

From: Peter Hernberg <petehern@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, October 8, 2020 10:15 AM

To: HOWARD Karen Lynne <karen.lynne.howard@HECC.OREGON.GOV>

Cc: Louis De Sitter <louis.desitter@oregoned.org>; Brett Nair <brett.nair@oregoned.org>; Enrique Farrera <enriquef@clackamas.edu>

Subject: Statistics on DOC for Chair Rives

Karen,

I am including the full text of my remarks below, but I want to highlight some of the numbers:

- Racial disparities in Oregon prisons: Black Oregonians make up just 2% of our state's population, but 10% of Oregon's prison population—Black Oregonians are five times more likely to be imprisoned than white Oregonians; Native Americans are 3 times more likely than white Oregonians to be imprisoned; Latinx Oregonians are 30% more likely to be imprisoned. Source: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/graphs/disparities2010/OR_racial_disparities_2010.html
- In the two year period from 2003-2005, Oregon State Penitentiary, the second-largest prison in the state, saw just 14 GEDs completed. I got this data from Louis De Sitter, OEA's excellent legislative advocate. He's CCed on this email and would be happy to answer any follow up questions.

Full written remarks:

Chair Rives ("Reeves"), members of the commission, thank for giving me the opportunity to speak today in opposition to the Oregon Department of Correction's disastrous plan to end its contracts with Oregon community colleges. For the record, I'm Pete Hernberg, President of the Blue Mountain Faculty Association.

Under the current system, DOC contracts with six Oregon community colleges to provide Adult Basic Education, GED, and English as a Second Language instruction to adults in custody at Oregon's prisons. Under this system, where we have dedicated educators working to train and educate citizens who will rejoin the community upon their release from prison, Oregon's GED completion rate in its prisons is among the top five in the nation.

Before I begin, I recognize HECC's commitment to an equity lens, and so I believe it's important to point out that Black Oregonians make up just 2% of our state's population, but 10% of Oregon's prison population—Black Oregonians are five times more likely to be imprisoned than white Oregonians; Native Americans are 3 times more likely than white Oregonians to be imprisoned; Latinx Oregonians are 30% more likely to be imprisoned. As you listen to the problems with the DOC's plan, I would ask you to consider the disproportionate impact the DOC's plan will have.

What is DOC's plan? For the past month, the Department of Corrections has issued a series of increasingly unreasonable demands to community colleges, all the while pursuing its true plan: ending its contracts with community colleges and taking this work in-house. This will lead to the lay off of many experienced community college faculty members—and you might think that's the only reason I'm here, to fight layoffs of my union members. But I believe I can very quickly convince you that this plan is a disaster for Oregon's prisons.

First, all but one of DOC's contracts with community colleges end on January 31st, 2021. But it can't implement its plan to bring education "in house" until the new biennium begins in July, leaving adults in custody without education for at least six months. This would violate Oregon law, which requires Oregon prisons to offer education to qualifying adults in custody. Moreover, because adults in custody can have their sentences reduced by successful participation in educational programming, the result would be

longer prison sentences and higher costs for Oregon's prisons. But it gets worse! ODOC's plan states that they plan to staff their in-house education programs with laid-off prisoner guards replacing the experienced educators employed by community colleges. Don't take my word for it—that's really their plan!

Perhaps you're still not convinced. I would ask you to consider this: ODOC tried this before, in 2003. So what were the results? In the two year period from 2003-2005, Oregon State Penitentiary, the second-largest prison in the state, saw just 14 GEDs completed. Yes, that's 14 ("one four") GEDs in two years. It's our understanding ODOC ended the program because its disastrous results imperiled Federal Title II funding. If DOC again tries this failed approach, what will the consequences be for Oregon's Title II funding under the federal Workforce Investment Act? What will be the consequences for Oregon's 40/40/20 plan the adult education objectives the HECC has established? And what will be the educational and career consequences for learners in Oregon's prisons?

You are entrusted by the state of Oregon with ensuring the best possible higher education experience for all students, and you have made a commitment to considering disproportionate impacts on people of color and other marginalized groups, so I urge you to contact DOC and the Governor to share your concerns about this disastrous plan and encourage DOC to begin good-faith contract negotiations with community colleges. Thank you.

Pete