

NEH 2019 Summer Institute on Incarceration and the Humanities

PROJECT COMPLETION PLAN Submitted by John Chaney

Project Description: Enhancement of the scope of the Criminal Justice Program's Corrections & Sentencing course by:

- Dedicating one full class session for each of the scheduled daytime classes for a facility site visit at Queensboro Correctional Facility (QCF) a prison facility operated by the New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) and located across the street from our college's E building (below). These visits will consist of a tour and career information component where students will be given the opportunity to speak with onsite officers, staff and administrators. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in a "Learning Circle" class room discussion with QCF students enrolled in volunteer classes facilitated by LAGCC Humanities faculty volunteers.



- Arrange for a collaboration of Criminal Justice majors, students and facilitators of LaGuardia Performing Arts Center (LPAC), and the Theater of the Oppressed (TONYC <https://www.tonyc.nyc/>) to arrange for a performance at QCF highlighting post release issues and possible solutions that will reduce mass incarceration.

Purpose: This project will give students a rare opportunity to speak directly with both criminal justice corrections professionals and incarcerated consumers, adding both depth and dimension to their college experience.

Additionally, students studying Criminal Justice and Humanities regularly apply critical thinking to issues that address ethical responsibilities of proactive citizenship, including reversing the negative impact of current sociological, racial and economic trends contributing to mass incarceration, arguably the most pressing civil rights issue of our time. This project will serve to both demystify and humanize many concepts covered during class lectures while adding unprecedented opportunities for our students to converse with individuals whose lives have been

directly affected by issues that encompass real life cross references of Humanities and Criminal Justice, working to create for them a stronger co-curricular experience.

Completion Steps:

A. Tour & Career Information Component

1. Arrange a meeting with QCF administration to discuss details of this project to receive a confirmation of approval to proceed. Be sure to arrive at an agreement on a realistic daytime time frame for each visit (anticipated: 90 to 120 minutes), and start date.
2. Find out from QCF security personnel to learn what specific security clearance procedures our students may have to undergo in order to participate in the site visit, including submission of DOCCS applications and acceptable forms of identification (LAGCC ID cards ideally).
3. Highlight for QCF administrators the specific corrections professionals with which we hope the students can engage to determine the ideal times for accessibility to these individuals. Include in this discussion what QCF will allow students to actually see during the tour (may or may not include housing units; mess hall; library; etc.).

B. The Learning Circle

1. Discuss with QCF administrators any concerns they may have in selecting students enrolled in QCF LAGCC volunteer classes to participate in Learning Circle discussions with current LAGCC Criminal Justice majors (note: they selected specific residents to participate last time. Any pros or cons in using this approach??).
2. Use the scheduling spreadsheet for 2019-2020 in order to identify SSJ 202 classes and their assigned instructors to determine the possible number of possible onsite engagements we may wish to have at QCF, then reach out to each instructor to generate interest in adding this component to the syllabus.

C. Theatrical Performance inside QCF highlighting issues of Incarceration..

1. Arrange for a meeting with administrators for LPAC and TONYC, to assess possible interest in performing inside a correctional facility. Discuss possible timelines, possible sources of funding to retain TONYC, also discussing recruitment of LAGCC students as well as possible partnership with The Fortune Society (CBO and collaborative partner with the May 2019 Criminal Justice conference <https://fortunesociety.org/>).
2. If the above meeting participants confirm interest, arrange a meeting with QCF Deputy Superintendent of Programs and Deputy Superintendent of Security to assess interest, as well as any administrative or logistics protocols and/or barriers that need to be addressed

Target Audience: Students in all Fall I and Spring I day sections of SSJ 202

Required Resources: I will need co-curricular funding from Student Affairs or some other source in order to retain TONYC in collaborating with our students in stage training and in developing the performance at QCF.

Collaborators: QCF; LAGCC faculty and staff volunteers from Social Science, Humanities and English departments, LPAC, LAGCC Student Affairs, TONYC, and the Fortune Society.