



Kum-Kum Bhavnani
Telephone: (510) 987-9303
Email: kum-kum.bhavnani@ucop.edu

*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

July 1, 2020

**JANET NAPOLITANO, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: Principles for Four-Year Undergraduate Education of Incarcerated Students

Dear Janet,

The Academic Council has endorsed the attached policy paper written by the University Committee on Educational Policy (UCEP) outlining principles to guide the University in developing educational programs for incarcerated students. This document is critical to ensure that qualified populations of incarcerated people have access to UC. I am especially appreciative of the work done by UCEP, led by Chair Serences, Vice Chair Potter, and Principal Policy Analyst Abrams.

The Principles are grounded in an overarching value that the University demonstrate a willingness and preparedness to offer educational access to the qualified women and men who are presently incarcerated, and who form a key population of California students eligible to transfer into UC. At this time, there is a large number of incarcerated students who have multiple AA degrees, who could be in UC's transfer pipeline, and who would benefit greatly from being part of UC.

Academic Council also recognizes that this statement of principles is just a first step in better supporting incarcerated students, and that the University could and must do more on other fronts—including supporting pathways to decarceration, actively expanding infrastructures of decriminalization, and encouraging faculty involved in the programs to advocate for their students by providing testimony for parole boards.

UCEP intends to engage CCGA and others in the systemwide Senate and faculty colleagues at CCC and CSU as next steps. In addition, we ask that the Provost and others at UCOP take a leading role in advocating for funding at the federal and state levels to support the UC's efforts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kum-Kum Bhavnani".

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair
Academic Council

cc: Provost Brown
Vice Provost Gullatt
UCEP
Academic Council
Senate Directors



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
John Serences, Chair
jserences@ucsd.edu

Assembly of the Academic Senate
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200
Phone: (510) 987-9466
Fax: (510) 763-0309

Monday, June 1, 2020

RE: Principles of 4-Year Undergraduate Education for Students who are Incarcerated

Dear Kum-Kum,

In the 2018-19 academic year, then-Senate Chair May asked UCEP to explore the current context and investigate recent experiences and best practices emerging for working with students who are incarcerated. UCEP organized meetings with representatives from the California Community Colleges and the California State University system over the summer to hear about their efforts. A working group within UCEP led by Katheryn Russ (UC Davis), with support from myself, Tony Smith, and Brenda Abrams, took over and developed some principles to guide the development of efforts in the University of California System. There is a rich literature documenting the benefits of post-secondary education for inmates and for society—socio-economic benefits, taxpayer savings, and increased public health and safety.

Readiness by the State and among the Incarcerated Population

Following authorization of in-person classes in California state prisons by community colleges with the passage of SB 1391, readiness and demand for 4-year degree programs inside state prisons has rapidly grown. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) estimates the emergence of more than 1,000 inmates who have earned associate's degrees and are awaiting the opportunity to enroll in a 4-year degree program. The media reports there are prisoners completing as many as 7 associate's degrees. The UCEP working group estimates that thousands of persons are likely to matriculate into 4-year degree programs over the next 5 to 10 years if seats are made available.

The Governor's January budget for 2020-21 included \$1.8 million dollars for the CDCR to partner with five CSU campuses, increasing to \$3.5 million annually in 2021-22 to "provide in-person instruction for the final two years of a bachelor's degree program for up to 350 inmates at 7 prisons beginning in fall 2020." This program was withdrawn in the revised budget presented last week due to the revenue shortfalls and increased costs stemming from the current public health crisis. However, given the momentum and need underlying the plan, it is likely to emerge when the economy recovers. (See enclosed excerpt from the January and May budgets for more detail.)

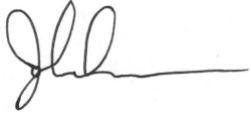
Draft Principles

In light of this demonstrated need for 4-year degree programs among a growing number of incarcerated residents of California and the teaching mission of the University of California, UCEP forwards the attached one-page summary recommendations outlining principles of 4-year undergraduate education for students who are incarcerated, as well as a brief white paper explaining motivations, the legislative context, recent lessons learned by the community colleges, and an abbreviated list of references.

UCEP asks that Academic Council formally endorse these principles as a starting point for developing 4-year undergraduate degree programs for students who are incarcerated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Serences", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Serences,
Chair UCEP
jserences@ucsd.edu

WORKING DOCUMENT
University of California
Principles of 4-Year Undergraduate Education for Incarcerated Students

I. Overview

Adult education in prison reduces recidivism by close to half. Every \$1 spent on adult education in prison reduces taxpayer costs by \$5 (Davis et. al 2014). A rich literature also exists demonstrating the benefits of access to college courses for incarcerated persons and their communities. Among them, college education is associated with decreases in recidivism by as much as half, with even greater reductions than vocational education and other interventions.¹ Education helps mitigate declines in cognitive function associated with incarceration (Cox 2018a), and can help incarcerated adults find secure employment after release (Davis 2019, Brazzell, Crayton, Mukamal, Solomon, and Lindahl 2009). These resources are crucial to successful re-entry given the economic insecurity and adverse health impacts that often afflict former prisoners, their children, and their communities (Cox 2016, Cox 2018b). Supporting programs enabling incarcerated persons to earn a college degree or credits putting them on the path to a degree can help end cycles of prison and poverty that exacerbate racial and socio-economic inequities and cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year.

