



Rebecca Sanabria for IHEP

Assessing the Impact and Importance of **HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRISON**

Institutions have a responsibility to ensure they offer consistent quality education to students, whether the courses are offered on their main campus or inside correctional facilities. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will facilitate important assessments across student populations and between institutions who are serving incarcerated students to ensure that institutions are empowered to offer quality higher education in prisons.

FOUR CATEGORIES OF DATA-BASED INSIGHTS TO INFORM CONVERSATIONS AROUND THE IMPORTANCE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN PRISON



Retention, Completion, and Success

These KPIs measure progress and success of justice-involved students compared to their main-campus counterparts.



Academic Quality

Analyzing syllabi, faculty, and course grading and assignments, these KPIs ensure the same quality of coursework offered on main campuses is offered in correctional facilities.



Civic Engagement

These KPIs measure how college students engage with society during and after their college experience and the broader social effect of postsecondary education in correctional facilities.



Soft Skill Development

In addition to course curricula, employers call on colleges to develop students' soft skills. These KPIs account for how postsecondary education develops characteristics and skills, like empathy and time management, both inside and outside of correctional facilities, to prepare students for the workplace and community.

“Education isn’t just something that contributes to the person getting the education. When someone receives an education, it is a gift to that person’s whole society, their whole, family, friends, people, even people they don’t like. I mean, if you have an enemy and they see that you treat them nicely even though we don’t see eye to eye, it speaks volumes.

**Student, University of Iowa
Liberal Arts Beyond Bars**



“We know that prison-based higher education programs can transform individual students’ lives, but they also hold unique potential to improve communities, close equity gaps, and fundamentally transform our society.

Michelle Asha Cooper, IHEP President



Students at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center share with members of the KPI Advisory team how quality higher education programming has transformed their lives and interactions in the facility.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will allow practitioners, administrators, institutions, and society to understand and measure the impact of postsecondary education outcomes in correctional facilities.

The KPIs will serve:

Practitioners in assessing the outcomes of their postsecondary education programs and working toward continuous improvement;

Correctional administrators in measuring the value of postsecondary education and its impact on incarcerated populations;

Colleges and universities in fulfilling see their responsibility to engage with and deliver high-quality programming to all of today’s students; and

Policymakers at all levels of government who can allocate resources to high-quality postsecondary education in prison.

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