to roll it out our academic classes, our GED classes, bring in some vocational, though vocational needs to be hands on, but most definitely at the table will be our college partners to be able to deliver content, to be able to do if they can still come in one day a week, they're still able to meet with students three days a week. So that's the hybrid approach that Todd and I have talked about, and that we're working on in Michigan Corrections is going to have to start moving into the technology era, it's time.

Lois Davis 54:20

Thank you. Todd?

Todd Butler 54:22

I'll stay I'll stay out of the technical things that we were trying to nuance our way through. I think the most important thing for us is, COVID took a lot of noise out of the room. And all of a sudden, we understood how important education was and how important this partnership was with our corrections side I mean, this was, if any of you in corrections you know this was really scary time, this was a horrific time to be an incarcerated person, or to be working in a facility like that, and, and then, and then the loss of family visits, loss of educational programming, other types of programming, religious programming, and it became really important that we figure out a way together how to continue to deliver education, because the men and women who were students there needed it, they needed something positive to focus on, they needed to be able to move forward. And I felt like as good as our relationship has been, it grew by leaps and bounds. During COVID, we started meeting every other week, we have a standing meeting about an hour. And before we used to eat when there were problems or connect with each other from time to time or do our, our, you know, a couple times a semester trainings. Now we're meeting a lot. And we did take leaps forward in terms of some technological advances. Some things we were able to do together that we had not been allowed to do before. And, you know, the saying necessity is the mother of invention. And we've together were able to invent some ways to move forward but I really think it was this clarity of objective, of education and the trust and partnership and working together that really rose during COVID. This is our first week back inside this week, getting things ready and our classes start next week. So, this is the first time in more than 18 months that we've been able to go back into a facility.

Lois Davis 56:20

I wanted to just say that we're very fortunate to have on this call some real experts out, out, in the virtual world too, so I know that Brandt Cho from CDCR just put in the chat that California has adopted the same learning management system as all of our colleges, that seems like a critical advance that we've seen in the field. And so I encourage you guys also to be reading some of the chat because we have some real experts, and they're also providing them but, I wanted to ask Sean Addie about, I know the Department of Education has been thinking a lot about the role of technology in correctional education. And I was wondering if you had anything you wanted to say there about the work that you guys are doing.

Sean Addie 57:10

Sure. So, we actually put out a publication of the department in 2015 to look at the use of technology and correctional education, we're actually in the process right now of reimagining, taking a fresh look at what state systems are doing around correction education, We're hoping to have that out this year. Fingers crossed on that. But I think the big thing that we're looking at for technology is, is really using it now as Heather said to practice in person education, people who are taking classes inside of facilities are going to be coming back out and then when they come back out, they're going to be using technologies, so getting them used to it. And, and seeing it as just an additional tool in their toolbox, knowing how technology works. Looking at wired internet, wireless internet, you know whitelisted sites, and having those tools and that access inside of correctional facilities because technology is not going away. And I think COVID has just, I don't know if I'd want to say exacerbated but it's really just shown how important technology is when it comes to delivering high quality education, and I think that that piece is crucial when we talk about technology, for correction education, is the high quality aspect of it. It was Heather or Todd who said we want, we want the same kind of quality that someone's getting on the outside that they're getting on the inside. And I think that applies with technology as well.

Lois Davis 59:01

He's One of the questions posed is, and I'm gonna open it up to whoever might have some insights about this is, are their funding sources that are favorable to helping corrections upgrading their facility based technology, is that I don't know what Michigan's experiences are if, if you all know of any options for corrections?

Heather Gay 59:33

There's not a grants out there, I know the Department of Justice has put a lot of grants out there to write for that are technology based, re-entry based, and I'm sure we'll be following to post secondary to around technology. But nothing, nothing really we have, we have an intranet already, intranet already in Michigan. So we're building off that platform that we already have in existence.

Lois Davis 59:58

Thank you. Another question has to do with concerns by higher education partners about a Second Chance Pell may affect a student's eligibility to receive Pell funds post relief. If they choose continuing their college education, out in the community. Sean, do you have any response to that or input?

