

**To: Chairwoman Theresa Alonso Leon, and Members of the Joint Task Force**

**From: Students at Coffee Creek: Jessica Dutro-Seaman, Danielle Cox, Carolyn Exum, Sarah Martin, and Sasha Womack**

**Date: July 29, 2022**

**Re: Higher Education in Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF)**

First and foremost, thank you for taking your time to meet and converse with us.

College students residing here at CCCF are seeking your support to implement positive reinforcements to promote the strength and sustainability of higher education in our facility. To protect these efforts, we have established the following 5 requests identified during our video conference with the Task Force:

1. **Equitable Access:** We would like to be viewed as equals and given the same opportunities to pursue higher education, develop marketable job skills, contribute to our continued success upon release, and reduce recidivism, as our male DOC counterparts. While all opportunities might not be exactly the same, we would like to have the ability to engage in similar programs with similar outcomes. Equitable access also includes DOC staff support to provide access to attend classes.
2. **Priority Badges:** We would like to ensure that priority access is given to those providing services through qualified higher education institutions- currently Portland State University and the University of Oregon. This involves processing badges and clearance to facilitate classes and other program requirements in a timely manner.
3. **Designated Educational Space:** Higher education has been placed in numerous areas of the institution to accommodate classroom time, which creates instability and inconsistency for those navigating stressful conditions, while incarcerated and also displaced by COVID limitations. By providing a designated environment solely for the purposes of higher education, we will be able to streamline courses and educational services, access books and materials kept there for college students, etc. This will also support the efforts of faculty and students to engage in online courses and enhance the productivity of the higher education programs.
4. **M17 to include higher education:** Many students are currently experiencing the barrier of choosing between employment required under Measure 17, or choosing to pursue higher education. Our proposed solution to this is to mandate that students participating in higher education be afforded the opportunity to receive PRAS points, that pays them to be students. Since students have to be in school *at least* half time to receive Pell dollars, this change is important. Ideally, we would

also have the ability to choose to work part time, as some of our male DOC counterparts do.

5. **Funding:** We ask that all Pell-eligible higher education programs, as designated by the Federal Department of Education, operating within CCCF receive a minimum annual allocation of \$100,000.00 from the State of Oregon. This will ensure that students who wish to participate in higher education courses have the ongoing opportunity, providing some financial stability for these programs.

Thank you for your willingness to actively build a platform and invest in human beings that are taking their imprisonment as a stepping stone to mature and to regain self-worth. We are striving to become the change we wish to see, and in turn ask that you join our movement that empowers the women of the future.

Sincerely,

The Women of Coffee Creek