

## **Auburn APAEP in Prison**

**ACCREDITED**

The opportunity for degree acquisition by the American Council of Education (A. C. E.) while confined to one of the most suppressive prison systems (Alabama Department of Corrections) in the Unites States, now sets the stage for human experimentation in social anthropology, and is made possible by a leading revolutionary effort in penal reformation emphasizing rehabilitation through cognitive enhancement. Auburn University's Alabama Prison Arts and Education Project (APAEP) is a nationally recognized program offering continuing education credits in an array of subject areas for over a decade, while many of its prisoner participant students have clamored for more intensive studies and those that would ultimately ensure their successful integration back into society as responsible and productive citizens.

The Director of the APAEP is a most perspicacious and diligent individual who has near single handedly changed the philosophy of incarceration from retribution and chronic stagnant ineffectiveness to one of higher cognitive thinking and problem solving by way of prisoners access to obtaining a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business and Human Development and Family Studies. The program officially starts January of 2017 and qualifying inclusion criteria for prisoners to participate is stringent. The ADOC currently offers GED acquisition at the anticipated location (Elmore Correctional Facility) for the APAEP new initiative. As well, prisoners at Elmore, who are enrolled in the trade school, are transported to a nearby technical school for classes. The ADOC is scant in offering

any other types of formal, by outside source governed education, although in the past, Elmore has offered over a hundred classes taught by the best collegiate teachers throughout the country in audio/video format, well known and reputable self-help/character development audio/visual teachings, and limited therapeutic entities, all facilitated by prisoners. This type of congruency will be essential to restart amongst prospective students in order to maintain motivation, which can be drained by the multi-faceted detrimental prison environment in Alabama.

To date, no one factor has consistently been shown to reduce recidivism other than the acquisition of traditional higher education degrees. Likewise, the government has not in recent decades made any reasonable attempt to provide such means to these degrees and this has contributed to the current global leading of egregious overcrowded inhumane prisons in the U. S.. The Obama Administration has interjected to rescind this ignominious trend.

It is worthy of experimentation to determine if 'right teaching' to an 'abnormal population' in a 'wrong environment' can influence one toward 'improved cognition'. All terms in quotations need boundaries of definition beyond the scope of this paper, as well as a control group, to rightly be considered scientific method, at least. However, we will consider the degree of content and adjunctive activities to constitute 'right teaching'; largely personality disorders and criminal thinking to define 'abnormal population'; and 'wrong environment' as the predominate barbarism of the ADOC. For sake of maximal beneficial results it would be ideal to segregate this in a not for profit private

prison with handpicked personnel to operate it, but that is not likely without directive by the Executive Branch and corresponding funding that is unlikely to occur at this bellwether.

Now is a unique time in meeting between resistance to education by prison bureaucracy and advocacy for such by progressive institutions for advancement of nation and humanity. There is no responsible coalition between the two for implementation of conducting academics. A prisoner currently has no practical means of maintaining educational materials among his/her living space. There are no book shelves in dormitories where students will reside for the APAEP degree, nor any tables to sit at and study, Etc. Yet, the ADOC will insist to the APAEP personnel all is ready and in place to the dismay of the prisoner student, who lives in the dorm where lights are turned out rarely before eleven or twelve midnight and back on at three in the morning. The non-availability of a reasonable atmosphere to acquire higher education falls on the ADOC Commissioner ultimately and locally with the warden of each facility. Current mentality of both is to do no more than the courts mandate and can in actuality enforce. This attitude can be adjusted with endorsement by the Governor, however as evidenced by Alabama's poor ranking nationally concerning education, it is unlikely. And so, this is where a call for Congressional support to intervene in Alabama's dismal policies and specifically in prison policies is essential to the success of rehabilitation.

It is time to move forward despite vindictiveness toward those who have

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been convicted of crimes, keeping in mind the gross injustice in our Judiciary process today also, and take appropriate action to promote wellbeing in society as a whole by affording education to those willing to improve themselves while in captivity. Likely public support will be less than enthusiastic.

Innovation by telemedia and many other means of completing studies needs incorporated into this effort at regular intervals and after-action findings noted regularly in order to fine-tune the program. This will require a holistic and cooperative effort on the part of all involved.

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