



Advancing Correctional Education

Tom Blomberg, Dean and Sheldon L. Messinger Professor of Criminology

Leadership Forum: Education is Change for the Future

March 30, 2009: Annapolis



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

Presentation Outline

I. Background

- **The Florida Experience**
- **National Findings**

II. The Development of the Alliance for Juvenile Justice and Adult Correctional Education

III. Alliance Activities (2008-2009)

IV. Congressional Testimony: An Illustration of Advancing Correctional Education

- **Written Testimony**
 - **The Problem**
 - **Cost Benefits**
 - **Issues to Consider**
- **Oral Testimony**
- **Some Lessons**

V. Future Alliance Plans

VI. Suggestions from Participants on Future Alliance Plans and Priorities



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

I – Background

The Florida Experience

- Since 1998, the FSU College of Criminology and Criminal Justice, through its Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research, has performed annual quality assurance (QA) reviews, provided technical assistance, and conducted research on the education programs in the state's approximately 200 juvenile incarceration facilities as part of the Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program (JJEPP)
- Each year the QA standards for these education programs have been evaluated and elevated to continuously improve education services for the more than half a million youth that have been served in Florida since 1998
- JJEPP's longitudinal research has determined that youth who experience higher academic achievement while incarcerated are more likely to return to school upon release and if they remain in school, their prospects for employment are increased and their likelihood of re-arrest drops significantly



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

I – Background

National Findings

- **Based on the recognized success of Florida’s JJEEP project, FSU’s College of Criminology and Criminal Justice received federal funding in 2005 to assist other states in implementing NCLB requirements in their juvenile justice schools**
- **From the project’s national surveys of states, conferences held with the states’ key juvenile justice education personnel, and site visits to individual states, FSU found that NCLB requirements have largely improved the juvenile justice education services in many states**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

I – Background

National Findings – Cont.

- **However, most states were only partially successful in implementing NCLB requirements**
- **Because of organizational diversity, lack of consensus on education best practices and, very importantly, patterned difficulty in hiring qualified teachers and general financial scarcity, the states' abilities to fully implement NCLB were limited**
- **As a result, and despite these efforts, most youth in juvenile justice incarceration facilities across the country remain “lost education opportunities”**
- **If these youth could receive quality and effective education services, the returns to society would be substantial**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

II – Developing the Alliance for Juvenile Justice and Adult Correctional Education

- What emerged from the NCLB Collaboration Project's work with states and organizations was the need to enhance communication, visibility, research, and policy development in the field of juvenile as well as adult correctional education
- Several organizations already existed in the field of juvenile justice, but they primarily focused upon custody and care issues
- While the Correctional Education Association (CEA) focus was on education, its emphasis had been centered upon adult correctional education
- In developing the Alliance, therefore, the intent was to bring together juvenile and adult correctional educators and related personnel in the common pursuit to advance correctional education in an era of unprecedented reliance upon incarceration and ever-increasing costs despite our continuing economic recession
- As a result, the time is right to advance correctional education as a means to increase public safety in a cost-efficient manner



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

II – Developing the Alliance for Juvenile Justice and Adult Correctional Education

Alliance Goals:

- **Increase citizen awareness and legislative support for juvenile and adult correctional education through public relations and legislative advocacy**
- **Provide leadership, direction, and research-driven services to advance education for students in juvenile and adult corrections**
- **Better prepare incarcerated offenders for successful reentry into society through supporting juvenile and adult correctional educators with research-driven education programs**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

III – Alliance Activities (2008-2009)

- In December, a press release was distributed to over 600 local news organizations explaining the purpose and need for the Alliance in the effort to increase public and legislative awareness of the value of correctional education
- FSU participated in state public radio interviews regarding juvenile and adult correctional education
- States and organizations contributed to the National Data Clearinghouse on juvenile correctional education under the Center's website at www.criminologycenter.fsu.edu
- Members of the Alliance have contacted existing organizations in the field in efforts to solicit their participation
- Alliance members assisted CEA in developing the agenda for this Leadership Forum
- FSU testified March 12 in a Congressional hearing with the U.S. House Committees on Education and Labor and Judiciary on “Lost Educational Opportunities for Youth in Alternative Settings”



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony: An Illustration of Advancing Correctional Education

Written Testimony:

- **Our K-12 public schools face some of the biggest and most important challenges of contemporary society**
- **They were charged with educating 49,298,948 students in 2006–2007. 6,247,443 of these students had learning and behavior disabilities**
- **Public schools do not meet all the individual needs of their diverse student populations, particularly those with learning and behavior disabilities**
- **Prior experience and research has demonstrated that for many troubled and at-risk students, alternative education settings are necessary**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

The Problem

- **However, education services and capacities of these needed alternative settings are insufficient for this population. This results in a pattern of lost education opportunities for these troubled and at-risk populations**
- **The resulting uneducated youth create a substantial financial burden to society because of their disproportionate unemployment, involvement in crime and substance abuse**
- **612,900 at-risk students were enrolled in alternative education programs in 2002, and 210,390 incarcerated youth received education services in juvenile justice schools during 2006.**
- **Without education achievement and high school graduation, the life prospects for these incarcerated and at-risk youth are dismal at best**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

The Problem – Cont.

