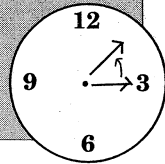


COURIER

Chemeketa Community College

Nov 2, 2007

Daylight savings time is Nov 4, so remember to turn your clocks back!



Inmates trade negative pasts for renewed future opportunities

By Janel Foster
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Chemeketa now offers education opportunities to inmates at Oregon State Penitentiary.

Two adult education programs are offered through OSP.

The first, called Inside Out, allows 15 outside students to go into OSP and attend class with 15 inmates inside.

The second is called College Inside, a program that is solely for the inmates inside the institute.

College Inside is in its first term with 56 students.

Nancy Green, the director of Corrections Education, and several other instructors from OSP and the Oregon State Corrections Institute have combined to create a stable program that they believe is a beacon of hope for these students' future.

"The skills that these men will acquire from this program are essentially the same as those of any college student," Green said.

Instructors involved in this program are Samuel Pierce who teaches psychology at OSP and OSCI; Ruth Perkins who

teaches writing at OSP; and Lori Murphy Cole, who teaches geography at OSCI.

According to Green, this program will promote:

- Stable learning climates of mutual respect and fairness;
- Creative and critical thinking;
- Clarification of student's expectations of responsibility for knowledge; and
- Learning as a lifelong process

"I believe that Chemeketa's teaching and learning values fit perfectly in this unique teaching and learning environment," she said.

Green provided the following details about the program by answering questions posed by The Courier.

Question: What are the requirements for participating students to participate in the program?

Answer: To receive the scholarship funding they have to have their high school diploma or their GED.

Inmates have to have 18 months of clear conduct. If they have been in prison shorter than 18 months they have to



photo by Nancy Green

The College Inside students enrolled in Lori Cole's geography class at Oregon State Correctional Institution, during a recent class meeting.

have a clear conduct record since the time they became incarcerated.

Finally, they must be within five years of release.

If they are not within their five years of release, students are required to pay their full tuition costs.

Q: Are the tuition costs the

same as students attending Chemeketa outside the program?

A: No, in the program each student pays a tuition fee of \$25

Inmate education

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per class.

Q: That's a significant amount less than other students. Why is that?

A: A generous donor to the Chemeketa Foundation (anonymous to students) pays the remaining \$167 per class for the students who qualify for this scholarship.

Most students are taking two classes per term.

Q: What is a typical student in College Inside like?

A: The program is for male prisons; it's a big room of guys. Our youngest student is 21; he just completed his GED inside.

Q: What is the average age of these students?

A: Most are in their 20s and 30s.

Q: Is this program currently a form of rehabilitation?

A: We really do want to impact recidivism.

The donor believes that this is a good investment for the community based on some statistics that he has seen.

Here is a quote from a student, in a letter written to the anonymous donor, "There was a time I thought I knew everything, but of course, knew nothing. Now I am all too aware of my lack of knowledge, but I also have a great desire to change that. Thank you for helping me towards that goal."

According to Oregon Department of Corrections, "those participating in an education program are 15 percent less likely to recidivate."

In terms of cost-saving, for every dollar the Oregon Department of Corrections invests in Adult Basic Education, the state saves \$2.15.

Q: What positive aspects have come out of having this program available?

A: The students always express how much this means to

them.

Many have had negative educational experiences and have commented on their insecurities about taking college classes until they received the teacher's comments on their essays or their grades on quizzes. They have discovered that they are much brighter than they have been told in the past or than they expected

While this program is not funded through the state, Green said she thought that it fits well with the evidence-based practices of the ODOC.

"These men want a future that is different from their past mistakes. They want to have an education and skills to get a good job to support themselves and their families," she said.

In addition, the College Inside Program directly addresses the ODOC's mission of reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.