



Student Success Subgroup – Quarterly Update

January 2022

The Student Success Subgroup continues to meet monthly on established and new objectives. The current topics and initiatives include an educational programs and services for incarcerated individuals survey and landscape scan, the need for a transcript database, and training for new navigators. Updates on each initiative are outlined hereafter.

Education Program Landscape Scan

The group identified a need for a clearer, documented understanding of what educational programs and services are available throughout prisons and jails in Iowa. Offerings and opportunities may vary by both higher education and correctional institution, and the survey is designed to help in compiling a comprehensive list of programs and services, including opportunities for individuals in the re-entry and release processes. The survey was designed based on a needs discussion facilitated within the student success group as well as similar surveys offered by the [Alliance for Higher Education in Prison](#) and the [RAND Corporation Correctional Education Survey Questionnaire](#).

The survey is complete and ready for distribution. In an effort to ensure collection of all desired information, the survey will be sent to recipients from the seven higher educational institutions currently engaged in corrections education in Iowa. The types of individuals within those institutions who will receive the survey include institutional researchers, enrollment managers, TRiO staff, existing navigators, deans of students, CTE deans, ABE deans, corrections representatives/education staff, and judicial services offices. An introduction of ICHEP and the survey will also be sent to the 10 community colleges that we do not believe are currently involved in corrections education work.

In addition to gaining a better understanding of the offerings throughout the institutions, the results of the survey may also help the Student Success subgroup identify future projects and initiatives.

Transcript Database

A common topic for the subgroup since our first meeting is the need for a transcript database. Challenges currently exists in both acquiring transcripts across institutions as well as ensuring students can access information on the process to access transcripts from disparate institutions. The group has not started work on the project but considers two possible improvements. One option could be to create a database or shared document providing the transcript process and resources for each higher education institution. A second improvement would be to approach partner institutions and request the waiver for transcript fees for incarcerated individuals.

New Navigators

An effort is currently underway to hire new navigators at the community colleges to support incarcerated students. As this is still in progress, no steps have been taken, although the group is discussing strategies for resources for the navigators. Members of the group are in conversation with a



Maryland project that employs navigators and has developed a handbook. There are other programs, such as a project at Rutgers in Mountain View, that can be explored as an additional model. Mentoring and utilizing current navigators in the training process would also aid in the success for individuals in the new positions.