

Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program
Summer Teaching Institute Research Grant
Proposal

Submitted by:

Susan T. Krumholz, JD., PhD.
Department of Sociology/Anthropology

1. Background Information

Susan T. Krumholz
Department of Sociology/Anthropology

2. Project Description

I would propose to take part in the Training Institute to be held by Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, and to create a program at UMD that brings together students and prisoners in classroom environments.

Inside-Out is a program that takes education, along with students studying crime, directly into the prisons. Classes are offered that bring college students in to the prisons to study alongside prisoners. "At its most basic level, Inside-Out allows the "outside" students to take the theory they have learned and apply it in a real-world setting, while those living behind the walls are able to place their life experiences in a larger academic framework." (Inside-Out Prison Exchange home page, <http://www.temple.edu/inside-out/IOhome.html>)

The training is a weeklong program, nearly one-third of which occurs within the prison setting. Upon completing the training, I would be able to partner with faculty at UMD to create and implement a program modeled on Inside-Out in Southeastern Massachusetts.

The first step in implementation would involve identifying faculty interested and willing to collaborate. The second stage would involve outreach to identify a local jail or prison willing to partner in this effort, and educating them about the benefits and risks entailed in such a program. (Note: There is already a significant interest in the local sheriff's office in identifying alternatives to reduce recidivism.) The third step would involve engaging University students in the process.

3. Rationale

Since I taught my first class in Criminal Justice more than two decades ago, I imagined teaching a class that would include university students and incarcerated persons. The benefits to all seem extraordinary, as the quote above indicates. One of the greatest

challenges in teaching topics related to crime and justice is getting the students to personalize those charged with criminal offenses; to understand that a burglar is more than their crime; that the system is dealing with REAL people with REAL lives. On the other hand, most prison education programs are insular and fail to give prisoners a context for living in the outside world. The results reported by the Inside-Out program at Temple have indicated life-altering learning occurring for both populations.

As beneficial as I expect the training will be, the key will be in implementing the program at UMD. That will take a collaborative effort and significant support. Having a cohort to assist in moving this project from theory to practice would be of tremendous value.

4. Applicability

And at the core of the University's mission is to effect change in our "neighborhood". At the heart of our department's goals is the appreciation of diversity. This project would take learning directly to the community, and would offer a truly unique approach to comprehending diversity and possibility.

5. Dissemination

I am quite confident that this project won't require dissemination, that once the program is begun it will receive a great deal of word of mouth notice. But to get it started, I would anticipate beginning with a presentation of the program to the University community. The presentation might include myself, whom ever on the faculty is collaborating on delivering the first course, and a representative from whatever prison or jail agrees to participate. More significantly, I would look forward to presentations by the students after the first course is completed. It will be their experiences, perhaps enhanced by testimonials from the prisoners who participated, that will demonstrate the power of the teaching model.

Reviewers might want to visit the Inside-Out website. In addition I would be delighted to provide additional information if it would be of assistance.

Addendum – A response to the review committee's inquiries:

1. In recently prepared assessment documents, one of the primary goals of the Department of Sociology/Anthropology is "understanding of systems of inequality and the dynamics of local and global distributions of power." The proposed activity, involving coursework bringing together college students and prisoners, would assist participants by furthering this understanding in a manner that is directly illustrative of the existence, construct and implementation of systems of inequality.
2. The summer workshop would be advantageous to this endeavor in several ways. Activities in advance of the training might include an exploration of local jail and prison programming to determine the most suitable venue, exploring possible collaborations with other faculty, and brainstorming about the possible pitfalls and hazards, and how best to address them (a substantial undertaking, based on my experience with the criminal justice system). Once I have completed the training, I would like to offer a workshop for interested faculty, identify existing courses and conceptualize new ones, work to develop a timetable for introducing courses (and thereby collaborations) in to the program, and design an assessment tool to measure the success of the courses once implemented. All of these activities would benefit greatly from the input and support a working group could offer.
3. When students return in the fall, I would gather a group of students who might be interested in taking a course in this model. Along with the summer working group and/or whoever will be working on the initial collaborations, we would present the program to the students in a manner that encouraged their questions, concerns and suggestions. In addition to being an important and necessary step, this would provide excellent feedback on the proposal and the work carried out in the summer institute.