Sean Addie 1:00:24

Sure, I mean, it's an interesting question because, you know, traditionally, you know, one can have six years of Pell Grant eligibility, There's a complicated formula I can drop in the chat for folks if they want to know more about how eligibility is calculated. And it's a question of is someone better situated while they're incarcerated to access funding and use it again figuring out there are limitations on what I can use it for versus someone returning home and using their Pell grant funds at that point, and I think there are pluses and minuses and I think that's something that corrections and institutions of higher education should be having discussions, you know, informing people who are enrolling. I'm sure they're doing it already, but being very thoughtful when it comes to explaining to people that we know if they use their Pell eligibility they may not have access to it when they come home and, and as it was mentioned, you know, people can only use it for, sort of those four categories while they're incarcerated, whereas if you're out in the community you could, it could potentially help you with transportation or housing or some of the other issues that arise that, I think it really does cut both ways because, you know, while someone's incarcerated, they don't, that there are concerns, there are different types of concerns, housing may not necessarily be the same type of concern when someone's incarcerated so they may be able to focus on, on education. So I think it's something that educational institutions and correctional institutions to be very thoughtful about when it comes to, it's really financial aid counseling for people who are participating in programs.

Todd Butler 1:02:19

If I could add to that, I refer you to the work of Davis Jenkins and Community College Research Center, one of the greatest worries about Pell and and the ways that students lose it is either by two things, by not making Satisfactory Academic

Progress, they're not they're not passing classes and making progress, or what we call on the outside swirl, which means they start down this program and they take a bunch of classes and then those classes don't count for anything when they switch over here and take a bunch of classes, and the Guided Pathways Initiative on the outside has been clarifying that for the last several years at community colleges across the country, but in the prisons we don't have that problem. We're much more efficient. We never run into that swirl problem because we're offering courses and we're guiding students in very hands on ways both within corrections, and the higher ed to say here's the class you're taking next, how this counts to your degree. And they don't lose that eligibility. And as far as making Satisfactory Academic Progress, these are just stellar students, their academic standards and accomplishments are incredible. Very, very, very rarely run into somebody who would have difficulty making satisfactory academic progress.

Lois Davis 1:03:41

Thank you I appreciate that. Todd, can you put in the chat the reference to that guide, I'd like to look at it, that you mentioned, That sounds really helpful. There's also the question of, if the panelists would be willing to share their email address so that individuals can reach out with specific questions. If you're fine with that that would be really helpful. Thank you. We touched upon it but I want to kind of get each of you to comment on, because it's a concerted debate that's going on right now and that is what do we consider to be high quality education within a correctional setting, and, how what are the concerns about how technology can either support that or maybe may lead to some concerns about maintaining that quality, so Carroll, do you want to start off with that?

Carroll Seron 1:04:46

I'm Sure. We are very concerned about the quality of the education, we're very committed here to replicating essentially the University of California education inside of prison. One of the things as a faculty member that I'm excited about with the opening up of technology is that we can have students who were in residence at UCI in classes with students in residence at our prison RJD, and the pedagogical and learning opportunities that that opens up for all the students is just, you know whether the course is on the Holocaust or on the you know the sociology of punishment, whatever the topic is it just creates an enormous opportunity for learning and communicating among students in completely different ways. And I guess the concern I have with this, the impact of COVID over the last year, not just on students who were incarcerated but students here on campuses as well, is asynchronous learning classes. When I think about this I really only think about it as synchronous, and that is that students are either in a virtual space like we are right now, or in a face to face context with the professor, not this recording, that would be my biggest concern. I don't know if that's helpful but. I will just add one other thing. We are hope we envision that the partnership with RJG and Southwestern will also open up the opportunity for performances, we have a school of the arts here that it gives students in the arts and drama the opportunity to perform at a new venue, which is what they're trying to do. We see it as an opportunity for the speakers that we have on campus to use technologies like this so that students get on site and enjoy what it means to be at a major, big research university, and technology definitely facilitates all that.

