

# Working with Incarcerated Students – An Update to the Field

**Raul Arambula, CCC Chancellor's Office**

**Dolores Davison, ASCCC Vice President**

**Michael Wyly, Solano Community College**

# Incarcerated Students in California Community Colleges

- Currently more than 7,000 CCC students in 35 prisons around the state
- Courses are taught inside the prisons or by correspondence
- SB 1391 (Hancock, 2014) introduced an opportunity for community colleges and state prisons to coordinate the offering of face-to-face instruction in programs that lead toward degrees or certificates that result in enhanced workforce skills.
  - Pursuant to Senate Bill 1391 (Hancock), the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) have entered into an Interagency Agreement for inmate education to expand access to community college courses that lead to degrees or certificates with an emphasis in Career Technical Education (CTE) skills or transfer to a four-year university.
  - Four pilot programs were selected: Antelope Valley, Chaffey, Folsom Lake, and Lassen.

# Bridging the Academic/ Equity gaps for Incarcerated Students

- How do we make it work?
- What are the logistics and how do they impact instruction?
- What challenges do faculty face?
- How do we initiate conversations with discipline faculty and/or departments to solicit buy-in?
- What programs apply to incarcerated students?
- DSPS, EOPS, other equitable services; how do we make those work inside?
- Guided Pathways?

# Breaking the Barriers: What Barriers Currently Exist For Incarcerated Students?

- Educational

E-Readers, Books, and Other Materials

Meeting course hours

DSPS, who provides testing?

Programs and courses

Instructor Office hours

Internet and Classrooms

- Correctional

Classrooms

Lockdowns

Course hours

Staff conflicts

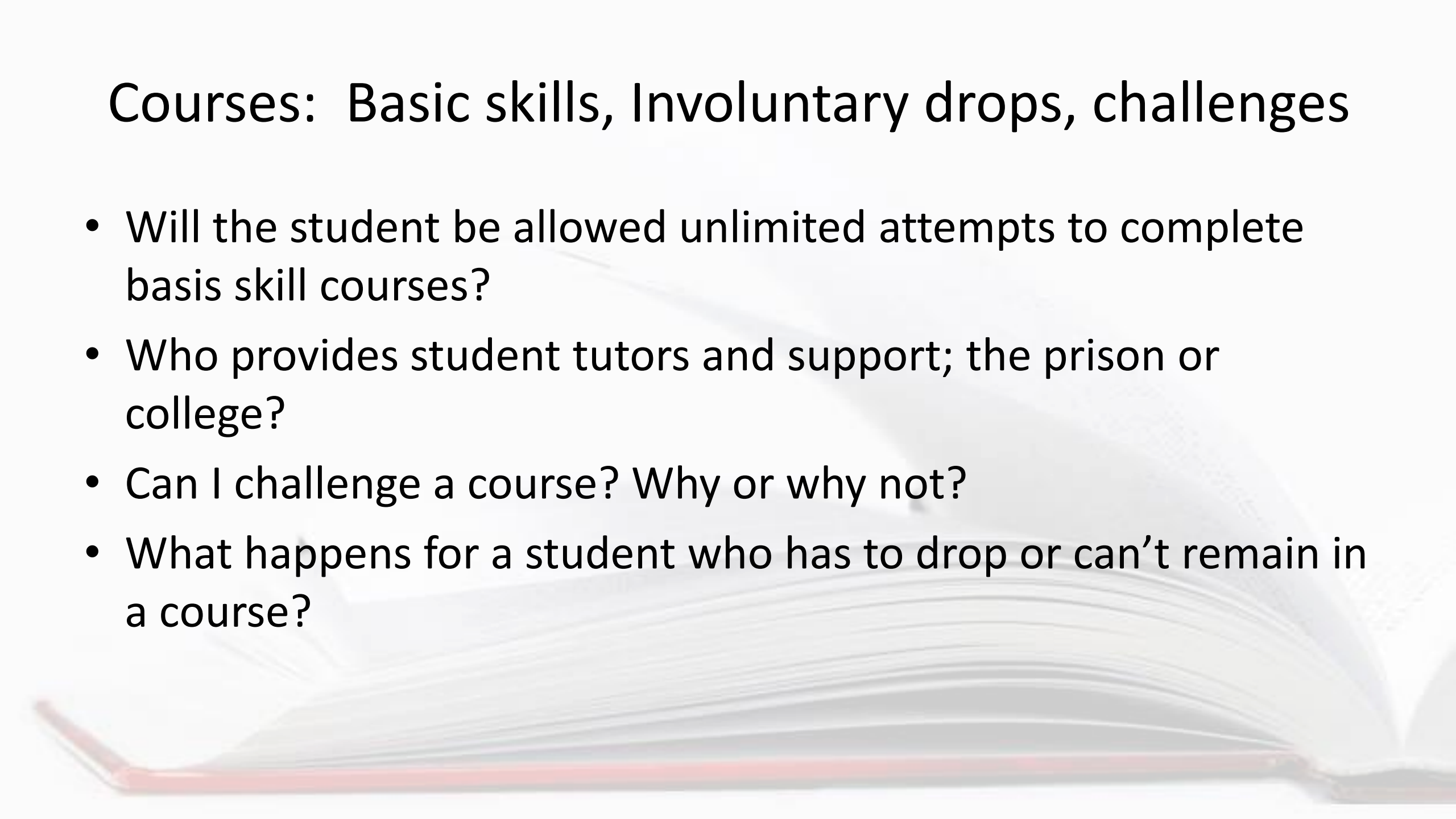
Is there a way for the incarcerated students to be housed on a separate unit?

