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## Literacy by Degrees and UNO Postsecondary Prison Education Project Evaluation

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# Literacy by Degrees and UNO Postsecondary Prison Education Project Evaluation



**AUGUST 2018**

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# Literacy by Degrees and UNO Postsecondary Prison Education Project Evaluation

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August 2018

Funding for this research was provided by a 2017 Urban Research Award from the  
College of Public Affairs and Community Service Dean's Office.





## **UNO'S POST-SECONDARY CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: A PROCESS EVALUATION**

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August 26, 2018

"Correctional education programs provide incarcerated individuals with the skills and knowledge essential to their futures. Investing in these education programs helps released prisoners get back on their feet — and stay on their feet — when they return to communities across the country."

- Arne Duncan, United States Secretary of Education, January 2009 – December 2015

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## INTRODUCTION

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) Post-Secondary Correctional Education Program was created in 2017 through fundraising by Steven and Thomas Scott and with the support of the University of Nebraska Foundation. A partnership was formed between UNO and the Omaha Correctional Center (OCC), a medium-minimum security men's prison within the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS). The primary purpose of this program is to offer UNO courses, taught by UNO professors or adjunct instructors, to inmates at OCC. Since its inception, four classes have been taught by three UNO instructors over three semesters (i.e., Fall 2017, Spring and Summer 2018). These courses have not only given the student-inmates an opportunity to transform their lives and earn college credit, but have also given UNO instructors a distinct opportunity to teach and learn from a unique and diverse population. The student-inmates are bright, motivated, and appreciative of the opportunity to take college classes and earn college credit while they are incarcerated. For most participants, the program had an empowering and transformative effect.

This report is a process evaluation of the policies and guidelines that have been established during the first year of the program, as well as an assessment of the fall and spring courses. This evaluation is a result of interviews with administrators at UNO and NDCS involved in the program, UNO instructors who taught at OCC in the first year, and student-inmates who participated in the courses. Although this program is still in its infancy, individuals at both UNO and NDCS have worked together to define the responsibilities and policies for various processes so that the program can be implemented more effectively. There are still many details to work out as this program grows at both OCC and to other NDCS facilities, but this report should provide a history of the various processes that must take place on both UNO and



OCC's side for this program to work. Thus, I outline the policies and processes we have already established at OCC which might serve as a blueprint for expanding the UNO Post-Secondary Correctional Education (PSCE) program to other facilities. It should be noted that each prison is different in terms of the inmate composition, staff culture, and what each warden and deputy warden will allow in their facility. So what worked at OCC and the agreements UNO has with OCC may not necessarily transfer to other facilities. Nonetheless, this report should provide a history of the first year of the program and some direction for the growth and sustainability of the program. If the program is extended to other facilities, it is essential that UNO administrators (or other institutions) first seek the support and cooperation of the warden and deputy warden of a facility.

First, I will briefly discuss the history of post-secondary correctional education programs in the United States and the research on their effectiveness. Next, I will describe the history of the UNO Post-Secondary Correctional Education Program, including the classes that were taught during the first year, student feedback about the classes/instructors, and outline the processes that UNO and OCC administrators have to take to make this program work. Finally, I will conclude with suggestions on how to expand the program to other facilities. I have provided three appendixes: Appendix A is a directory of individuals who were involved in the program during the first year, Appendix B is a copy of NDCS's most recent volunteer handbook which instructors must abide by when teaching in prison and the background forms UNO instructors must complete, and Appendix C is a potential teacher application form.

## **BACKGROUND OF POST-SECONDARY CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION (PSCE) PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES**

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, incarcerating one out of every 100 American adults in local, state or federal facilities (Guerino, Harrison & Sabol, 2011; Wagner & Sawyer, 2018). Although the United States has only 5% of the world's population it houses 25% of the world's prisoners, or 2.3 million people, the majority of which are poor, undereducated, and disproportionately from minority communities (Pew Center on the States, 2008; Wagner & Sawyer, 2018). Most inmates do not serve life sentences and are eventually released back into society, thus it is in society's best interest to help inmates succeed upon re-entry (Clear, 2009; Petersilia, 2003). There are several factors that affect an inmate's odds of becoming a productive member of society upon release, one of which is post-secondary education programs (Vera Institute of Justice, 2017).

One of the major drivers of the high incarceration rate is the large number of released inmates who return to prison because they cannot find sustainable employment upon release (Lin, Grattet & Petersilia, 2010; Travis, 2007). Nearly 2,500 NDCS inmates were released from prison in 2017 and about 80% were discharged with community supervision (i.e., parole), as opposed to mandatory discharge without parole/supervision (Nebraska Board of Parole & Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, 2018). The majority of individuals released on parole are required to maintain employment as part of the conditions of their release – if they are unable to secure employment they are at risk for parole revocation and return to prison. About 90% of jobs in the fastest growing occupations require at least some post-secondary education (National Governor's Association, 2010). People who participated in post-secondary education programs while incarcerated had 46% lower recidivism rates than the people who had not taken

college classes (Chappell, 2004). A separate study done in three states (i.e. Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio) also found that prison education programs significantly reduced recidivism in part because the earnings of the correctional education participants were higher than the non-participants (Steurer & Smith, 2003). Higher wages means that individuals are better able to support themselves and their families, and that they are engaged in jobs that hold promise of sustainability, making it less likely they will turn to illegal means for income (Steurer & Smith, 2003). The Department of Justice estimates that every \$1 spent educating an inmate saves correctional facilities \$5 long-term due to lower recidivism rates (Davis et al., 2013).

Prior to the 1970's, educational programs were present in the majority of prisons and widely supported by corrections officials, politicians and the public (Ryan, 1995). Even in the early 1990s, the majority of state correctional facilities offered some form of college-level programming that allowed inmates to earn two- or four-year degrees, usually through partnerships with local community colleges (Wetherbee, 2008). During this time most states could cite studies and internal statistics demonstrating that education significantly reduced participants' odds of recidivism by ensuring that individuals who had served their time had a better chance of avoiding future crimes and remaining free, by expanding their social horizons and making them more employable (Wetherbee, 2008).

However, due to the changing political climate and a very misunderstood report by Robert Martinson (1974) on what works in prison rehabilitation, public support for correctional education programs began to wane in the late 1970s (Ryan, 1995). The landscape of the prisons began to change dramatically during this time as policy experts became skeptical that prisons could prevent crime by reforming inmates, thus federal and state governments began to move prison policies and funding away from rehabilitation purposes and toward the goals of

incapacitation and punishment (Western, 2006). In the early 1980s, state lawmakers began crafting mandatory sentencing laws, abolishing parole, creating three-strike laws for repeat offenders, and the federal government began a war on crime which transformed into a war on drugs. Between 1970 and 2013 the state and federal prison population grew sevenfold to house 2.3 million felons and new prisons were constructed all over the country as the nation began mass incarcerating people, particularly disadvantaged communities of color (Alexander, 2010; Wagner & Sawyer, 2018; Western, 2006).

Although the nation's prison population has grown exponentially in the last four decades, the Bureau of Justice Statistics revealed that states are spending less on prison education programs now than in 1982 (Kyckelhahn, 2014). Part of this is due to widespread policies making education less accessible to felons. For example, in 1994, President Bill Clinton and Congress signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act which declared prison inmates ineligible for Pell Grants and other federal funding that had made college programs behind bars possible. The American Correctional Association (1988) recognized the disturbing shift in prison policy and population and released the following statement, "*Prisons today are filled to overflowing with the young, the poor, the illiterate, the unemployed, the minorities. When they are released (as the majority will be) their chances for law-abiding behavior will not be enhanced if nothing is done to deal with their deficiencies while incarcerated.*" A special report published by the U.S. Department of Justice confirmed that incarcerated persons are disproportionately likely to come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; to be members of racial/ethnic minority groups; to have held a low-skill, low-paying job (if employed at all) at the time of arrest; and to be less educated than their counterparts in the general population (Harlow, 2003).

The loss of funding for post-secondary correctional education programs led to a huge decline in the number of programs available to inmates in state and federal facilities, although some states were able to partner with local community colleges to create/keep PSCE programs. There is some evidence that public and political support may be growing again since President Barack Obama signed the Second Chance Pell Experiment in July 2016, which reinstated Pell Grant eligibility for some incarcerated students. This is important because increased educational attainment can reduce crime rates by providing meaningful alternatives to criminal activity once inmates are released. A reduction in crime over time will increase public safety and potentially ease strained federal and state budgets (Davis et al., 2013).

### **Research on PSCE Program Effectiveness**

Several state and federal prisons have offered post-secondary correctional education (PSCE) to inmates in the past two decades. The primary objective of providing PSCE to inmates is to advance their educational attainment levels so they have better employment opportunities upon release from prison. Many studies have noted that participation in PSCE programs reduces recidivism, criminal justice costs and reliance on welfare and other public programs, and increases post-release employment and education (Baer et al., 2006; Chappell, 2004; Davis et al., 2013; Easman & Contardo, 2005; Gorgol & Sponsler, 2011; Meyer et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2000; Winterfield et al., 2009). Furthermore, investments in correctional education can provide more efficient cost/benefit outcomes than other sorts of correctional investments (Bazos & Hausman, 2004). For example, Aos, Miller, and Drake (2006) showed that vocational training and education in Washington state prisons produced some of the largest net economic benefits for the state.

Education and vocational training programs in prison are important because the majority of inmates are less educated and vocationally trained than the general population. For example, about 36% of inmates in state prisons had below a high school education compared to 19% of the general population (Davis et al., 2013). Inmates face significant barriers to employment once they are released, due in part to low educational attainment and a steady history of unemployment (Visher & Lattimore, 2007). Additionally, the stigma of having a criminal record can make it difficult for uneducated inmates to obtain stable employment post-release (Davis et al., 2013). Baer and colleagues (2006) found that individuals who are employed after their release from prison are less likely to recidivate. Improving inmates' educational aptitude is one strategy that has shown promise in helping inmates find gainful employment upon release and end their involvement with the criminal justice system. Several studies have examined the effectiveness of correctional education programs and find that inmates who participate in PSCE have significantly lower odds of recidivism (Aos, Miller & Drake, 2006; Chappell, 2004; Davis et al., 2013; MacKenzie, 2006; Wilson, Gallagher, & MacKenzie, 2000). For example, Chappell (2004) found that PSCE in particular led to a 46% reduction in recidivism while Wilson et al., (2002) found a more modest but still significant 26% reduction in recidivism by inmates who participated in PSCE. A RAND study also found that inmates who participate in prison education programs are 43% less likely to recidivate (Davis et al., 2013). In addition, Davis and colleagues (2013) found that correctional education would reduce recidivism and save states between \$870,000 and \$970,000 for every 100 inmates who received PSCE. In summary, providing inmates the opportunity to participate in college education while incarcerated is valuable not only to the inmates and prisons, but to society as a whole.