Lois Davis 1:07:34

Thank you. Anyone else want to speak to the question of how do we define what's quality education, and the role of technology in that?

Heather Gay 1:07:44

I can jump in there, Lois, on this one. One thing that has to happen when you're talking about high quality is it has to start with a student. I was happy to hear the panelists earlier talk about these pathways and and Todd's comment on that. Shout out to her and Brian Walsh really quick, I'm gonna use something I learned in my leadership academy, is it with those pathways you oftentimes have to start from the end and work your way back. What does that individual want his career to look like post release? Start there. Look at his county and parole, work your way back on his pathway or her pathway. And what does it start with and how can we put resources and guidance and and all of those programming and education opportunities in between. I think that is really what's important to high quality, it has to be personal, it has to be within their individual interests and aptitude, it has to start there. We mentioned earlier and Jackson college wide, I really loved them as our partners as they always do this, I don't even have to say it, they always mirror for us what that classroom looks like on their college campus in my prisons, that that to me, it just speaks volumes, that's why the person piece is so very, very important, important. Yes, technology has a place, absolutely, technology is going to help them be successful post release as well. So we have to include technology but that in person experiences, what they learned from those college instructors is also going, it's very, very valuable and it's going to help them be successful post release, so that that is one thing I would say. College folks that are on this call that are listening, one thing I would challenge you to do is look at diverse degree offerings, we've got to get more diverse in our degrees and corrections on that, I'm challenging corrections too because we have to allow those programs to come in. But what I, what I will, what I will keep saying is, Find out the population in which

you're going to serve, their interests and aptitude or degree offerings that are diverse, so they will be successful, they will stick with it, it will lead to a career, and then corrections, we need to be a little more open to more diverse offerings. So that would be my definition of high quality.

Lois Davis 1:09:54

Thank you so much. Todd?

Todd Butler 1:09:57

Yes. All of us agree that we would be completely negligent, negligence is the best word I can come up with, if we're not doing high quality technical training in the prisons as related to education, not just technical classes but thinking about how do we teach students to research, to do quality research and to navigate something that probably wasn't in existence called the web, when many of them went away, or they weren't doing that, and then how to access that for all sorts and leverage that for all sorts of things that they're going to do, but we really believe that it needs to start with becoming a community of scholars. And our first class that we throw out there is the first year seminar, and it is built around what is called the OnCourse principles, Dr Skip Downing, and it is focused entirely upon self responsibility, being a leader, being a creator, not a victim, taking charge of your education and then thinking about, as Heather just said, what's the end goal and what do I need to do there, but in that classroom we teach, that whole thing is designed so that they can become have practice and have the experience of becoming a community of scholars, so that they can walk forward in a different way in their future classes and it doesn't matter if that's on our on campus students or not, that's a very difficult class to pull off when it's fully online. When you start face to face, you're seeing each other. You're modeling behaviors about how to be in the classroom, how to disagree in the classroom, how to share ideas, how to backup my thinking. All of those things are precipitated or made much easier when you're working face to face, building that community, building that trust in modeling how to do that in an academic setting.

Carroll Seron 1:11:50

Can I just jumped in here? I want to just raise another point and that is, having taught many thousands of students over many many years, students often don't know what they're interested in because they haven't had the opportunity to explore new ideas and so while we, you know it's good to have a goal, often the goal, all of our goals if you think back on your own goals when you started college, can be somewhat parochial, and part of the joy of a liberal arts education is to learn about things that you didn't even know existed. And so I think it's really important to start out perhaps with the goal, but also to, to allow students to understand that it's fine to change that goal. You know, from teaching here at UCI we have many first generation students who have a lot of pressure from their families to major in certain things, because it's practical or whatever and these students face, you know, when they get that out, they need to kind of hit the ground running, but there also has to be space to just explore the life of the mind and let it take you where you never imagined going, so it's kind of a delicate walk, if we're really going to think about what the opportunity of a meaningful liberal arts education is all about.

