Utah Higher Education and Corrections Council

Council Work Plan

9/30/2022 working draft)

Legislation
- **53B-35-202** (HB-226). Council duties -- Reporting.
- **64-13-48** (HB-194). Educational and career-readiness programs.

Guiding Objective: *What actions and funding need to be applied or discontinued to provide for completion of higher education in Corrections facilities that will yield* sustainable employment *and* successful integration *without recidivism, will provide access to educational opportunities beyond incarceration, and will provide an educational experience consistent with a college setting?*

Strategic Priorities:

- Long-Term: Find out what we *ought* to be doing (*September/October*).
  - Evidence-Based Practices: Considering national research/literature, what impacts/benefits does higher education have on incarcerated individuals?
  - Lived Experience: Considering experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals, what impacts/benefits does higher education have?

- Gaps *(October/November)*.
  - What gaps exist between the most effective research-based approaches, and current Utah performance and lived experience?
  - What are the actions and costs to close those gaps?
  - Which gaps, actions, and costs will be targeted?

- Administration and Funding *(2023)*.
  - What is the most effective model for administration, roles, and funding?

Tactical Priorities: (*October/November*)

- Short-Term: Things needed, desired, achievable *this year*.

- Assign working groups to identify and recommend priorities and action.

<u>WORKGROUPS</u>

- **Research/Data**:
Chris Hodson (lead), Erin Castro, Anndrea Parrish (UDC), Edén Cortes (USHE Academics), UPEP

  1. (September/October meeting): Present evidence-based practices from national research/literature for Council consideration on the impacts/benefits of higher education on incarcerated individuals, including exemplary state models, and recommend the best 3-5 things we should be doing to provide the best investment up-front.
  Possible issues:
     - Impacts for significant demographics of incarcerated populations (age, gender, race, type of offense, length of incarceration, education level, previous employment, etc.).
     - Types of programs (technical certificates, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, general education, etc.).
       - Consider roles and missions of institutions as well as combinations of credentials (see article on degree and certificate programs at UDC linked here).
     - Occupational fields or majors.
     - Preparation for and access to higher education.
     - Continuity and completion of education during and after incarceration.
     - Delivery methods (classroom, lab, synchronous remote, online, technology, correspondence, etc.).
     - Case management.
     - States like Colorado, Washington, Louisiana, etc. have had some success with technology, access, quality, stakeholder collaboration, workforce, etc.
     - Consider best practices and expertise that might be available from private sector groups that have had successful outcomes (e.g., The Other Side Academy, Delani Group, Hustle 2.0, etc.)
     - Etc.
  2. Collection of outcome data is inherently difficult, but necessary for effective results. Consider data currently available or collectible by UDC, USHE, institutions, DWS, and UDRC, and develop coordinated efforts.
  3. How do we track meaningful outcomes for the education and occupational opportunities we provide? Including post-incarceration databases we can mine for outcome data (i.e. tying education credentials to employment and other measures of success).
  4. For data related to the Council's highest priorities, identify and present gaps between Utah performance and national best practices.

- **Educational Programming:**
Dan Powers (lead – Davis Tech), UDC (pending), Mike Medley (Snow), USHE (TBA), SLCC (David Bokovoy), UU (pending)

  1. Curriculum alignment and coordination: Itemize what is being taught, who is teaching it; coordinate offerings.
  2. Incorporate corrections education efforts with the overall USHE strategic plan and initiatives for access, completion, affordability, and workforce, including pathways, program alignment, industry engagement, etc.
  3. Based on national evidence-based best practices and Utah data analysis of what is working and not working and what we should stop doing or shift from doing for the current and projected incarcerated demographics, recommend programs and approaches to discontinue, expand, or add, considering:

- Employment: **What kinds of programs (technical education, general education, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, etc.)** are most likely to result in post-release employment?
- Recidivism: What kinds of programs are most likely to reduce recidivism?
- Program Success: How do various inmate characteristics and educational preparation correlate with different kinds of programs? I.e., will inmates with certain characteristics have greater likelihood of success in certain kinds of programs? What can we realistically expect students to complete while incarcerated? Is a full course catalog and complete degrees realistic?

4. Recommend criteria for selecting institutions, considering:
   - **Institutional roles and missions.**
   - Combinations of credentials (see article on degree and certificate programs at UDC linked here).
   - Assigned geographic service regions.
   - Coordinating education efforts to minimize the burden on UDC.
   - Inmate population, abilities, and needs.
   - USDOE eligibility (beginning as soon as the fall 2023 semester, incarcerated students will only be able to access Pell Grants if they enroll with a college or university that has met the approval from the appropriate accrediting and corrections agencies and the U.S Department of Education).

