

Ideas and Themes from Mapping the Future of Technology in Prison Higher Education

a Convening hosted by Open Campus Media, with support from Ascendium Education Group



STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

College students in prison deeply value personal contact and camaraderie with teachers and fellow students.

The personal connection is much harder with 100% online learning.

Lack of digital literacy will be a big hurdle after release.



TECHNOLOGY AND SCALING: SOLUTION OR PROBLEM?

It's not either/or: learners will need tech skills after release. Technology is a vehicle of instruction and also a means to teach digital literacy.

Technology makes scaling easier and wider access possible –but what about quality?

Scaling will be a matter of partner diversification and coordination.

Defining quality (quality indicators) is key to fending off predatory providers.



RELATIONSHIPS AND CULTURE

College partners can create a consortium to increase consistency for students.

College, prison education and custody staff need to build rapport and work to prioritize student success.

Culture shift: corrections needs to move from managing tech from worst-case scenarios to solutions that help the most people.

PELL GRANT HOPES AND FEARS



HOPES

- More colleges and universities get involved, expanding offerings.
- Increases quality innovation and solutions.



FEARS

- Learners use up their one-time Pell money before getting a degree.
- Attracts predatory actors.



WHAT'S AHEAD? OBSERVATIONS AND TAKEAWAYS

Carceral and higher education systems each have their own shortcomings and shortsightedness that prevent centering on the needs of students.

As choice expands, more work is needed on what choices are, how they're presented, who presents them and what drives them.

More than 100 attended the Feb. 24 virtual conference from various arenas, including state corrections, universities and advocacy groups. Panelists included Allen Burnett, Justin Hong, Taffany Lim, Terrell Blount, Max Kenner, James Montiero, Erin Corbett, Andrew Lama, Cynthia Conti-Cook, Cris Fanning, Michelle Ruder, Brant Choate, Daniel Karpowitz, Jule Hall, Toya Wall.