In light of these benefits to society, in 2014, the enactment of SB 1391 allowed California community colleges to offer in-person courses to incarcerated students not only in local jails, as had been the case, but also in state prisons. It changed the formula for funding these courses to eliminate earlier disincentives. SB 1391 explicitly decreed (emphasis added):

On or before March 1, 2015, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges shall enter into an interagency agreement to expand access to community college courses that lead to degrees or certificates that result in enhanced workforce skills *or transfer to a four-year university*.

Prior to this bill, nearly all incarcerated persons in California engaged in college coursework did so through paper- and video-based correspondence courses. After the passage of SB 1391, access to in-person community college credit and degree programs jumped from one state prison in 2014 to 34 of the 35 state prisons (Mukamal and Silbert 2018). Between Spring 2016 and Spring 2018, the number of in-person community college courses offered increased from 49 to 209. More than 95 percent of in-person courses now offer transferrable credit and are part of a sequence leading to a degree (California Community Colleges Office of the Chancellor 2018).

Amid this rapid expansion of offerings by and enrollment in California's community colleges, only one California university, CSU Los Angeles, offers 4-year degree programs inside a California state prison--California State Prison Los Angeles County, a maximum security prison for men in Lancaster (Rancano 2020). Thus, it follows that several years after this legislation expanding access to community college degrees, the California State University and University of California are examining their own educational policies as they pertain to access to 4-year degrees for incarcerated persons. Encouraged by the success of the CSULA program, CDCR currently is negotiating a memorandum of understanding with the CSU system to bring 4-year degree programs to more state prisons. The Governor's budget proposes funding for this purpose,

¹ See Erisman and Contardo 2005 and Davis 2019 for comprehensive surveys of research linking secondary, vocational, and post-secondary education to reduced recidivism.

To further assist inmates with finding gainful employment and prepare them to enter the workforce, the Department [of Corrections and Rehabilitation] is expanding post-secondary educational opportunities to inmates who have completed an associate's degree. The Department is planning to partner with the California State University system to establish bachelor's degree programs at several prisons, including Valley State Prison in Chowchilla. The Budget includes \$1.8 million General Fund in 2020-21 and \$4.5 million ongoing for tuition, books, materials, training, and equipment for students participating in the program (Newsom 2020a).

This program was withdrawn in the revised budget presented in May 2020 due to the revenue shortfalls and increased costs stemming from the current public health crisis. However, given the momentum and need underlying the plan, it is likely to emerge when the economy recovers.

II. Demand: Parsing the numbers

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDRC) reports that between Spring 2016 and Spring 2018, the number of students enrolled in in-person college courses for credit, increased from 1,145 to 7,523 (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2018). These numbers of Course retention rates during this period were at least as high as for on-campus courses, with higher pass rates for in-person college courses than for on-campus courses. It is notable that between 2015 and 2017, the number of incarcerated students enrolled in the video- and paper-based correspondence college courses declined by more than 10 percent, even as enrollment in in-person college courses skyrocketed (Mukamal and Silbert 2018).

The CDRC estimates that about 700,000 people are incarcerated in California. In 2014, 22,000 (about 4 percent of the total)² incarcerated persons had a high-school equivalency making them eligible for college coursework (Mukamal, Silbert, and Taylor 2015), a number which likely has grown with the state's correctional population and the increasing state emphasis on access to education within California prisons and jails.

The bottom line is that the current enrollment of 7,523 persons is a small fraction of the roughly 30,000 incarcerated people eligible for college coursework, with a growing fraction of those already holding associate's degrees and ready for matriculation in a 4-year degree program. If supply is available and funding continues, it would not be surprising to see several thousand incarcerated persons matriculated into 4-year degree programs within the next 5 to 10 years. CDRC's Director of Rehabilitative Programs estimates that there are already more than 1,000 inmates who have earned associate's degrees and are waiting for an opportunity to enroll in a 4-year degree program, some who have earned multiple associate's degrees in the interim (Rancano 2020).

III. Challenges

² Mukamal, Silbert, and Taylor (2015) report data from CDCR indicating 22,000 incarcerated persons holding a high-school equivalency in 2014, which is nearly 4 percent of 589,000, the total number of incarcerated persons in California in 2014 as reported by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016).