There is much literature about the difficulties inmates face when trying to reenter society after even a few years of incarceration (e.g., Clear, 2009; Petersilia, 2003). Inmates face enormous difficulties when trying to find housing and jobs, and many do not even have a high school diploma, making their employment prospects even more bleak (Nelson, Deese, & Allen, 1999). A disproportionate number of inmates also have severe physical or mental disabilities and often have a history of substance abuse and victimization (Bushway & Reuter, 2002; Byrne et al., 2002; Petersilia, 2003; Steurer & Smith, 2003). All of these issues compound to make reentering society more difficult, especially for inmates who no longer have social support from family or friends, which can greatly assist inmates with the overwhelming obstacles they face in reentry (Clear, 2009). Additionally, the experience of incarceration has negative psychological effects on many individuals, including a reduced self-esteem, hopelessness about the future, and a sense that others look down on people who have been incarcerated (Evans, Pelletier & Szkola, 2018). However, prison education programs may empower inmates and help attenuate the negative effects of self-stigma that can result from incarceration (Evans et al, 2018).

### **UNO'S PSCE PROGRAM**

Specific to our community, every year Nebraska prisons release over 2,000 inmates back into the community and disproportionately into the Omaha-Metro area (Nebraska Board of Parole & Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, 2018). Although NDCS's 2017 annual budget is over \$207 million, a very small amount was invested in prisoner reentry (Nebraska State Budget Division, 2017). Additionally, over half of all inmates released from Nebraska prisons are released mandatorily, meaning without supervision (or parole), which can assist former inmates find employment, housing, and education opportunities once they return to their

communities (Young, 2016). Without preparation or support for reentry, it is not surprising that about 30% of Nebraska inmates return to prison, or recidivate, within three years (UNO Center for Public Affairs Research, 2012). As noted above, education can play a critical role in helping inmates build community connections and reduce their risk of recidivism (Aos et al., 2006; Gorgol & Sponsler, 2011).

In a study by Visser and Lattimore (2007), the researchers found that “more education” was one of the most commonly reported reentry needs by prisoners. A study by Davis and colleagues (2013) revealed that, on average, an inmate who participates in post-secondary education in prison is half as likely to reoffend and is more likely to obtain post-release employment compared to one who does not. Unfortunately, post-secondary educational opportunities are limited in the Nebraska correctional system, leaving many inmates who already possess a GED or high school diploma few options for advancement. However, UNO’s PSCE program seeks to change this by providing an opportunity for interested professors to teach college courses to a population that needs and desires an opportunity to transform their lives.

In 2014, Metropolitan Community College (MCC) was awarded a three year grant by the Nebraska State Legislature (under Legislative Bill 907, 2014) to implement a Vocational and Life Skills Program (VLS). The goal of the program is to reduce recidivism and increase employment opportunities for individuals released from prison in the last 18 months. The VLS programming is available in all 10 Nebraska correctional facilities and offers a wide range of services from mental health programming, vocational training, job readiness skills, career certifications, cognitive behavioral therapy, and more (for more information see <https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-public-affairs-and-community-service/nebraska-center-for-justice-research/vls/index.php>). While MCC has done a great job providing a variety of



vocational and life skills training to NDCS inmates, there is still a gap in post-secondary education programming for inmates. This gap inspired Steven and Thomas Scott to raise money to give to UNO if they would offer college classes in the Omaha Correctional Center (just 1 of NDCS's 10 prisons).

The Scott brothers' proposal (2017) created an initial partnership between UNO and NDCS to provide college-level educational courses to OCC to fulfill both UNO's and NDCS's mission. The PSCE Program extends UNO's mission to "transform and improve the quality of life locally, nationally and globally" (<https://www.unomaha.edu/about-uno/mission.php>) by engaging students incarcerated in Nebraska prisons in new knowledge, the respectful exchange of ideas, and self-achievement. This program has the potential to transform and improve the quality of life locally by reducing the recidivism rates of student-inmates who participate in the program, which also influences the communities they return to (e.g., reduces taxpayer dollars spent on corrections, and increases the stability of families). This program is also consistent with NDCS's mission to "keep people safe" by providing program opportunities to inmates that help transform lives, make prisons safer, and prepare inmates to return renewed to their families and communities (<https://corrections.nebraska.gov/about>).

### **UNO Classes Offered at OCC**

In the fall of 2017, with the support of the University of Nebraska Foundation funds raised by Steven and Thomas Scott, Dr. Daniel Wuebben taught the first face-to-face UNO course in OCC: ENG 1200.804 "Autobiographical Reading and Writing." Below is information regarding which classes that have been offered, who taught them, how many inmates were enrolled and how many completed the course.

### Fall 2017

- ENG 1200.804 “Autobiographical Reading and Writing” with Dr. Daniel Wuebben of the Goodrich Scholar Program (14 enrolled, 12 completed)

### Spring 2018

- SOC 101 “Introduction to Sociology” with Dr. Nikitah Imani of the Black Studies Department (14 enrolled, 12 completed)
- ENG 225 “The Short Story” with Dr. Daniel Wuebben (12 enrolled, 9 completed)

### Summer 2018

- POLSCI 101 “Introduction to Political Science” with Joel Case, adjunct professor in the Political Science Department (15 enrolled, 12 completed)

### Fall 2018 (scheduled)

- ENG 1150 “English Composition I” with Dr. Daniel Wuebben

## Survey Responses from Students who Took UNO Classes At OCC

**Table 1.** Descriptives of student-inmates at OCC ( $N = 26$ )

	Frequency	%	Range
<b>Age at survey</b> ( <i>mean</i> (SD))	41.4	(10.66)	24 – 58
<b>Marital status</b>			
Single, never married	9	34.6	0 – 1
Divorced	11	42.3	0 – 1
Married	2	7.7	0 – 1
In a serious relationship	4	15.4	0 – 1
<b>Was in foster care while growing up</b>	5	19.2	0 – 1
<b>Grew up in Nebraska</b>	13	50.0	0 – 1
<b>Have a child(ren)</b>	14	53.8	0 – 1
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	16	61.5	0 – 1
Black, non-Hispanic	5	19.2	0 – 1
Hispanic	4	15.4	0 – 1
Native American	1	3.8	0 – 1
<b>Number of times incarcerated</b>			
1	12	46.2	0 – 1
2	3	11.5	0 – 1
3	3	11.5	0 – 1
4 or more	8	30.8	0 – 1
<b>Number of times on probation</b>			
0	5	19.2	0 – 1
1	15	57.7	0 – 1
2	2	7.7	0 – 1
3 or more times	4	15.4	0 – 1
<b>Age at first arrest</b> ( <i>mean</i> (SD))	18	(8.08)	6 – 42
<b>Age when first incarcerated</b> ( <i>mean</i> (SD))	25.8	(12.11)	12 – 51
<b>Individual served time in a youth detention facility</b>	8	30.8	0 – 1
<b>Months incarcerated for current offense</b> ( <i>mean</i> (SD))	81.5	(88.28)	10 – 384
<b>Months left to serve for current offense</b> ( <i>mean</i> (SD))	15.6	(14.17)	2 – 49
<b>Have a place to live when released</b>	13	50.0	0 – 1
<b>Have a desire to continue college when released</b>			
Definitely yes	20	76.9	0 – 1
Probably yes	6	23.1	0 – 1
<b>Barriers to continuing your education upon release*</b>			
Cost of tuition	12	46.2	0 – 1
Housing issues/access to classes close to home	6	23.1	0 – 1
Time for classes	4	15.4	0 – 1
Addiction issues	2	7.7	0 – 1
No concerns	6	23.1	0 – 1
<b>Motivation to participating in PSCE*</b>			
To achieve better situation for myself	11	42.3	0 – 1
To pass the time in prison	15	57.7	0 – 1

To prepare for employment upon release	21	80.8	0 – 1
To achieve better educational training	23	88.5	0 – 1
To look better for prison staff/parole board	2	7.7	0 – 1
Self-improvement/to become less dependent on others	23	88.5	0 – 1
To receive higher pay once released	17	65.4	0 – 1
To satisfy intellectual curiosity	5	19.2	0 – 1
<b>Employment prior to current incarceration*</b>			
Employed full time through legal means	21	80.8	0 – 1
Employed through illegal means	9	34.6	0 – 1
Temporary work	3	11.5	0 – 1
Employed part-time through legal means	2	7.7	0 – 1
<b>Other prison programs participated in*</b>			
MCC	21	80.8	0 – 1
Defy Ventures	3	11.5	0 – 1
7 Habits	4	15.4	0 – 1
MRT	5	19.2	0 – 1
SAV	3	11.5	0 – 1
Other (i.e. Peru State College, Blackstone paralegal certificate, 180 re-entry, Southeast Community College)	4	15.4	0 – 1
<b>Highest level of education prior to current sentence</b>			
Some high school but didn't graduate	4	15.4	0 – 1
High school diploma (HSD)	1	3.8	0 – 1
General education diploma (GED)	6	23.1	0 – 1
Attended vocational school but didn't finish	5	19.2	0 – 1
Attended college less than 2 years, no degree	3	11.5	0 – 1
Attended college more than 2 years, no degree	6	23.1	0 – 1
College graduate (4 year degree)	1	3.8	0 – 1
<b>Highest level of education completed since current sentence</b>			
HSD/GED, some college classes but no degree	23	88.5	0 – 1
HSD/GED, some vocational training but no degree	2	7.7	0 – 1
College graduate (4 year degree)	1	3.8	0 – 1
<b>Main reason you stopped schooling when you did</b>			
Financial problems (e.g., needed to work, couldn't afford it)	8	30.8	0 – 1
Did not do well in school	6	23.1	0 – 1
Sent to juvenile detention/jail/prison	7	26.9	0 – 1
Personal reasons (i.e., drugs, illness, military deployment)	5	19.2	0 – 1

**Notes:** Responses with the range of 0 – 1 were coded 0 = “No” and 1= “Yes”.

\*Question was not mutually exclusive (i.e., respondents could choose more than one answer).