5. Educational continuity across institutions (align with USHE requirements and pathway initiatives):
   - Pursue articulation agreements that will allow Certificate completers to earn AAS degrees.
   - Clearly articulate an educational pipeline from early reading and math interventions to advanced degrees, milestone for high school diploma, "2+2" arrangements, etc. The nearly completed articulation with Davis Tech and SLCC could provide the fastest track to both a degree and certificate.

6. Personal and Civic Development (from statute). Are there approaches to stand-alone courses needed or being provided by UDC or others that could tie in for credit (e.g., financial literacy, etc.)?

7. Provide recommendations regarding waiving occupational licensure fees for individuals who received preparatory education while incarcerated.

- **Funding:**
Rep. Melissa Ballard (lead), UDC (TBA), USHE (TBA), President Darin Brush (Davis Tech), Tim Sheehan (SLCC), Melanie Jenkins (Snow), Chris Hodson (BYU)

1. FY2023 Budget Request: Considering needs for current higher education programs, UDC support, and Council priorities, provide recommendations for potential FY2023 legislative budget requests for USHE, the institutions, and UDC.

2. Structure: What are the best, most sustainable funding models? Are funds best appropriated to and administered by UDC to contract with institutions for inmate access, or by the institutions to be integrated with institutional programs, budgets, and student population?
   - UDC funding: tech certificate programs (Davis Tech, Snow, UBTech) are almost entirely funded by UDC using telephone surcharge, "tuition" collections, promissory notes, and UDC budget. Available funding limits program availability and expansion. What is the place of the telephone surcharge with modern communications technology and accessibility for family and social support? See statutory requirements at UCA 64-13-42 and 64-13-30.5.
   - Institution appropriations: institutions are experienced with operating a college with the taxpayer in mind. SLCC is funded by a direct $200K appropriation and whatever tuition the inmates can pay, including Pell recipients.

- County jail provides small subsidy to UBTech program in addition to UDC funds.
- Prison Education Project and participating partners rely on donor contributions. One donor gave $50,000 over two years to fund Independent Study tuition for 24 incarcerated students. Consider public/private partnerships, such as BYU, LDS Church, donors, etc.

3. Pell: recommend discussion about upcoming changes. Newly available, will increase tuition funding availability. How will it be managed? Review results of SLCC's first Pell recipients, explore options newly available for other institutions, and how it will impact budgets.
4. Make sure the financial resources and systems beyond education are in place in the larger corrections system to support needed educational efforts. I.e., sufficient security, facilities, etc. to reduce barriers and increase access and completion.
5. Get to the financial friction point. Look to industry and other partners for experienced resources and programs.
6. Ongoing funding for technology. Covid funding used for technology was one-time – is there a need for replacement or ongoing funding?

- **Access/Continuity:**
  Bryan Taylor (lead – UDC), Roxanna Molina, USHE (TBA), Davis Tech (TBA), Snow College, SLCC (David Bokovoy), Tim Miller (UBTech), UPEP (TBA)

  1. Incorporate corrections education efforts with the overall USHE strategic plan and initiatives for access, completion, affordability, and workforce, including pathways, program alignment, industry engagement, etc.
  2. Enrollment:
     - Conditions and timing of enrollment (currently within two years of release), completion, employment, post-release education continuity. Providing for universities/colleges to recruit, select, and enroll students at the facility, build relationships, and navigate challenges within the facility.
     - Regular testing and orientation schedule to better take advantage of open entry/open exit model.
     - Consider waiving application fees.
  3. How do we improve faculty access to facilities and students, and the educational experience for students and teachers at the prison? Can reductions in evening programming time be restored to allow sufficient time for required class time? Students are unable to take academic supplies (books, paper, pens, etc.) to housing units.
  4. Space: new facility has less space. How do we manage space and educational programming to meet the highest demands for employment? Consider fiber optic or other technological connectivity, programming at other facilities, etc. Are there ways to focus on technology in lieu of additional space? Could chapels be used in off-hours for education?
  5. (Security) Understaffing, transition to new facility slowed down access to educational programs. Engagement and support of ground-floor officers. What equipment will students have access to -- technology, school supplies, etc. What financial resources for prison staffing and infrastructure are needed in the larger corrections system to support inmate access to education?
  6. Case Management:
     - Risk assessment, needs lists, prioritization and balancing of educational opportunities with evidence-based treatment and other pre-release needs, matching available services in a facility with the individual's need. Consider a dedicated discussion on best evidence-based approaches to timing and adjustment of drug rehabilitation and other programs for timely pre-release education and employment preparation.

- Streamline inmate selection and enrollment. Would utilizing Programming Case Workers to screen prospective students and enter them into the student data base eliminate UDC screening bottlenecks?
- How many inmates could be considered, given risk assessment, literacy requirements, Pell, etc.?
- Impact of mandatory time cuts for certificate and degree completion. What changes need to be made to mandatory time cuts? Which credentials should be eligible? Determine in conjunction with the Board of Pardons and Parole.