Lois Davis 1:13:28

Thank you, that's a really good point and one of the comments on in the, in the chat was related to on them. In many states unfortunately on particularly rural states, you may have facilities that are not near universities or community colleges and so it brings that tension between, how do you provide educational opportunities in those settings and the role of for example online education versus in person instruction and I know that, I don't know Todd if you have anything to say about that but I remember from Pathways that that really some of these instructors had to drive long distances to go to their prison facilities to provide instruction. Do you have any comments about that, any of the panel members?

Carroll Seron 1:14:20

Well, I mean that's the challenge we're facing. Richard J Donovan is 75 miles. So one of the things that we're just really nitty gritty, hoping to do is that classes will be in three hour segments and two faculty will go down so it's once a week rather than what would be on campus twice a week. So, I mean, the prison is not nearby for us, and, you know, and also we plan to reimburse faculty for cost of transportation. Given the distance so those are two very nitty gritty things that we're thinking about that we plan to do given the distance of the prison.

Todd Butler 1:15:04

If you're familiar with the geography of Michigan. Now, we were operating in the UP in Marquette branch prison. We were both blessed by that the University of Northern Michigan is in that same city, and we could draw on a group of faculty from there. But it was enormously challenging. That's eight to 10 hours away from us, and we're trying to manage that, have to hire somebody on site to manage that and to try to watch the quality and I think it was a very good program, a lot of challenges. Right now our furthest prison is about 125 miles away. And it is, again, a challenge to get up there and you're

sort of, it gets expensive to reimburse faculty, faculty get tired of driving that far, using an evening and driving back and you look for somebody local, and then you begin to lose control. They're not part of the culture of the campus, our campus, they're not necessarily understanding the outcomes that we're seeking on our campus and that we want to, as Heather mentioned, we want to mirror those same outcomes into prison. So we have to do a lot of extra work, and a lot of monitoring, I have to do a lot of traveling. I have to drop in on an evening to a prison 125 miles away, unexpected, sit down, see what the quality of education is. You cannot pretend as educators that, if it's out of sight out of mind and it must be working well because they haven't heard about any problems. It takes a lot of legwork on corrections, takes a lot of legwork on the college end to keep the high quality programs, when you're working at a distance from from the campus.

Lois Davis 1:16:50

Thank you. One of the questions that was posed was, by Steve Stewart who is well known to all of us as one of the leaders in this field is that is that we can't forget about those inmates who currently don't qualify for post secondary education. As we know that that's currently a concern of many, or all state prison systems, um, I just wanted to mention that, that I always was struck by John Linton's really laid it out in advocating that we need to think about developing a continuum of educational opportunities within each of these systems that doesn't stop at the GED, but really thinks about it being as a building blocks, The next step in the educational process, and build that into the educational plans and thinking about education that way rather than being binary. Does anybody have anything to add to that or comments?

Sean Addie 1:17:59

I would just add that I think we're talking about sort of full implementation of Pell in 2023, sort of, now is the time for corrections officials, policymakers, so people are in this space to really think about gearing up their adult education and CTE programs, and sort of creating those pathways for students. A while ago now, in Michigan, Todd, and folks at Jackson were doing work around developmental education, and they were working on, I forget the term, Todd maybe you remember, but there's basically planted classes to get people sort of up to speed for that. I know they've done a lot of work in that space, so it's really sort of thinking holistically about this opportunity is going to exist, it's going to be here very soon. And also you know it's also useful motivation for someone who may not be pursuing their high school equivalency, is that you know there is something more.

Lois Davis 1:19:05

Thank you. Todd?