## Student Feedback about the Classes/Instructors

**Table 2:** Course evaluation survey responses ( $N = 26$ , \*  $N = 17$ )

	(1)	Strongly Disagree	(2)	Disagree	(3)	Neutral	(4)	Agree	(5)	Strongly Agree	Mean
I put effort into the writing assignments	-	-	-	-	2	7.7%	2	7.7%	22	84.6%	4.8
I participated in class discussions	-	-	-	-	2	7.7%	7	26.9%	17	65.4%	4.6
When I needed individual help, I took the initiative to ask the instructor	-	-	-	-	3	11.5%	8	30.8%	15	57.7%	4.5
I found this course intellectually challenging and stimulating*	-	-	-	-	1	5.9%	1	5.9%	15	88.2%	4.8
I learned something I consider valuable*	-	-	-	-	1	5.9%	4	23.5%	12	70.6%	4.6
My interest in the subject has increased as a result of this course*	1	5.9%	-	-	2	11.8%	2	11.8%	12	70.6%	4.4
The instructor was enthusiastic about teaching this course*	-	-	-	-	1	5.9%	1	5.9%	15	88.2%	4.8
Instructor's was dynamic and energetic in conducting this course*	-	-	-	-	1	5.9%	1	5.9%	15	88.2%	4.8
Instructor's materials were well prepared and carefully explained*	-	-	-	-	1	5.9%	2	11.8%	14	82.4%	4.8
Instructor's presentation facilitated my organization of content*	-	-	-	-	1	5.9%	2	11.8%	14	82.4%	4.8
Students were encouraged to participate in course discussions*	-	-	1	5.9%	2	11.8%	3	17.6%	11	64.7%	4.4
Students were invited to share their ideas and knowledge*	-	-	-	-	2	11.8%	3	17.6%	12	70.6%	4.6
Students were encouraged to ask questions & given meaningful answers*	-	-	-	-	2	11.8%	1	5.9%	14	82.4%	4.7
The instructor has a genuine interest in individual students*	-	-	-	-	2	11.8%	1	5.9%	14	82.4%	4.7
Instructor presented the background or origin of ideas/concepts developed*	-	-	-	-	1	5.9%	2	11.8%	14	82.4%	4.8
Feedback on examinations and graded material were valuable *	-	-	-	-	2	11.8%	2	11.8%	13	76.5%	4.6

\*Question was added to the survey for the spring semester, thus the percentages reflect  $N = 17$ .

## Students' Responses to Short Answer Questions about the Class/Instructor

Note: Responses below are color coded with their respective classes/instructor:

- Responses in **black** correspond to Dr. Wuebben's Autobiographical Reading and Writing Course (Fall 2017)
- Responses in **blue** correspond to Dr. Imani's Introduction to Sociology Course (Spring 2018)
- Responses in **red** correspond to Dr. Wuebben's Short Stories Course (Spring 2018)

1. Explain which assignments were the most valuable to you and which were the least valuable?

the writing interested more. It was easy to write about my life. I got less out of the reading than I should have
all of them were valuable
All the assignments have been very valuable to me for each one had new lessons in each
Most valuable was the personal autobiography. Least was the reading responses, brothers & keepers book- replace with Always Running by Luis Rodriguez
the autobiography was really helpful, I will continue working on it when I get out
I think the personal autobiography was the best assignment. All the other assignments helped my writing get better.
all were valuable, none were not valuable
I thought all the lessons were pertinent
MV-timed writing exercises, Least favorite but valuable-writing 3-part summaries
The overall learning of basic sociology concepts, micro/macro, quantitative, qualitative, etc.
all were valuable, the history of sociology was very interesting to me
I valued the
The only assignment was the sociological autobiography and it really provided little value to the course because it was not really addressed, discussed or feedback given
Society and social interaction was the one I learned the most. I learned from each module
society/culture
It helped me put a perspective on where I fit into society
They all gave me insight and knowledge, but I know I won't use some of the material
I feel the writing of the final essay was the best for me because I was able to get feedback and improve my work. it allowed me to formulate my thoughts & learn about references.
all the information that the professors showed me English is a class where students my age get a sad feeling but he made it fun
The most valuable by far were the red marks on my paper regarding what I should touch up. The least valuable was having to read long and boring short stories with no excitement or adventure
The writing over stories as critical evaluation always had constructive comments on how to do better
Analyzing stories was very new to me and helped me understand breaking down the story
I liked the fan fiction

The readings and the papers were really useful.
all of them

**2. Has your writing improved? Give a couple specific examples of areas of improvement.**

yes, my writing has improved. I started giving more detail.
yes, responses, summaries and short stories have improved
yes, in creative and punctual and grammar
yes, better description of things, people or events
Yes, I've learned to be more descriptive when I write, before I wrote like the reader knew certain things already. Now I take time to write them out.
Instead of writing boring sentences, I've learned how to spice up my writing and still make it sound good.
I like to think so but that is subjective....
become more thoughtful in terms of describing scenes
yes 1. being able to recall several childhood memories w/ vivid detail & write extensively about it. 2. becoming better about not getting really wordy in my writing
yes, learned what a passive sentence is, how to use Microsoft word
yes, more detail in my writing
no
yes
probably not
no
society instead of people
my knowledge of sociology is much better
no, it hasn't improved but I feel my insight into cultures and societies has improved- especially on how groups need to grow and change
Definitely, learning how the intro should catch the attention of the reader as it leads into the story and the closing should give you what you have written able in a summary
my writing has improved from my spelling to grammar
Yes, my writing as improved and I am able to argue my point of view with valid facts as opposed to just saying, "The sky is blue."
yes, critical thinking and use of quotes and to show parallels between the works
I would like to think my writing has improved. I give more detail in my writing now
I think it has, I see it in my personal writing
I think so- but Dr. Wuebben would know better.
yes

**3. Have your feelings or attitude about college changed this semester? If so, how did the course or instructor contribute to these changes?**

I have the writing bug. I like putting my experiences on paper.
---

I tend to attach more details when I write a response, summary or short story
Yes, I hate to read and write but this class has helped seek some potentials I have on it
no
Yes, I really loved the autobiography writing. Before not so much. Writing seemed like a way to get your assignments done but nothing more
Yes, I love to write a lot more now. This class has helped me become better in my writing.
nope, still enjoy it!
yes, I found myself wanting to write more about past events
Yes, for the better. I knew I had a story to tell, but my confidence in it was not great but I feel very confident & accomplished now that I've written my autobiography and received positive feedback on it
yes, I love UNO, great teaching instructor
my feelings didn't change but were more enhanced
I love education
yes
no change, still engaged
the way he taught the class- I figured it was going to be a harder class but I did good!
yes- the society of college makes me want to know more
no
I want to get a degree
I love being in college- it gives me a sense of purpose and accomplishment. this course also allowed me to think critically
I always wanted to go to school but when I did it seemed I never had time. I'm glad I'm taking UNO and can't wait to move on and start school
No, my feelings have not changed. I still only want to take classes that would pertain to my future and not waste my time.
yes, this class has greatly increased my confidence in my ability to write
my feelings are the same- I feel privileged to be able to take the classes I am able to
I have been interested in higher education and this experience has boosted that interest
No- I am still just as engaged in my education
yes

4. Did the atmosphere of the class encourage full participation of everyone, regardless of age, race/ethnicity, or socioeconomic background? Please explain?

yes- there were no barriers
yes- because we were/are all focused on the task at hand
yes
yes, everyone who wanted to participate had the chance to do so in my eyes
yes
yes, because we are all in prison and there was only 10 of us so everything that was said seemed authentic from the different people
I thought so



I believe so, I though a little coaxing, but others came around
yes, we discussed very culturally & politically sensitive topics in class & in our readings. our class was a multi-racial mix & we were all able to freely talk and not feel uncomfortable
yes, everyone was welcome and invited
yes
yes, Dr. Imani is very engaging
yes
yes, everyone was treated equally and respectfully
yes
no
yes- discussions were very open and encouraged
yes- everyone was welcomed and it didn't feel like anyone was being belittled
Absolutely, the atmosphere was very relaxed and it allowed you to learn. Instructor Wuebben is a great and knowledgeable teacher
I just wish it was longer and more hands on
yes, because this atmosphere allows us to be comfortable with one another due to the closeness
yes, he always wanted and sought input. He treated everyone as equal
yes
yes
I felt like the atmosphere was very conducive for learning!
yes

5. What would you change about this course? Is there anything you would add or remove from the course?

Less reading and more writing
more computer time
nothing, don't change the instructor or else his class will not be as good as it was
brothers & keepers, get rid of it
nothing
personally, I wouldn't change anything. That class was damn near perfect to me!
the extra typing time through MCC keyboarding was invaluable and would have been tough to finish my autobiography without.
the course is what it is. Dr. W put it right up front as advertised
nothing- maybe steer clear of jail stories or books about incarceration. In a prison setting it's not exactly uplifting material
more computer work and research
nothing
nothing
nothing
I would make the tests be no-note/closed book. I would add more graded homework where feedback could be given.

nothing
more Mexicans
I wouldn't change it. maybe make it more class time as I really liked being here.
nothing
maybe to write 2 essays
Longer class and more hands on work. Books were okay but hands on would make it great and I'm talking about hands-on-work
I would change the choice of short stories and add in more suspense driven stories. I would not delete a thing besides the boring short stories
I think it went great. I believe pressure should be put on NDCS to allow time per the syllabus to type our final paper
nothing
more computer time
nothing
nothing

6. Which characteristics of this instructor or course have been the most valuable to your learning experience? Which characteristics of this instructor are the most important for him to improve upon?