- Previous studies document a positive relationship between education achievement and employment. Graduation from high school has been found to significantly decrease involvement in crime
- Among the tangible economic consequences of our continued failure to effectively educate our at-risk and incarcerated youth is an estimated lifetime economic loss of \$2.2 million for one student dropping out of high school and subsequently becoming involved in a life of crime and substance abuse



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

Cost Benefits

- **Public schools throughout the nation have and continue to struggle in the attempt to meet the individual education needs of their diverse student populations**
- **The end result is that currently the United States has millions of students in our K–12 public schools that are at risk of entering the School-to-Prison Pipeline**
- **We cannot reasonably expect our public schools to meet all of the education challenges and individual needs of at-risk students that far too often fall through the cracks of our education system**
- **Consideration must be given to strengthening and improving our alternative and juvenile justice schools currently serving more than one million students annually**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

Cost Benefits – Cont.

- **The average annual cost to incarcerate a student is \$23,876 in contrast to the annual cost of \$8,701 for educating a K–12 student**
- **Prior research has conclusively established that investments that improve academic achievement and high school graduation rates significantly reduce crime and increase economic competitiveness for both juvenile and adult offenders**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

Cost Benefits – Cont.

- **Effective education systems are a critical component of a successful and prosperous society. Education prepares leaders, inspires innovation, opens minds, and changes the trajectory of juvenile and adult lives. It is a necessity for the success of a nation, and it is almost impossible to quantify. If we try to put numbers to it, we find that the cost savings of such a critical part of our culture is, as one would imagine, extraordinary**
- **If you take, for example, the number of juvenile offenders confined in custodial institutions in 2006–210,390—assume varying success rates of that population, and use a lifetime economic gain of \$2.2 million (Cohen 1998) for each individual experiencing success, you will find the following cost benefits to the economy**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

Estimated Cost Benefits – Cont.

Education success rate for 210,390 student population	Number of youth prevented from reoffending each year	Economic gain from preventing students from becoming career criminals	Economic gain from preventing students from becoming career criminals	Economic gain from preventing students from becoming career criminals
		For 1-year period	For 5-year period	For 10-year period
1%	2,104	\$4,628,800,000	\$23,144,000,000	\$46,288,000,000
5%	10,519	\$23,141,800,000	\$115,709,000,000	\$231,418,000,000
10%	21,039	\$46,285,800,000	\$231,429,000,000	\$462,858,000,000
20%	42,078	\$92,571,600,000	\$462,858,000,000	\$925,716,000,000
40%	84,156	\$185,143,200,000	\$925,716,000,000	\$1,851,432,000,000
60%	126,234	\$277,714,800,000	\$1,388,574,000,000	\$2,777,148,000,000



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

Issues to Consider

- **Distance learning and video technologies in conjunction with skilled teachers could increase the quality of classroom instruction in small and medium sized populations where it is not financially feasible to employ multiple professionally certified teachers**
- **Annual quality assurance reviews and student outcome assessments should be used to evaluate the strength of a program, consider improvements, and calculate funding**
- **A national database to track specific program successes and failures could lead to a shared understanding of what the best teaching practices are for incarcerated and at-risk youth**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

Issues to Consider – Cont.

- Research has yielded three clear areas that have a significant effect on the quality of education:
 1. Well-qualified teachers teaching in their areas of professional certification
 2. Individualized curricula and instruction that is responsive to the documented needs of the student population served
 3. Transition services that prepare youth as they reenter communities, return to schools, and enter the job market



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Congressional Testimony

Oral Testimony:

**Lost Education Opportunities for Youth
in Juvenile Incarceration Facilities and
other Non-Traditional Settings**

Video



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Some Lessons from the Testimony

- Importance of clear and concise presentations
- Cost-Benefit estimates are essential in today's economic climate if we are to successfully advance correctional education
- Testimony should be focused upon making one major point not multiple points and do not read to legislators or inundate them with statistics



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

IV – Some Lessons from the Testimony – Cont.

Post Testimony Questions:

1. **What kind of data is needed to best address the needs of youth in alternative settings and their lost educational opportunities?**
2. **What systems need to be involved in addressing issues for youth in alternative education settings? How might they work together to better serve the needs of the population?**

Answers:

1. **Data on numbers of youth served, their individual characteristics including educational history, their education experiences/attainment while in alternative educational settings and outcomes (i.e. return to school, H.S. graduation, GED, drop-out, re-arrests)**
2. **The identification of necessary systems to be determined from data analyses that reveal the inputs-activities-results-outcomes that succeed in educating our lost opportunity populations**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

V – Future Alliance Plans

- **Gain funding as a professional organizational entity – Stimulus Bill?**
- **Continue to develop effective partnerships between various juvenile and adult correctional education organizations and associations**
- **Continued expansion of the national data clearinghouse for research on juvenile and adult correctional education practices and community reintegration outcomes**
- **Identifying and validating “best practices” in correctional education**
- **In sum, what we are trying to accomplish through the Alliance is a “social movement” aimed at improving the quality of life for all citizens in the most cost efficient manner**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.

V – Future Alliance Plans – Cont.

- **Developing a uniform national evaluation and quality assurance model for juvenile and adult correctional education**
- **Educating policy makers and the general public about the economic and public safety benefits of juvenile and adult correctional education**
- **The creation of a national teaching certificate for juvenile and adult correctional education teachers**
- **The development of university programs that train teachers to work in correctional settings with a Pilot Project at FSU's College of Criminology and Criminal Justice**



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.



VI – Suggestions from Participants on Future Alliance Plans and Priorities



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.



Advancing Correctional Education

Tom Blomberg, Dean and Sheldon L. Messinger Professor of Criminology

www.criminologycenter.fsu.edu



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Research Brought to Life.