Todd Butler 1:19:07

Thank you, Sean. They're called co-requisite courses where you take a developmental course and you blend it with the college level course at the same time, same moment, you're simultaneously enrolled. And our goal was to add standalone developmental education where students would have to take a series of developmental education courses before they could get to college classes. And one of the keys of that was we were emboldened by our work in the prisons, and what those students were able to do when we gave them full rein, and it allowed us to be more courageous in our moves on campus, and getting rid of standalone education. It's been a long process, it's probably been the single best initiative we have ever done on our campus. And it was, it was made possible by the work that we experimented in the prisons with, and the inmates knocked it out of the park, the incarcerated students just overachieved and told us this could work on campus and it has.

Lois Davis 1:20:06

Thank you. Thank you, I also wanted to mention that all of us have been very fortunate to have known and worked with John Linton, to learn from him. We're fortunate today that his wife Linda is listening to this webinar, as well as with our good friend, David who has also worked closely with John over the years, so I'm hoping that, Linda I'm not going to put you on the spot, but I am hoping that that this discussion is really helping you to understand how important John played a role in all of our work, and personally. So before we wind up I wanted to just ask each of the panelists, is there one thing that you felt it's important for correction officials to takeaway from this webinar, that you'd like them to consider as they start moving forward with this area. So who would like to jump in on that?

Carroll Seron 1:21:23

If I had one message, especially with the return of the Pell program which is so fantastic, I would urge leaders in education, in departments of corrections to really look to vet the programs that they allow in very carefully. And I would urge them to not go down the path of for profit universities, so I'll leave it at that.

Lois Davis 1:21:59

Heather?

Heather Gay 1:22:03

I saw about action over here in the chat and I was reading, um, Aaron had a really good point in the chat, he's also from Michigan, shout out to Aaron. I think corrections leadership really needs to be challenged in the whole ideology, for example, everything we do has a very good reason of why we do it. One thing that I've struggled with when Todd and I and Sean and Lois too started our journey in 2013, I built up what I thought in my mind, I thought a perfect student to be successful would look like, oh, boy has that changed over the last seven years, but one of the things that I looked at was, you know, we didn't want students to have misconducts for two years, we wanted their incarceration to be a certain time limit. And really I was wrong. You know, I mean you look at it when you really start to dig into the individual students and the data and you look, you put it all together in one picture, is that it's really deeper than just looking at the amount of tickets one gets or their sentence or what they're in prison for, that's irrelevant. The thing that I would challenge leaders in corrections to look at is the whole theory on what comes first, the chicken or the egg. So if I exclude all these students, because they have too many misconducts, right? What if I would have included those students, and then their behavior improves because that's what education does, right, so that's what I would challenge educational leadership to look at is, let's not put boxes, let's not put definitions, let's look at the whole picture of an individual to set them up for success. That's what I'd say.

Lois Davis 1:23:45

Fantastic, thank you so much. Anyone else?

Todd Butler 1:23:51

Yeah I just share our experience, when we first started our prison education program, there was no Pell, there was no pathways from prison for many grants. We could only work with students who had the ability either themselves or their families to pay for education. And the students were incredibly high achieving. And when pathways from prison came on, when I first met Sean and Lois, there was this sense that now that we're going to open it up the quality will go down, students don't have skin in the game. Their families aren't, these are different quality of students. And Heather I kept wondering what's this going to be like? And it started off bumpy, it really did, didn't it Heather? It started off bumpy and the quality of students never dropped, never dropped. And then when Second Chance Pell started and expanded, we heard the exact same mantra again. People said the quality of students is going to go down, now we're not handpicking, you know, we're not getting the students who have violations and tickets, etc. And we're opening it up, and the quality never dropped, it was just, it still blows us away about what they're able to accomplish, under the conditions that they work in, and study in. And as we move further and further into this. our students have never changed, the quality has remained high, our challenge on corrections and especially in the education side is to match that quality, to keep that quality high, and to do our part in that bargain, and Lois if you just permit me just one second. I was sitting in my office a number of years ago, and I got a call on a Friday afternoon from New York to the person saying they were in the New York City's Mayor's office asking us how we were doing such and such thing and I explained it. And the very last question, they said was, where's your authority, how are you doing that? And I went into this full blown panic because, I tore apart my entire office trying to find the document that we have based all this work on. And I thought, my God, I am going to be running the prison education program from inside the prison. And it was late on a Friday afternoon, and I picked up the phone and called John. I said, John help me out. Literally in 30 seconds, he had the answer in front of me, because that's just who John was, he was the foremost expert in the country on what we were doing. And yet he was incredibly accessible to all of us, all the time. And I just want to say Linda, thank you for sharing. Thank you for sharing him with us.