the well explained concepts, real life application to sociological theories and concepts
a personal teacher, he included life experiences in his teaching
he did great
none
I enjoyed Dr. Imani's personality and approachability. I LOVED his course.
how Dr. Imani gave examples of what was going on in the world today with what we were learning.
his race was valuable and gave him credibility
He was very engaging. I really enjoyed my time here- thank you so very much Dr. Imani
nothing to improve. Great teacher made it easier to understand. I hope all my future teachers are like Dr. Imani
Dr. Wuebben is a great listener, very respectful, non-judgmental, and an overall good person
He's funny and curses
He took the time critique each assignment, which really helped me become a better writer. I would just have him improve on his short story choices.
his attitude, personality, and demeanor were always great. he's outgoing, upbeat and caring.
He showed that he cared and wanted to see each of us learn
being put in a position to think outside the box
Dr. Wuebben's classes have been really exciting- It's something I look forward to - this class every week!
none

7. What other types of classes would you like to see UNO offer to inmates at NDCS?

psychology, computer science, African civilizations
any tech training classes that would help people get employed or classes that would help with a degree
Math
Math
criminal justice, psychology, sociology courses
Any class I need to become a counselor
anything
legal aid certification
Math
computer skills, college algebra, biology/science, culture
any other that are more hands on and more info about the school
computer programming or computer repair classes.
Business management, MIS, computer information
business, criminal justice, math
criminal justice, psychology, sociology courses
math & computers



## **Overall Feedback from the First Year**

These courses have not only given the students an opportunity to transform their lives but have also given the professors a unique life experience and an opportunity to not only teach, but also learn from, a unique and diverse population. Dr. Wuebben writes, “Teaching courses for UNO at the Omaha Correctional Center has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. The students are bright, inquisitive, and appreciative. Despite the institutional challenges, these class meetings allow me to feel the palpable and transformative effects of sharing knowledge and striving for social justice.”

The initial efforts of the UNO’s PSCE Program have garnered favorable responses from inmates, prison educators, and corrections officials. However, research, leadership, and development are required to sustain and to possibly expand this project and to help released inmates continue towards degrees and to become engaged members of the local community.

## **Current Program Challenges**

- Determining the most useful curriculum (which courses will spark interest, what will best help student inmates upon release, class assessments since internet use is not accessible to inmates and computer time and skills are limited)
- Deciding on rules and guidelines (which students qualify, when to pay tuition, when to drop students who do not show, what to do with students who get transferred between facilities)
- Coordinating course schedule, classroom space, and materials with OCC.
- Adequate training for faculty so they can enter the facilities and feel comfortable teaching alone with students (radio etiquette, ID badges, communication with OCC personnel)

## **PROCESSES TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM**

### **Matt Tracy's (UNO) Responsibilities to Get Instructors/Classes Set Up**


1. Identify instructors who are interested in teaching in the program.
2. Talk to the department's chair and dean of those instructors:
  - a. If they are a full-time faculty member and the course they are teaching is considered part of their workload, their department chair and dean just need to sign off on it.
  - b. If their course is considered over-load, there is paperwork that needs to be completed by their chair and office managers and such so they can be paid extra for the course.
  - c. If the instructor is an adjunct, there is a whole different process – Matt works with the assistant to the dean to generate the paperwork for teaching a class in prison and the dean of the college and the instructor have to sign off on it. From there, it goes to Academic Affairs and a Personal Action Form (PAF) is generated which enables the instructor to be paid for the course.
3. The University of Nebraska Foundation needs to be notified of the class and instructor who may teach in the program so they can get the funders (Steven & Thomas Scott) to sign off on it.
4. Work with Steven Scott and Jean Slieter (NDCS Adult Edu. Principle) to advertise the course in prison.
5. Set up a date/time with Jean Slieter, Chasidy Bryl (OCC Program & Volunteer Coordinator), Katie Sup Rezac (UNO academic advisor in Division of Continuing

Studies), and Maureen Pope (UNO admissions representative) to go into OCC to have inmate-students complete a basic UNO application (hard copy).

- a. Katie will answer inmates' questions about how classes will count toward credit, financial aid when they are released, how to go about continuing education once released, and so forth.
6. Jean then takes the completed applications and checks the inmates' records against the eligibility criteria that Steven Scott (funder) set up. These criteria include:
    - a. Inmate must have a GED or High School diploma
    - b. Inmate must be free of any Class 1 misconduct in past 12 months, free of all IDC misconduct reports for the immediate past 6 months and only 2 UDC misconduct reports for the immediate past 6 months
    - c. TABE test of academic ability level 10.0 (desired but not required)
    - d. Inmate should have at least 18 months before parole eligibility date (desired but not required)
  7. Jean then sends the list of approved students to OCC Warden Barbara Lewien and Deputy Warden Loretta Wells to sign off on the list of inmates.
  8. Once the wardens sign off on the list, Jean sends the list back to Maureen Pope (UNO admissions representative) to work with the UNO registrar's office to admit the students and register them for that particular course. Maureen also helps set up the course with the registrar's office (although it is not visible to regular UNO students in the class search).
  9. Maureen will then send the list of enrolled students back to the UNO instructor so that they know how many and who to expect for the first class.

## UNO Instructors' Steps to Teaching in the PSCE Program

1. Interested faculty or adjuncts should talk with their department chair about their desire to teach in the program and if their chair would be willing to count the course as part of their workload.
2. Instructors should then talk with Matt Tracy about potential classes they would like to teach and coordinate with Jean Slieter and Chasidy Bryl about a date/time of the class to make sure it doesn't overlap with other teaching responsibilities.
  - a. **NOTE:** OCC is very limited on classroom space and UNO is just one of many programs that requests to use the classrooms so availability of space is a hurdle that OCC and UNO must work through for every semester and every class.
3. Instructors must complete a background check for NDCS before they are approved to do the volunteer training (see form in *Appendix B*).
4. Instructors must complete a 3-4 hour volunteer training prior to the semester beginning (instructors should coordinate with Chasidy for the date/time of training).
5. Once instructors have a course, time, and enrollment set up with both OCC and UNO administrators they will receive a roster of enrolled students and confirmation about the day/time of the class.
6. Instructors need to send their sample syllabus to Chasidy, Warden Lewien and Deputy Warden Wells at least 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the semester so they can sign off on the syllabus and the books being used.
7. Instructors can order the books/materials for the course through the University of Nebraska Foundation, as the funders will pay for these materials (i.e., Tessa Barney with the UNF will help with this process).

- 
- a. Whether the books are new or used, instructors need to take them to OCC for Deputy Warden Wells to inspect at least a few days before the first class.
  - b. Deputy Warden Wells will leave the books/class materials with the Central Command after she inspects and approves the material, which instructors can get when they check in before their first class.
8. **FIRST CLASS and the intake process:** Instructors should show up to OCC for the first class 30 – 40 minutes before the class begins so they can go through the intake process.
- a. Bring your driver's license and give to the office at central command and tell them you are with UNO and teaching a class in education.
  - b. Put car keys, phone and any smart device (watch), wallet, and coat in a locker. These are free to use so no need to bring in quarters.
  - c. Wait for a guard to put your bag and class materials through the detector and to pat search you. Note: you will have to take your shoes and belt off before you walk through the metal detector so make sure you wear socks.
  - d. Once you and your material are searched and cleared, central command will buzz you in to the secure side of the lobby where you will receive a visitor's badge and radio. Make sure you follow radio etiquette (see below).
  - e. A guard will then escort you back to the education center and your classroom where you will wait for inmates to arrive. Note: If your class is at 5:30 p.m., it is common for students to be 10-15 minutes late to class because the facility count can often go longer than scheduled and inmates only have a tiny window to get dinner before class.



- f. Have inmates sign in on the accountability roster once they arrive, which you will take back to central command when you check out of prison. The guard will give the roster to Chasidy to see who is coming/not coming to class every week.
- g. Once you finish class you can dismiss the inmates and use the radio to call for an escort to take you back to the lobby (see the process outlined by NDCS below).
- h. Once back in the lobby, give central command the radio, your visitor's badge and the accountability roster for Chasidy, and you will get your driver's license back.
- i. They will buzz you out to the non-secure side where you can collect the items you left in your locker.



## **IMPORTANT PRISON POLICIES FOR INSTRUCTORS & OTHER FAQ's ABOUT THE PSCE PROGRAM**

**Q:** When are the courses offered?

**A:** All courses follow UNO's regular academic calendar. Classes can be offered during the fall, spring, and summer terms. Specific class times are coordinated with OCC leadership.

**Q:** Where do classes take place?

**A:** All classes are offered inside the Omaha Correctional Center (OCC) which is located at 2323 Ave J, Omaha, NE 68110. OCC has 3 classrooms inside their facility.

**Q:** What courses are offered at OCC?

**A:** This program ideally seeks to offer courses that fulfill UNO's General Education requirements and that are widely transferable to other post-secondary higher education institutions. The course offerings for any particular semester is determined by an advisory committee composed of UNO faculty/staff and representatives from NDCS. UNO would eventually like to establish a sequence of 6-8 different courses that could be offered on a rotating 18-24 month schedule.

**Q:** Are there any special requirements for faculty teaching inside OCC?

**A:** Yes, anyone who wants to work inside OCC must first complete an OCC background check *AND* a one day orientation training session offered at the facility. Faculty are also required to submit to OCC administration a list of all materials (books, pens, articles, etc.) they want to bring into the facility. No electronic devices (e.g. thumb drives) are permitted into the facility without prior approval from the OCC Warden.

**Q:** What are the costs of the PSCE program?

**A:** The cost of tuition for each enrolled inmate, teaching materials, will be paid by the Nebraska Post-Secondary Correctional Education Fund in coordination with the University of Nebraska Foundation.

**Q:** What resources are available in the classrooms?

**A:** Resources vary by classroom, but are limited compared to what is typically available in UNO classrooms. All rooms have a white board that instructors may use during class. Computers are limited to one room and student use is highly regulated by OCC requirements. Students have no internet access and they are unable to print or save their work in Microsoft Word. Instructors must make plans to bring in a flash drive with Chasidy and Deputy Warden Wells if they want students to be able to save their documents and work on them from week to week. In short, the ability for students to complete assignments using a computer is difficult. Additionally, most classrooms do not have the capability to use electronic resources (e.g., videos, PowerPoint slides). Faculty should be prepared to teach a course under these constraints.