Can the students be on a different meal time or schedule to support classroom hours?

# DSPS, EOPS, other Equitable services

- My students need more services than I anticipated.
- Substandard skills: I need DSPS
- Basic skills remain as an essential foundational tool.
- Don't exempt me because of my imprisonment; I'm entitled to services.
- Are we duplicating services, if so, is that really a bad thing?
- Polishing our current practices?

# Courses: Basic skills, Involuntary drops, challenges

- Will the student be allowed unlimited attempts to complete basic skill courses?
  - Who provides student tutors and support; the prison or college?
  - Can I challenge a course? Why or why not?
  - What happens for a student who has to drop or can't remain in a course?
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# 'EW' (Excused Withdrawal) Grade

- On January 23, 2018, Title 5 §55023 (Academic Record Symbols and GPA) and §55024 (Withdrawal) were amended to include the Excused Withdrawal (EW).
  - §55023 recognizes the EW grade: “THE EW symbols may be used as described in, and in accordance with, §55024.”
  - §55024(e) states: “The governing board of a district that decides to provide a withdrawal policy shall also adopt an excused withdrawal procedure based upon verifiable documentation supporting the request.”
    - EW occurs when a student is permitted to withdraw from a course(s) due to specific events beyond the control of the student affecting his or her ability to complete a course(s).
    - EW shall not be counted in progress probation and dismissal calculations.
    - EW shall not be counted toward the permitted number of withdrawals or counted as an enrollment attempt.
    - In no case may an excused withdrawal result in a student being assigned an “FW” grade.

# Implications of EW Grade

- EW grade may include a job transfer outside the geographical region, an illness in the family where the student is the primary caregiver, or other extenuating circumstances.
- EW grade applies if an incarcerated student in a California state prison or county jail is released from custody or involuntarily transferred before the end of the term, compelling a withdrawal from the course(s).
- Extenuating circumstances are verified cases of accidents, illnesses or other circumstances beyond the control of the student.
- Grading policies fall under the 10+1, and should be set by local Academic Senates per local policy and procedures: local procedure to petition for EW, to be developed with local Academic Senates
- Implications for incarcerated students, but also other extenuating circumstances which may impact the student, such as homelessness, food insecurity, domestic violence, or other circumstances which may disenfranchise the student of sufficient access to the classroom space.



# Guided Pathways, what's that?

- My skills are so low, I will never finish.
- This is too hard and requires too much work.
- I'm only taking courses for milestones anyway.
- This isn't the program I really want.
- Without a pathway, this is just some courses.



# What about the correctional staff?

- We seem to be putting a lot of effort into our incarcerated program but what education do we currently offer to the correctional staff?
- Is this a disparity creating academic hardship between corrections and academia?
- Does this support an unhealthy relationship among the correctional and educational staff?

# Classroom Logistics: hours, lockdowns, incidents, and remedies.

Wait a Minute! I didn't sign up to be an officer. I am a Teacher!  
This disrupts my entire lesson plan! How do I get the lecture information out there?

Have I witnessed an incident and now suffer from PTSD? Do I need mental health services?

Am I mentally, emotionally, and/ or physically prepared for a possible riot?

Do I have options? How can the employee assistance program help?

# Maintaining Control

- What kind of training is available?
- Are there legal ramifications for defending myself?
- How am I protected?
- Am I aware of all possible risks working in this environment?
- Being Firm, Fair, and Consistent
- Don't become a victim to the inmate games
- Enforcing classroom/ personal boundaries
- Reporting unsafe or inappropriate behaviors of staff or inmates.

# What's left?

- Working inside a prison can be stressful and at times emotionally, mentally, and physically debilitating...however...
- Many faculty report that this is the most rewarding experience and appreciative student body that they have worked with.
- One of the most important parts of this structure is having a boots on the ground administrator who can deal with the logistics and roadblocks so faculty can focus on teaching and students.
- Best practice is that your teaching faculty are communicating with each other. Don't hold any concerns in as it could be detrimental to your mental health.

# Chancellor's Office

- Reinstating the Advisory Committee.
- In the process of creating a training module for teaching inside a prison.
- RP group in the process for interviewing the 19 college that teach face-to-face.
- Hope to receive additional funding next budget.

# Coding Students

- A Special Population data element was implemented in 2011. As a result, incarcerated students should be reported as SG04, and then coded as follows:
  - 0 The student is not incarcerated.
  - 1 The student is incarcerated in a city or county correctional facility.
  - 2 The student is incarcerated in a California Youth Authority correctional facility.
  - 3 The student is incarcerated in a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation correctional facility.
  - 4 The student is incarcerated in an out-of-state correctional facility.
  - 5 The student is incarcerated in a U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons correctional facility.
  - 6 The student is incarcerated in a private correctional facility.
  - X Unknown/Unreported.

# Coding Students

- Later this summer, an additional data element will be rolled out: SG15 – Ex-Offender Status, in compliance with the federal Workforce Invocation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The following is the current proposed language:
  - “Per WIOA, ex-offender is defined as a person, who at the time of entry:  
(a) has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for committing a status offense or delinquent act, or (b) requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction for committing delinquent acts, such as crimes against persons, crimes against property, status offenses, or other crimes.



# Thank you!

- Dolores Davison ([davisondolores@foothill.edu](mailto:davisondolores@foothill.edu))
- Michael Wyly ([Michael.Wyly@solano.edu](mailto:Michael.Wyly@solano.edu))
- Chancellor's Office Website:  
<http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/AcademicAffairs/InmateEducationPilotProgram.aspx>