Preparation and screening. The fraction of the prison population with high-school equivalency and an associates degree is growing quickly. The challenge of gathering and screening applications, especially under the current paper-only systems described by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's report (2018), is likely to require significant expertise and staff hours, disproportionate to the resources required for online applications from better-served populations.

Access. Some of the biggest barriers to enrollment and retention noted by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's report (2018) include access to textbooks, access to basic supplies like pen and paper, access to computers and internet to complete schoolwork, and access to library services for research. The cost of textbooks and library staff is a significant and unexpected costs for community colleges noted in the Chancellor's report.

The Governor's budget tries to address some of the issues by increasing the availability of computers and other information technology:

Finding gainful employment is a significant challenge for many ex-offenders. While CDCR currently provides academic and vocational training to thousands of inmates to help prepare them with the skills demanded by employers, these programs lack access to technology, such as laptop computers, that facilitate learning and familiarize inmates with tools they will need to succeed in the modern workplace. The Budget includes \$26.9 million General Fund in 2020-21, eventually declining to \$18 million ongoing to provide increased access to modern technology for inmates participating in academic and vocational training to address this gap and better prepare inmates for reentry.

However, it is unclear how quickly or fully this transformation will take place. The lack of computer and internet access also limits the use of online course delivery for the foreseeable future.

Transfers. Inmates may need to transfer frequently, due to administrative reassignments or release from the prison system or jail. It is difficult to find data on the average stay in any one location, which varies by institution, but it may vary from 6 to 18 months. The California Community College system partially addressed this problem by adopting an Excused Withdrawal, noting specifically within the policy that incarcerated persons transferred or released would be eligible for this designation, allowing them to drop a course with no penalty to their GPA, good standing, or financial aid. The use and resolution of incompletes is often somewhat haphazard across departments and courses, but methodical treatment may become crucial for this population's ability to complete a degree in a rigorous 4-year program.

Transfers to UC campuses upon release also can pose special challenges given the lack of financial and social support often faced by formerly incarcerated persons. Bridge programs and ongoing socio-emotional support resources may be particularly important for this population.

V. Summary and Recommendations: UC Undergraduate Degrees for Incarcerated Persons

1. The University of California Office of the President affirms that as part of the UC's teaching mission, "Undergraduate programs are available to all eligible California high-school graduates and community college transfer students who wish to attend the University of California (UCOP)." Therefore, the University of California in keeping with its public mission will strive to provide access to education to all those who seek and are eligible for a UC education, including people who are incarcerated. Qualified people who are incarcerated, including those who reside in California prisons, who are able to pass the admissions screening process, should have access to this opportunity regardless of prospects for release. In short, qualified people who are incarcerated merit a pathway to earn an undergraduate degree from the University of California.
2. In parallel with partnerships and programs that UC has with community colleges and other institutions to ensure access for non-traditional and underserved students, UC will strive to partner with community colleges and other programs involved in preparing people who are incarcerated to become eligible for 4-year degrees, whether or not they are released upon matriculation.
3. Courses for people who are incarcerated will aim to deliver the same rigor as that provided via on-campus courses. The same requirements, means of evaluation, and general standards, including transferability of credits to UC campuses upon release, will be expected and embraced. This is a foundational principle that follows from the notion that we should not make assumptions about the limitations or ambitions of students who are incarcerated.
4. Once enrolled, UC programs will strive to partner with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to maximize engagement with students who are incarcerated, much like traditional on-campus students are engaged on a full-time basis. Programs should be encouraged to treat the prison location as an extension of the main campus, effectively ensuring the residency requirement is met. This will have some practical implications, for example, programs should be made aware that the lack of computer or internet access for students who are incarcerated may require coursework and administration all to be carried out on paper.
5. Instructors and academic programs should be encouraged to integrate students who are incarcerated and engaged in UC coursework into the intellectual environment of the main campus where possible. This includes providing services to students who are incarcerated that are typically provided to students who take courses on the main campus. This may have implications for student services, including, for example, academic counseling services, insofar as those services could be extended to the students who are incarcerated.
6. UC programs should be particularly attentive to the methodical use and resolution of incompletes amid frequent transfer or sudden release of incarcerated persons.
7. UC campuses are encouraged to develop and institutionalize bridge programs to aid matriculation and retention of academically qualified formerly incarcerated individuals, especially those recently released. Admissions offices, student services, and others should be encouraged to play a role in ensuring a smooth transition for those who begin as an incarcerated student and become a student on the main campus.
8. Serving the needs of students who are incarcerated involves additional cost to address challenges to access. Additional resources need to be identified to support these programs for students who are incarcerated, to avoid weakening resources for programs on campuses.
9. Consistent with the University of California's commitment to both research and excellence in education, programs and offices are encouraged to ensure systematic collection of data to assess the implementation and outcomes associated with extending a UC education to students who are incarcerated.

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