**Q:** How many courses are offered at OCC in a given semester?

**A:** Currently, the maximum number of courses that UNO is able to offer is two per semester due to classroom space limitations at OCC.

**Q:** How do students apply and matriculate to UNO?

**A:** Representatives from UNO's Admissions Office and/or Registrar visit OCC prior to the semester when the class is offered to work with students in completing a hardcopy application which is then entered into UNO's Students Information System.

**Q:** What are the minimum requirements for inmates to participate in the program?

**A:** All prospective students must either have a diploma or GED. Additionally, NDCS also requires students to pass the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) which assesses reading, language, and mathematics abilities of students. Students must also meet conduct requirements established by OCC.

**Q:** Pedagogically, is there anything I need to know about teaching in a prison?

**A:** Be prepared to be challenged by your class. Students will have done the work you assigned and will be eager to discuss it and seek clarification of what they don't understand. Prepare to be flexible. For example, if the entire prison should close on

the day of your class, you need to be able to adjust your curriculum to cover the same amount of material in a reduced number of sessions. Be aware that students' exposure to the norms of a college classroom is limited. They do not have access to the Internet, and the library is limited in terms of research purposes. Do not expect carefully hand-written papers. There is a white board available for your use. There are no "office hours" in prison teaching. However, if you would like to discuss coursework with a student, you can devote a portion of a class for that purpose while the rest of the class reads quietly or works on a group project.

**Q:** Are there any students with disabilities who might be interested in taking classes if they had the appropriate accommodations (e.g., is there someone who can sign for deaf students?)

**A:** The NDCS American Disabilities Act coordinator is looking into this issue.

**Q:** How should I address students and how should they address me in class?

**A:** As for how to address your students, some professors refer to students as Mr. or Ms., while others use students' first names. Similarly, you may ask them to call you Professor or to use your first name. Another consideration is the role of pride and respect in prison. In a traditional college classroom, a student may enjoy being singled out or applauded for his or her work. This is not always true in prison, for a variety of reasons. You may wish to write notes on papers that are read only by the student, but it is a good idea not to allude to disparities in achievement within the class.

**Q:** Who should I contact if I have an issue with a student (e.g., not showing up to class, or showing up late/leaving early)?

**A:** Use an accountability roster where you have students sign in every class period and then leave it with the front desk clerk who will give it to Chasidy. You can also let Chasidy, Vicky, Amy, Jean, or Warden Wells know if there is an issue with a student's attendance or any other aspect of the course. Instructors should contact Rob Britten during the Fall 2018 semester while Chasidy is on maternity leave if they encounter any problems.

**Q:** Can instructors remain in communication with inmates for purely academic purposes after a class and/or after the inmate is released? (e.g., if student wants information on attending UNO or is working on an academic publication with the instructor?)

**A:** Generally no, instructors should not have contact with inmates outside of class due to safety and boundary issues (see volunteer handbook in *Appendix B* for more details). If instructors want to be involved in other prison volunteer programs or groups (e.g., Hammurabi) they need to be especially aware of inmate manipulation and make sure they understand the strict boundaries they need to maintain with inmates.

**Q:** What is the best way to get students their final grade since they do not have access to e-mail or MavLink?

**A:** Send the final grades to students at end of semester via USPS. You will just need the inmates' names & ID numbers and you can send it to: **P.O. Box #11099 Omaha, NE 68110-2766.**

**Q:** Can students keep the course books after the class ends if it is okay with the instructor?

**A:** You will need to check with Deputy Warden Wells in each case and for each book. Inmates can only have so many supplies in their cell so even if it is okay with the instructor, they may not have room for it in their allocated personal space.

**Q:** If an inmate transfers to the Omaha Community Correctional Center (O-CCC) right across the street from OCC can they remain in the class?

**A:** They cannot come back into OCC for classes, but if instructors want to meet with them at O-CCC to keep them in the course and give/get assignments they can.

**Q:** What is the policy for radio and/or keys for instructors?

**A:** Instructors should ask Central Control for a utility radio upon entry into the facility and if one is available it will be issued. No keys will be given to instructors. The radio will be the responsibility of the instructor while inside the secure facility and should not

be left where inmates can get ahold of it. It will need to be turned back into Central Control when leaving. Radio etiquette should be discussed with instructors when checking them out. In general, it is important that the radio be set on Channel 1. To contact Central Control, proper etiquette would be something like, "UNO Instructor Daniel Wuebben to Central Control". Then wait for a response from them. Central Control is referred to as "297" so the response may be something like, "Go ahead for 297." The instructor should then state as clearly and concisely what the communication is, such as, "UNO class is dismissed and I need an escort back to the front of the facility from the multipurpose room or computer lab."

**Q:** How do I use the radio for an emergency while I am teaching?

**A:** In the event of an emergency give the same introduction ( "UNO Instructor (your name) to Central Control") then state your location, and describe what is happening (e.g. how many inmates are involved, weapons if known, etc.). For example, "UNO Instructor Daniel Wuebben to Central Control. I have 2 inmates fighting in the multipurpose room. There are about 10 other inmates watching the fight but not engaged. There are no weapons, just 2 inmates throwing punches at each other." Tell all other inmates not involved to get belly down onto the ground. That way staff know they are not involved when they enter.

Lastly, the radios are equipped with body alarms on them. They are a little orange/red button on the top of the radio. If in immediate danger, the instructors should push the button and a notification will be sent to Central Control. The facility's emergency response teams will be immediately dispatched and any sounds/noises will be broadcast over the radio.

**Q:** Are there other universities or colleges that have similar programs in prisons?

**A:** Yes! There are many institutions all over the United States that have their own style of PSCE programs. Below is a list of just some of these universities/colleges and their respective websites. There is also a Consortium for the Liberal Arts in Prison

organized by Bard College (NY) which provides resources for other institutions looking to build similar programs (<https://bpi.bard.edu/the-work/consortium/>).

- Bennington College (VT/NY) <http://www.bennington.edu/center-advancement-of-public-action/human-rights-and-peacebuilding/incarceration-america/prison>
- Boston University (MA) <http://sites.bu.edu/pep/>
- Colorado College (CO) <http://sites.coloradocollege.edu/hip/prison-education/>
- Cornell University (NY) <http://cpep.cornell.edu>
- Emerson College (MA) <http://epi.emerson.edu/>
- Grinnell College (IA) <http://www.grinnell.edu/academics/centers/liberal-arts-prison>
- Goucher College (MD) <http://www.goucher.edu/learn/goucher-prison-education-partnership/>
- Holy Cross College at Notre Dame (IN) <http://www.hcc-nd.edu/westville-education-initiative/>
- Metro Community College (NE) <https://mccneb.edu/reentry>
- Middlesex Community College (CT) <http://mxcc.edu/cfpe/>
- Tacoma Community College (WA) Freedom Education Project of Puget Sound <http://fepps.org/>
- University of California – Los Angeles <http://www.uclaprisoned.org/>
- University of Vermont <https://www.uvm.edu/cas/liberal-arts-prison-program-lapp>
- Washington University (MO) <https://prisonedproject.wustl.edu/>
- Wesleyan University (CT) <http://www.wesleyan.edu/cpe/index.html>
- Yale University (CT) <https://www.yaleprisoneducationinitiative.org/>
- York College (NE) <https://www.york.edu/news>

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF UNO'S PSCE PROGRAM**

There is ample evidence that post-secondary correctional education programming is beneficial to inmates, the communities they return to, and to taxpayers (Gaes, 2008; Meyer et al., 2010; Winterfield et al., 2009). Inmates who participate in PSCE programs have a 43% lower recidivism rate than non-participants and are 13% more likely to be employed upon release (Davis et al., 2013). Every single year nearly 700,000 individual are released from federal and state prisons and nearly half of them return to prison within three years (Davis et al., 2013). Although some people may question why inmates should receive post-secondary education for free (or little cost) when many law-abiding citizens struggle to afford college tuition, the cost-benefit to society as a whole are ample. A study by RAND Corporation found that education programs cost nearly \$1,400 to \$1,744 per inmate every year, but they can save prisons (or taxpayers) between \$8,700 and \$9,700 per inmate, or the costs associated with re-incarcerating them (Davis et al., 2013). Former United States Attorney General Eric Holder said, "These findings reinforce the need to become smarter on crime by expanding proven strategies for keeping our communities safe, and ensuring that those who have paid their debts to society have the chance to become productive citizens."

Administrative support from UNO, NDCS and prison staff from each facility is essential for the implementation of PSCE programs in Nebraska prisons. This support is especially crucial as the program begins, ensuring that university and prison staff are willing and able to assume their new duties for the program. This support is also critical due to the large amount of time it takes for the program to work and to grow. Finally, administrative support from both UNO and OCC is essential to guide the program through ongoing changes and challenges that may surface.



The challenges moving this program forward are manifold: the need for quality research and evaluation, continued professionalism, and standards for correctional education (for more information about the challenges and opportunities of implementing PSCE programs see Borden, Richardson & Meyer, 2012; Meyer et al., 2010). There is a critical need to increase opportunities for education and participation in education programs. The evidence clearly supports the value of correctional education—to inmates, instructors, taxpayers, and society in general. The challenge to correctional educators is to ensure that quality programs are offered and the participation rate is increased significantly. On the surface, the odds against meeting this challenge are overwhelming. State and federal sentencing laws and practices, the nation's penchant for increasingly punitive responses to crime, the competition for scarce resources—these are just some of the obstacles correctional educators must overcome. But there is room for optimism even in the face of these odds. There will always be a place for correctional education in the nation's prison systems (Winfrey, 1993). As long as there are correctional educators with courage, conviction, commitment, and creativity, the challenge to develop and deliver quality programs can and will be met.



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## **APPENDIX A: Directory of Individuals Involved in the PSCE Program During Year One**

### **Funders:**

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## **APPENDIX B: Possible UNO Teaching Application**

Please email your responses to [mtracy@unomaha.edu](mailto:mtracy@unomaha.edu)

**1. Course title and name.**

**2. A 200-250 word statement of your motivation/aspiration**

- Why do you want to teach this particular course?
- Why do you want to teach it in a prison setting?
- What are your goals for yourself, including your goals as a teacher in a nontraditional classroom setting?