Lois Davis 1:26:23

That's really important to hear. Sean?

Sean Addie 1:26:28

Yeah, I think I would just sort of add to what everyone else is saying. And what's great and Carroll about your point is actually for Pell restoration, for profit institutions are not allowed to participate. So that's, that's not an issue. Um, but I think I would kind of, I would say what we're seeing here, how important partnerships and communication and relationships are to successful programs, and I think also it's about not reinventing the wheel and learning from other people who are already doing this, instead of trying to do it all yourself, to go your own way. I think we had at one point over 100. There's a, there's a community out there of practitioners who are accessible and, and who are available. And I think kind of the final thing I would say is just how important language is, you know, education changes people's lives. And I think it's also important, you know, when we're talking about, you know people in prison, and people in college and prison programs if it's students, you know, and that's, that's part of removing that stigma, you know, is, is using, you know, positive language, or trying to improve their lives and be commended for it.

Lois Davis 1:27:45

That's a really really good point, I strongly agree with that. You guys have been wonderful. I wanted to thank you all for taking the time to participate both the panel members but also the participants. I hope y'all got something useful out of this. And I, I myself have learned a lot from listening to you guys, plus it's just really nice to connect with all friends again so thank you. I'm going to turn it back now to Mayra at the Michelson Foundation.

Mayra Lombera 1:28:20

Thank you, Lois, thank you so much. I want to just start off by thanking our co-host RAND Corporation, you Lois in particular have been a long term partner for us in this work. The Michelson 20MM Foundation started this work back in 2017, when we launched our Smart Justice Initiative and I remember the very first event we actually hosted at RAND Corporation here in Santa Monica. And we did a screening, an optional screening Dirt 13 with Ava DuVernay who produced that and it's just been an incredible experience to see the passion behind a lot of this work and the commitment that you've all really put into this, it's a multi year giving to really be able to advance this work. As you all mentioned, it requires a ton of patience to work in partnership and the seeding of trust to be able to work through the range of challenges that will inevitably arise as you're trying to work through those agreements and establish protocols and procedures for being able to really establish these prison programs. There's going to be ongoing issues when it comes to cost. When it comes to the implementation of technology which, yes, inevitably, we need to do that. The students are released back into community. They're going to have to work with tech, that's where the world is headed and so we want to make sure that we're adequately preparing them. I just, I also want to thank our panelists for the very rich conversation, it was grounded not just in your unique experiences but what will inevitably be the experiences of anyone else who is joining us in this work. It's apparent that it's going to require a ton of creativity and willingness from corrections and higher education leaders. Only leaders who are stepping into this space, to be willing to work through all of the challenges as they arise. And lastly, thank you to our audience for giving your time so generously. To learn more, we hope that today's discussion will inspire you to join in the work for advancing higher education and prison programming, and, of course, today would not have been possible without the vision, the passion and the compassion of John Linton. The world is better for your contributions and a little colder without you. And so we hope that his work, and our work continues. It's about breaking cycles of poverty and inequality and incarceration, and to everyone, we look forward to continuing this dialogue, working in partnership with the higher education and correction sectors to advance our Smart Justice Initiative, and we hope that other foundations will also be inspired and see the value in this work and give generously to the criminal justice reform field. We have to seed some of this work before the government is willing to step in and before states are willing to underwrite it so to the foundation community, we hope to continue to advocate for this work. Please know a recording of this event will be posted on our YouTube channel. The Michelson 20MM Foundation, and sent to everyone who registered. So thank you everyone and have a wonderful rest of your afternoon.