7. Inmate mobility: relocation management, Inmate Placement Program (IPP), move frequency, balancing preference for keeping low-risk individuals at new facility for education vs. sending to county jails for bed/staff shortages, other barriers to completion. Placing holds on enrolled students would increase the number of completers, reduce large numbers of students lost to inmate moves. Consider deployment of inmates to county jails based on location of programs suitable to interests and preparation. What financial resources for prison staffing and infrastructure are needed in the larger corrections system to reduce relocation barriers to inmate education access?
8. Coordinating education access, continuity, and completion efforts between institutions to minimize the burden on UDC.
9. Post-incarceration: Consider approaches in mainstream higher education that can remove roadblocks and enhance opportunities for previously-incarcerated individuals.
    - Consider alternatives to felony disclosure in admissions applications.
    - How should institutions manage and reduce barriers to formerly-incarcerated students? What is necessary and unnecessary for campus security, legal requirements, etc.?
    - Eligibility for work-based learning opportunities.
10. How do determinations of where individuals may live after release affect available felon-friendly occupations, continuation of educational opportunities, and the choices of educational programs?
11. What is the best way to provide student advisement – Institution-specific counselors for each institution, general or shared counselors for all institutions and educational programs, etc.?

- **Instructional Technology:**
  Representative Lowry Snow (lead), Valerie Worrall (UDC), Ian Ewell (Davis Tech), Chris Bradbury (SLCC), Snow College (Mike Daniels), UTech online (TBA), SUU?, WGU?, Silicon Slopes?

Online Learning (consider devoting a meeting if needed):
1. Educate the Council in plans and constraints.
2. How do we develop a comprehensive plan for integrating technology—and ongoing funding—for our incarcerated population?
    - What educational programs can be provided online?
    - What are the limits of technology and devices as delivery mechanisms for instruction? Role of technology to complement vs. provide instruction.
    - Are there programs or resources that WGU, SUU, adult learner grant partners, or other parties interested in corrections efforts could bring in?
    - Digital learning timeframe - what is needed to make it more accessible, e.g. county jails?
    - SLCC suggested financial lit class offered at a time when inmate can log in from anywhere.
3. Limitations imposed by understaffing and security.
4. Tablets (recommend discussion with UDC tablet technician providing brief update on what is being done and possibilities for the digital future):
    - Utah tablets are still not in the hands of inmates a year later. Can we get help?

- Ongoing funding for technology. Covid funding used for technology was one-time and needs to be replaced.
- Could tablets go with the inmate when they need to be moved?
- Other states: Louisiana – every inmate has a tablet, tested for security, used for scheduling. Washington also has a good program.
- Can a Silicon Slopes partner approach a tablet manufacturer to make a tablet appropriate for a corrections setting? Imagine Learning (a Utah company)?
- Students aren't allowed to bring tablets to the classroom.
- Students aren't allowed to use the secure laptops that institutions purchased last year. Institutions can only load academic material on institution-owned devices due to intellectual property rights.

5. Tablets can go with the inmate when they need to be moved.
6. There is a problem with textbook access. How can it be facilitated better?

- **Workforce Alignment & Industry Engagement:**
  Helen Hanson (lead – DWS), Bryan Taylor (UDC), USHE (TBA), Rich Christiansen, employer (TBA)

1. Incorporate corrections education efforts with the overall USHE strategic plan and initiatives for access, completion, affordability, and workforce, including pathways, program alignment, industry engagement, etc.
2. Identify educational programs that are aligned with current and future workforce demands of the state, lead to accessible occupations, and provide sustainable wages. Explore Utah labor market data.
3. Involve occupational advisory committees and DWS with addressing programs at correctional facilities and how to facilitate employability.
4. Identify and cultivate "felon friendly" occupations and employers that will hire and support justice-impacted individuals. Consider federal requirements and resources to DWS. Consider how to approach occupations that may be felon-friendly, but for which accessible programming cannot be provided in a corrections setting (e.g., truck driving, etc.). Can we explore more with bonding? We have found some success with that in some of our local employment centers.
5. Get to the financial friction point. Look to industry and other partners for experienced resources and programs.
6. Work-Based Learning: consider how opportunities can be provided during incarceration.
7. How can Keys To Success and other programs be used in the corrections environment to connect employers with incarcerated individuals?
8. Just Serve: has a prison component for getting a job.
9. License fee waivers: consider legislation to waive licensure fees for individuals who received preparatory education during incarceration.
10. What are we and can we do locally to assist those that are post release, for example reentry fair participation that offers resources available in the local area including food, education, mental health, and training.
11. Review funding that is available for post release individuals that need assistance with supplies or equipment needed for their new employment. There are some training funds that are available through the local employment centers, depending on eligibility criteria and programs.
12. How do determinations of where individuals may live after release affect available felon-friendly occupations and the choices of educational programs?