**3. 200-250 words about your preparation**

- What, if any, is your teaching or tutoring experience, and how will it prepare you for teaching this course?
- What coursework have you taken/experience do you have that has prepared you to cover the content?
- How are you equipped to engage students of diverse backgrounds and skill levels?

**4. A list of learning objectives**

- At the end of the semester, what specific skills will your students walk away with?
- What are your goals for your students?

**5. A 150-200 word course description**

- What is your course about?
- What academic discipline?
- Will it be based loosely on any UNO classes?

**6. A preliminary syllabus.**

- This syllabus is for approval by prison administration only, and should list your initially assigned readings and assignments for each week of the course. Please note that we expect you to work further on your syllabus as your class approaches.

## APPENDIX C: OCC Volunteer Services Handbook and Related Forms

<b>NEBRASKA</b> Good Life. Great Mission. DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES	<b>OMAHA CORRECTIONAL CENTER</b>		
	OPERATIONAL MEMORANDUM		
	<b>VOLUNTEER SERVICES</b>		
	REVISION DATE July 31, 2018	NUMBER 105.01.001	PAGE 1 of 11
STATEMENT OF AVAILABILITY			
<b>Official Distribution</b>			

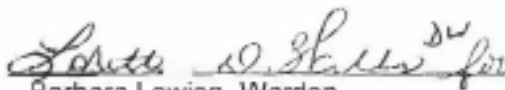
Effective: March 6, 1985  
Revised: July 26, 2009  
Revised: July 28, 2010  
Revised: July 27, 2011  
Revised: August 13, 2012

Revised: August 2, 2013  
Revised: October 11, 2014  
Revised: September 30, 2015  
Revised: July 31, 2016  
Revised: July 31, 2017

### SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW

Several revisions, staff should review thoroughly and carefully.

APPROVED:



Barbara Lewien, Warden  
Omaha Correctional Center

- I. Purpose To establish rules and procedures which govern the operation of a volunteer service program at the Omaha Correctional Center (OCC) which will ensure the efficient use of volunteers.
- II. Policy The OCC encourages citizen involvement and volunteer programs with the intent of generating a variety of services for inmates. Rules for the protection of staff, volunteers and inmates and the orderly operation of OCC have been established and will be followed.
- III. Authority Administrative Regulation (AR) 105.01.
- IV. Applicability This Memorandum is applicable to divisions/departments/operations and shall be maintained current by the Deputy Warden.
- V. Procedure

A. Definitions

1. A Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) Volunteer is an unpaid community member who facilitates programs by providing leadership, direction and guidance to the mission of the program.
2. A volunteer program is defined as any program approved to operate within or operated by NDCS which utilizes non-paid personnel (This does not include interns; see AR 112.15, *Internship/Externship/Practicum Programs*).
3. Staff may volunteer with approval from the facility Warden.
4. Employees approved to volunteer will be issued a volunteer badge that they must wear while they are performing as a volunteer.
5. They will only be allowed to volunteer in areas which are different from their regular paid assignment.
6. Any staff who chooses to be a volunteer will be doing so on their off time and are not considered to be an on duty staff member.
7. Off duty employees are not expected or permitted to perform work related functions during their volunteer time and other staff members shall not request anyone wearing a volunteer badge to perform any work related tasks.
8. Employees may also serve as a Victim/Offender Dialogue Facilitator.
9. An employee who is a member of an inmate's immediate family may sponsor that inmate on furloughs and passes.
10. Immediate family is defined as spouse, parent, step-parent, persons acting in place of a parent (as documented in the institutional file), sibling, step-brother, step-sister, half-brother, half-sister, child, step-child and grandparent.

B. Responsibility

The Central Office Administrative Assistant III-Programs is responsible for coordination of the Department's non-religious Volunteer Service Program. This individual will also chair the non-religious volunteer services committee, which will assure that departmental policy is followed in each institution and program area. The Central Office Administrative Assistant III-Programs will also receive, review and coordinate volunteer programs with the volunteer services committee. All Volunteers are subject to the provisions in this

policy. The Department's Religion Program is a separate entity comprised of Religious Coordinators, legal staff, Clergy Visitors, and Religious Volunteers. Religious Volunteers are also subject to the provisions in AR 208.01, *Religious Services*. The Department's Religion Program has a separate Committee referred to as the Religious Study Committee (RSC). The RSC is chaired by the Central Office Administrative Assistant III-Programs. Religious Coordinators are responsible for Religious Volunteers.

OCC's Religious Coordinator shall act as the OCC's Religious Volunteer Services Coordinator. The OCC's Administrative Assistant II is the Volunteer Services Coordinator for the non-religious volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator shall assume the following responsibilities of the Non-Religious Volunteer(s):

1. Coordinates and supervises the distribution of Volunteer Application Form (Attachment 1) and NDCS Personal Information for Security Check (DCS-A-per-002) (Attachment 2) to potential volunteers.
2. Maintains accurate records of the identification, training, and program status of all volunteers.
3. Reports to the Administrative Assistant III and Deputy Warden on the activities of the volunteer services programs.
4. Recruits, screens, and selects volunteers from all cultural and socioeconomic segments of the community.
5. Coordinates the orientation and training for all approved volunteers, and
6. Coordinates OCC's volunteer programs with the Central Office's "Volunteer Service Committee."
7. New inmates arriving at OCC shall be given information relative to the volunteer services programs available at the institution. The current schedule of available volunteer services to inmates shall be posted on bulletin boards in all housing units.
8. During the month of April, OCC will honor the volunteers who participate in the programs offered at OCC. OCC will determine the type of function by which the volunteers are honored (e.g. recognition letter, reception, banquet, etc.) OCC will select a Volunteer of the Year who will be honored at an annual NDCS gathering to coincide with Correctional Employee appreciation month in May.

C. Program Coordination

1. The Volunteer Coordinator or Religious Coordinator depending upon the program, will be responsible for the recruitment and initial screening of volunteers from all cultural and socioeconomic segments of the community. Volunteers are to be 19 years of age or older. This does not preclude younger individuals who are a relevant part of a volunteer program/service from participating in an activity, under the supervision of appropriate volunteers, within an institution at the discretion of the Warden. Non-religious volunteers are allowed to be involved in more than one club/activity at one facility. Religious volunteers will be limited to involvement in one religious group unless the volunteer can show relevant knowledge which would directly relate to a different religious group. A request for involvement in more than one religious group requires a recommendation from the Religious Study Committee.
  - a. A National Crime and Information Center (NCIC) check is required initially, and annually thereafter, for all of the following volunteers:

- (1) Individuals volunteering for more than a single event.
- (2) Any leader (professional or religious), regardless of credentials, for whom there is no documented endorsement by their judicatory.

All volunteers working in the institution in a discipline, which by law requires professional credentials, must hold such credentials. The credentials must be currently valid, and the volunteer must be able to produce verification of that fact. Copies of certificates, licenses, etc., shall be filed in the Volunteer Services Coordinator's Office, in that particular volunteer's file.

- (3) Performing or athletic groups which will have significant, direct contact with inmates.
- b. An NCIC is optional for the following individuals volunteering for a single event: (i.e., One Time Volunteers)
- (1) Professionals with national organizations. These individuals will often provide services as speakers or seminar/workshop leaders.
  - (2) Credentialed and/or endorsed professionals, worship leaders or religious instructors.
  - (3) Performing or athletic groups which will have minimal or no direct contact with inmates.
  - (4) Representatives of organizations who have been provided with documentable training for volunteering in a correctional setting.
- c. Recommendations shall be delivered by the institution volunteer coordinator, to the Warden/designee for final approval.
- d. Information on volunteers will be tracked on a Department-wide computerized data base. This information will be shared by all NDCS volunteer coordinators.
- e. Once a volunteer has met the entire agency's requirements, has received an orientation, and has been approved at one secure facility they will be approved at all secure facilities. However, before providing volunteer services at another facility, the volunteer shall complete a facility specific tour and be briefed on the various aspects unique to each facility and the inmate population. The tour and briefing will be given by either the Volunteer Coordinator or Religious Coordinator depending upon the volunteer service being provided.

## 2. Ex-inmates

The volunteer programs may include ex-inmates as volunteers, providing the following is considered:

- a. Written approval to be given by the Warden/designee.
- b. The ex-inmate is no longer on parole and has been discharged for a minimum of 18 months and had no contact with any criminal justice agency during the 18 months. The Warden may make exceptions on a

case-by-case basis dependent upon agency needs, including exception based on NDCS staff recommendations.

- c. The type of crime and length of sentence.
  - d. The ex-inmate's friends and associates are still incarcerated.
  - e. The institutional record, including any program participation.
  - f. They possess a special talent or skill that will benefit the inmates, institution or NDCS.
3. After final approval by the Deputy Warden, each Volunteer's name shall be retained on file in the Volunteer Service Coordinator's Office. Initial training and orientation procedures shall then be scheduled by the Volunteer Service's Coordinator.

D. Orientation and Training

Orientation and training will be provided to volunteers by the Volunteer Coordinator or Religious Coordinator with whom they will be working. Exceptions may be made upon agreement between institution and department.

1. All volunteers are to attend an orientation session and be placed into the Volunteer database, prior to their first volunteer activity (Attachment 3). These orientation sessions shall be made available on an as needed basis as determined by the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers participating in a one-time activity are to be given a verbal and/or written orientation appropriate to the circumstance. Orientation for volunteers will include the following:
  - a. The criteria requirements for being a volunteer (a copy of the Volunteer Services AR shall be given to each volunteer);
  - b. An overview of NDCS philosophy and operation, the criminal justice system, agency mission statement and vision points;
  - c. Familiarization to OCC including physical plant layout, staffing, programming provided, operational memorandum, etc.
  - d. An overview of inmate characteristics and background;
  - e. Guidelines for working with inmates specific to the institution;
  - f. Security and confidentiality of information;
  - g. Emergency situations; (i.e., being taken hostage, severe weather, lockdown);
  - h. Contraband;
  - i. Ethics (A copy of the American Correctional Association's (ACA) Code of Ethics shall be given to each volunteer) (Attachment 4);
  - j. Workplace harassment policy;
  - k. Statutory provision regarding sexual conduct with inmates/parolees, Section 28-101 R.S. Supp. 1998.

I. Victim Services

m. PREA guidelines.

2. During this first six months, in addition to the general orientation, each volunteer shall be given specific training in a curriculum devised by the program head under whom the volunteer's services will be rendered. The subject matter and length of time needed shall be left to the discretion of that program head.
3. Volunteers may be directed by OCC staff verbally and/or in writing to report their observations or incidents they may witness. This information may be helpful in continuing and/or designing new programs and resolving security threats or misbehavior by inmates, staff or other volunteers.

E. Volunteer Responsibilities

1. In general, volunteers are to conduct themselves in a manner similar to that expected of employees pursuant to the rules and regulations of NDCS. Specifically, volunteers shall not:
  - a. Introduce contraband into any institution within NDCS;
  - b. Accept or issue any bribe, gift, loan, or gratuity from or to an inmate;
  - c. Engage in trading or trafficking with inmates, including selling, buying from, or delivering to any inmate any article or commodity, of any description, except through authorized channels;
  - d. Bring articles of any kind into an institution for delivery to an inmate, or take out an article of any kind for an inmate, unless authorized to do so by the Warden;
  - e. Give or send money to an inmate in a secure facility for any reason. Dual Status Volunteers may send money with Warden's advanced approval (refer to AR 208.01, Religious Services);
  - f. Be on the visiting list of any inmate, with the following exceptions:
    - (1) The visiting lists of inmates on community custody residing at a community corrections center.
    - (2) With written permission from the Warden, volunteers may be on the friends and family visiting list of an immediate family member. The volunteer should not provide services within the facility that houses the immediate family member without the Warden's permission. This exception also applies to dual status volunteers, as defined in AR 208.01, Religious Services. Exceptions for other non-immediate family members will be at the Warden's direction.
  - g. Provide services at any institution housing an immediate family member;
  - h. Be permitted to perform their duties or enter departmental facilities or offices while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs and/or controlled substances.
2. All volunteers shall sign a prepared statement agreeing to abide by all institutional/program policies and regulations, especially those dealing with security, confidentiality of records and other privileged information (Attachment 5).

3. All volunteers shall follow the same dress code established for visitors, per AR 205.02, Visiting.
4. All volunteers shall sign a waiver, acknowledging that they assume the risk of engaging in contact with inmates.
5. Volunteers will generally be responsible to the department head within whose area the volunteer service is being performed. Volunteers will be accountable, as is paid staff, for their actions and services rendered in the institution or program.
6. All volunteers working in a discipline which by law requires professional credentials, must hold such credentials and be able to produce verification of such.
7. No telephone communication or written correspondence (to include email) is allowed between volunteers and inmates at NDCS institutions. Exceptions may be approved by the Warden on a case-by-case basis and require written justification from the volunteer, and a recommendation from the Volunteer Coordinator or Religious Coordinator. (Exceptions to this section are made for dual status volunteers as written in AR 208.01)
8. Any volunteer who is arrested or issued a citation of the law, other than a minor traffic violation, must immediately notify the Warden or Volunteer Coordinator of his/her alleged violation of the law. Failure to report may result in suspension or termination of volunteer status.
9. Whenever a volunteer would like to play a video and/or audio recording at an approved activity, it must be screened and approved by the Intel Captain prior to the presentation. Recordings will be denied when they advocate violence, when the contents are likely to incite violence including inflammatory racist/ethnic content or illegal activity or sexual activity, or they describe plans for incendiary/explosive devices, alcohol/drugs or escape plans. No audio/video recordings will be allowed for hearing/viewing when such would violate copyright laws.
10. Group coordinators and volunteers shall have their activities reviewed a minimum of annually by the volunteer coordinator. This will coincide with a new NCIC check. This information will be updated in the volunteers file, and the volunteer database during the month of expiration.
11. Access areas for all groups of volunteers will be stipulated according to the Operational Memorandums.
12. All Volunteers must be escorted unless they have successfully completed Pre-Service and/or annual In-Service training as directed. Upon successful completion of Pre-Service and/or annual In-Service training, volunteers may be granted unescorted access to specified areas of the facility as approved by the Warden/designee.

F. Volunteer Categories

Volunteers shall be categorized into the following groups:

1. One-Time Volunteer

An individual may only be admitted into an institution once per year as a One-Time Volunteer for a single event or purpose.

2. Volunteer



The volunteer category is comprised of trained volunteers providing consistent and regular services to inmates.

3. Grant Recipient Volunteer

- a. The purpose of a Grant Recipient Volunteer is to provide vocational and life skills services to Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) offenders. The following applies to these individuals.
- b. Grant Volunteers will abide by the regulations stated within AR 105.01 unless specific provisions are granted by the Deputy Director of Operations, Deputy Director of Programs, or their designee.
- c. Grant Volunteers who complete the Pre-Service course and PPCT II will be allowed unescorted access to the area in which their event occurs. These individuals will be identified by a blue stripe at the bottom of their NDCS ID.
- d. The Grantee Coordinator will act as the Volunteer Coordinator for Grant Volunteers and will be responsible for the maintenance of their paperwork to include annual NCIC updates and In-Service training if applicable.

4. Group Coordinator

Group coordinators are those volunteers who work closely with the volunteer coordinator in providing services to inmates. Group Coordinators are the volunteers most involved in advisory and policymaking groups for the total program. Once a volunteer is approved by the institution/program as a group coordinator, that individual's volunteer application form is to be forwarded to NDCS Programs Administrator as a reference for other institution/programs. A group coordinator will:

- a. Be credentialed professionals in their area of volunteering, and/or;
- b. Be a director or executive director of a volunteer organization, and/or;
- c. Have a minimum of two (2) year's experience as a volunteer with NDCS.

5. Dual Status

An individual holding both a volunteer and clergy visitor status is identified as a dual status volunteer. In dual status cases, the clergy visitors/volunteers will already have a current NCIC and it will not be necessary to run a new NCIC to activate the new status, unless the NCIC has expired. In the event of a dual status, the volunteer will be afforded the same privileges as a clergy visitor as outlined in AR 208.01. When present in the facility as a volunteer all applicable volunteer regulations apply.

G. Peer Volunteer Program

OCC and Adult Parole Administration recognize that some parolees can offer inmates insight into release planning that will facilitate success and potentially reduce recidivism. Parolees may participate in events facilitated by staff for this purpose. Such events may occur at the request of staff or structured inmate clubs.

2. Application Process

A parolee may volunteer for or a Parole Officer may invite a stable parolee to participate in the program. In order to be selected, a parolee should have a period of time on parole that has been successful. The parolee may have experienced some struggles initially; however, there should be sufficient stabilization to ensure that the parolee can provide appropriate guidance. Rather than have specific guidelines, the parole officer will consider the following:

- a. Length of stable time on parole in the following areas:
  - (1) Residence
  - (2) Sobriety
  - (3) Relationships
  - (4) Medication
  - (5) Associates
  - (6) Overall outlook concerning changing behavior, responding to challenges and experience on parole
- b. Length of time since any parole violation
- c. References from others in the community that the parolee is involved with including:
  - (1) Mental Health/substance abuse providers/sponsors
  - (2) Family member (this should not be the only reference that the parolee has)
- d. Parolee commitment and interest in helping other offenders re-enter the community. Including a potential interest to continue participating after discharge from parole.
- e. Ability to follow instructions from the NDCS/APA staff the parolee will be working with.

3. Upon identification of an interested parolee/former parolee, the parole officer will ensure that the person meets the qualifications and will prepare the Peer Volunteer Program form (attachment 9) and submit to his/her supervisor. Upon approving, the supervisor will submit to the Warden. Once the Warden has approved the form, it will be forwarded to the Adult Parole Administrator/designee who will forward to the Reentry Administrator/designee for his/her approval and finally to the Deputy Director of Programs for approval.

4. Preparation for entering the institution

Parolees and former inmates selected for this program will not need to go through a volunteer program, as they will be escorted by a staff person at all times. However they will be required to submit an NCIC form.

5. Removal of a parolee/former parolee from the program

In the event a participant elects to be removed from the program or needs to be removed due to unsatisfactory progress, relapse, parole violations, criminal conduct or other situation that make the participant unacceptable, a new attachment 9 shall be resubmitted through the supervisor to the Adult Parole Administrator/designee, Warden Reentry Administrator/designee, Deputy Director of Programs/designee notifying of the removal.

At the completion of a successful quarter of participation (the end of the month September, December, March and June) in the Peer Volunteer Program, the parolee/former parolee will be issued a certificate of successful participation (attachment 10). Successful participation shall mean at least one volunteer event during the quarter. The assigned parole officer shall be responsible for monitoring and issuing the certificate(s).

#### H. Volunteer I.D. Cards

Volunteers and group coordinators will be issued photo I.D. cards.

1. A volunteer I.D. card will be issued to volunteers after 6 months or longer service with NDCS (attachment 8). Depending upon the program, the institutional volunteer coordinator or the institutional religious coordinator will notify the volunteer and arrange for the volunteer to have the ID card mad.

Once the I.D. card has been issued, the volunteer will retain the ID card in their possession and will be responsible for showing the NDCS issued I.D. card along with their state issued I.D./drivers license to enter the facility. The volunteer will wear their NDCS issued I.D. at all times when in a facility. Only one I.D. card will be issued to a volunteer for all facilities.

2. The ID card will contain the following:
  - a. Picture of the volunteer, preferably with a yellow background, or a color background different than employees; Full-time Volunteer Clergy ID cards will have a green background.
  - b. Name of the volunteer.
  - c. The position title of the volunteer – group coordinator or volunteer (i.e., group coordinator, volunteer, or full-time volunteer clergy).
  - d. Date of issue.
3. Volunteers not issued ID cards will be granted admission to an institution by placement of their names on a list each time they are approved to enter the institution. When in the institution, they will wear "visitor" cards.
4. A computerized database which includes name, current address, telephone number, current status, record of participation and other relevant information by individual volunteers will be maintained by each institution's Volunteer Coordinator. This information will be shared by all institution/program volunteer and religious coordinators.
5. Each approved volunteer will receive a letter once a year from the Volunteer Coordinator/Religious Coordinator with a Personal Information for Security Form (NCIC) attached. The letter will be sent out at the first of the month when the volunteer's NCIC is due. The volunteer will be given 15 days to fill out, sign, and

return the NCIC to the Volunteer Coordinator/Religious Coordinator. If there is no response by the 15th of the month, the Volunteer Coordinator/Religious Coordinator will send out a follow-up letter, warning the volunteer of change in status if there is no response by the end of the month. If no response is received by the end of the month, the volunteer's status will change to "Inactive" on the NDCS Volunteer Database and the volunteer must return their volunteer ID card. The volunteer will then be required to repeat the application and orientation process in order to serve as a volunteer again. A final letter will be sent to the volunteer advising them of the change in their status, explaining the conditions for the re-application and requesting the volunteer card be returned.

I. Termination/Suspension

At such time as deemed necessary by the Warden for the safety of the volunteers, the management of the inmate population, or the tightening of security precautions, may restrict, postpone, suspend or terminate the services of any volunteer or volunteer organization.

1. If a situation of high risk occurs in the institution, the Warden/designee may, by verbal mandate immediately discontinue, restrict or terminate the services of volunteers.
2. Following the issue of such a mandate, a written statement shall be prepared by the Volunteer Coordinator or the Religious Coordinator and signed by the Warden informing the volunteer or volunteer organization of the reason(s) for the discontinuance of the program. The statement shall be issued to the volunteer(s) unless divulging such would be detrimental to the safety and security of OCC and/or the general public.
3. When a volunteer has been terminated or suspended, the Administrative Assistant III-Institutions will be notified. They will make the appropriate database entries and subsequently notify all other coordinators and relevant stakeholders in NDCS. The respective volunteer or religious coordinator will send a letter to the volunteer requesting that the volunteer ID card be returned.

I. Funding

See AR 113.01, *Fiscal Management* for funding relevant to volunteer and volunteer activities.

VI. References:

ACA Standards 4-4114, 4-4115, 4-4116, 4-4117, 4-4118, 4-4119, 4-4120-4-4121, and 4-4122.

Attachments:

1. Volunteer Application Form DCS-A-adm-123-pc
2. DCS Personal Information for Security Check Form DCS-A-per-002
3. Orientation and Waiver Form for One-Time Volunteers
4. ACA Code of Ethics
5. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Volunteer Pledge and Waiver
6. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Volunteer Training Record
7. Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Religious and Volunteer Services Organization Chart
8. Volunteer Identification Card Request Form
9. Application for Volunteer Peer mentor
10. Certificate Success-Peer Mentor

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES  
VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First Middle*

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (Social Security number is needed to complete security check.)

In Case Of Emergency Notify: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Are You on a Visiting List of, or Visiting any Inmate or Detainee? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If Yes, Inmate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any specific area/program within the Department for which you wish to volunteer?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ If yes, list which area/program (be specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever volunteered for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services? If yes, where and when? \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the following information so you may best be matched with our volunteer needs:

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills/Abilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Prior Volunteer Experience(s): \_\_\_\_\_

List the names of three individuals we may contact (other than relatives) who have knowledge of your skills and character.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# NEBRASKA

DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

## Personal Information for Security Check

As part of maintaining a safe and secure environment the NDCS may conduct security checks prior to and periodically throughout an individual's employment or affiliation with the NDCS. A conviction does not automatically bar an individual from entering a facility or from employment. Each case will be considered individually. **All information on this document is required.** If you omit any information from this form you may be disqualified from entrance to a facility or employment. **PLEASE READ FULLY AND PRINT LEGIBLY IN INK.**

**Please check the appropriate reason for requesting entrance into a facility.**

List position title and facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor     NDCS Employment     Volunteer     Clergy     Intern     Temp/SOS     PREA

PRINT NAME  
(Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial)

Date of Birth  
Month/Day/Year

Social Security Number

Other Names Used (e.g. aliases, former names, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number / State  
If no driver's license, please enter your state ID.

State ID number

Expiration Date

Place of Birth (City, State or Country)    Sex    Race    Height    Weight lbs.    Eyes    Hair

List all previous states or countries of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Current address:

Street Address    City    State    Zip

Please provide your current phone numbers and e-mail addresses (business and personal):

Home: (    )    E-mail addresses: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: (    )    \_\_\_\_\_

Other: (    )    \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently or have you ever been in contact with any Nebraska Department of Correctional Services inmate (current or former) by way of phone, facility visit, or email?    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, state name, facility, and relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_

Are you or have you ever been affiliated with a gang/security threat group(s)?    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, state group name and your affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby certify that all information I have entered on this form is accurate and complete. I understand and agree that the NDCS may use information on this form to conduct security checks prior to and periodically throughout my employment or affiliation with the NDCS. I understand that failure to disclose or fully disclose the requested information may be grounds for disqualification of my application or termination of my employment.**

Signature

Date



**NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**  
**VOLUNTEER PLEDGE AND WAIVER**

INSTITUTION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    LAST                    FIRST                    MIDDLE

**PLEDGE**

In consideration of being allowed to participate in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (DCS) volunteer program, I agree that:

1. I will abide by all policies, rules and regulations of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services and of each facility where I perform volunteer services;
2. I will follow verbal instructions given to me by DCS staff;
3. I will abide by the policies and procedures regarding confidentiality of information;
4. I will not accept from nor convey to an inmate or anyone acting on behalf of an inmate any article, money or message without appropriate approval from DCS staff;
5. I will keep scheduled hours as agreed;
6. I will not perform professional services which by law require certification, licensing or credentials that I do not have;
7. I will dress in accord with the DCS dress code; and
8. I will immediately report to correctional facility staff any violation of the DCS rules by an inmate or another volunteer.

**WAIVER**

In consideration of being allowed to participate in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (DCS) volunteer program, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. My participation as a volunteer may involve risk of serious injury or harm;
2. I understand that the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services makes no representations regarding behavior of the inmates with whom I may come in contact;
3. I assume any and all risks of injury or harm caused by or arising from my participation in the volunteer program;

This Volunteer Pledge and Waiver shall remain in full force and effect for the duration of my volunteer service with the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

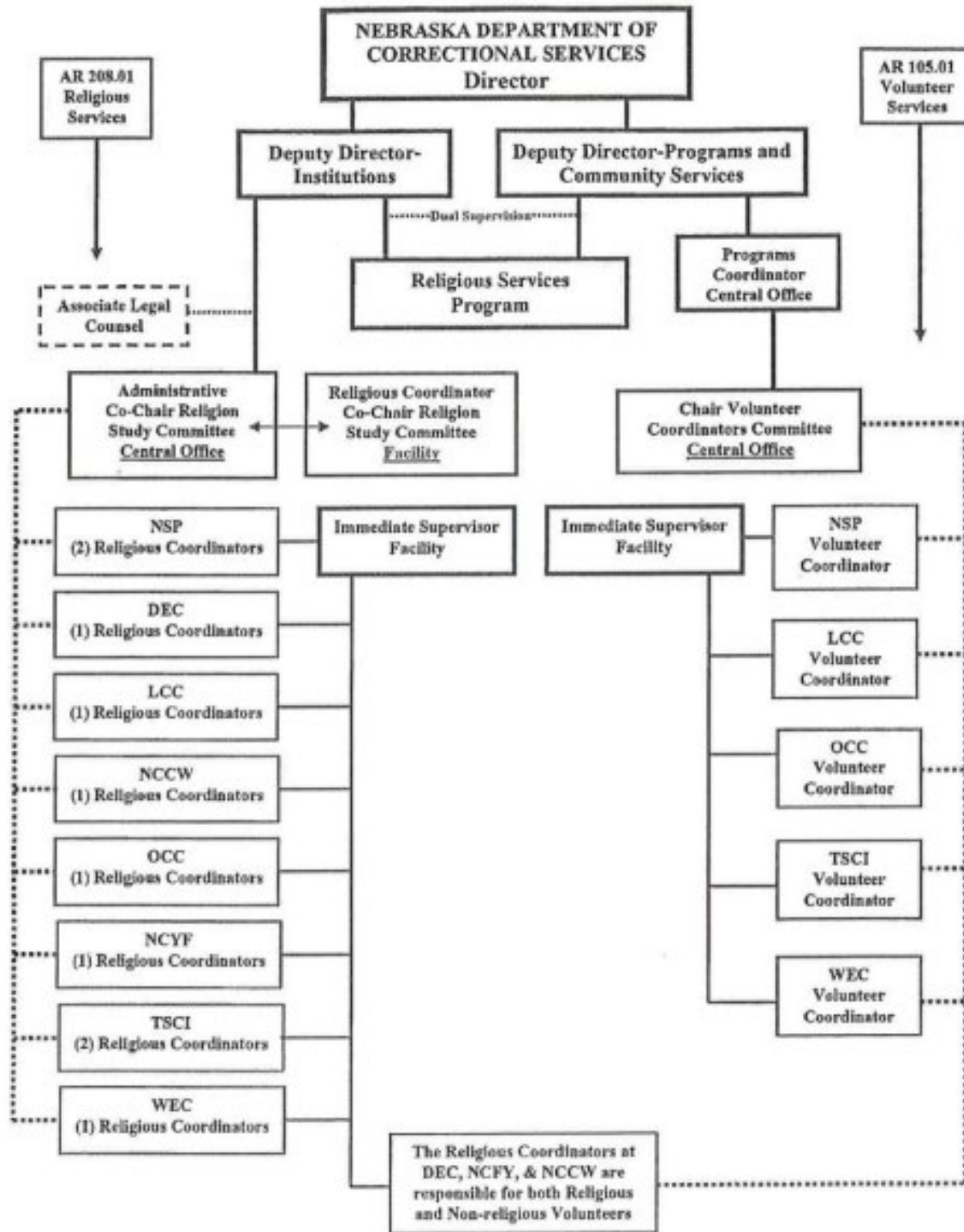
\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date







 UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA OMAHA  
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

 COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE  
SCHOOL OF CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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