

Title: Expanding Access to Postsecondary Education in Prison
Transcript

Moderator: Derek Lowry, Program Associate, Vera Institute of Justice

Presenters (in order of appearance): Anne Precythe, Director, Missouri Department of Corrections; Sean Addie, Director for Correctional Education; Romarilyn Ralston, M.L.A., Program Director, Project Rebound at Cal State Fullerton; and Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack, President, Claflin University

[0:00:01]

Derek Lowry: Greetings and thank you for joining us today. Welcome to the Expanding Access to Postsecondary Education in Prison webinar.

Derek Lowry: Thank you for joining us to kick off Reentry Week. During Reentry Week the National Reentry Resource Center is your home for resources and virtual events.

Derek Lowry: We also recommend that you explore these hashtags and also explore whatever resources are available during this week.

Derek Lowry: I encourage you to sign up for the National Reentry Resource Center newsletter and if you have any questions, please reach out to the NRRC via email, you can also reach me at dlowry@vera.org.

Derek Lowry: So again, thank you for joining us today and today's speakers will be Anne Precythe, Director of the Missouri Department of Corrections, Sean Addie the Director of Correctional Education with the US Department of Education.

Derek Lowry: Romarilyn Ralston, the Program Director of Project Rebound at Cal State Fullerton, and Dr. Dwaun Warmack President of Claflin University.

Derek Lowry: I'm Derek Lowry with the Vera Institute of Justice. Our mission is to build an improved justice system that ensures fairness, promotes safety, and strengthens communities.

Derek Lowry: We partner with local, state, and national government officials to create change from within. We're excited about today's conversation, given our role, working with Second Chance Pell and

Derek Lowry: the US Department of Education. And through that work, we're partnering with 130 colleges across 42 states.

Derek Lowry: I'll now stop my screen share and hand it over to Director Precythe to share why expanding post-secondary education and training matters to her and other corrections agency leaders.

Derek Lowry: Thank you, and welcome Dr. Precythe.

[0:01:51]

Anne Precythe: Thank you, Derek. It's great to be here and I want to thank the Vera Institute for their support in really helping us get the reinstatement of Pell grants back for our incarcerated population.

Anne Precythe: I am President of the Correctional Leaders Association. We are an organization made up of

Anne Precythe: top executive leaders in the correctional systems across the United States, the Federal Bureau of Prisons,

Anne Precythe: some of the major city jails like Los Angeles and Philadelphia, the military corrections system, as well as the US territories.

Anne Precythe: And collectively we oversee about 450,000 staff and close to 8 million incarcerated individuals and people on probation and parole.

Anne Precythe: You know, for us in the correctional system, the Pell grant reinstatement allows the obvious. It helps our prison systems be safer, it helps improve public safety, and it helps to strengthen our families.

Anne Precythe: So I want to talk about those briefly. When it comes to safer institutions, you know, the more constructive

Anne Precythe: positive, engaging activities that are incarcerated individuals are a part of

Anne Precythe: the Safer the place is for staff, as well as the other offenders. But you can go one step further and think about the community savings as well with reduced violence inside our institutions, because people are positively occupied, there's less assault, which means less medical

Anne Precythe: money from the outside. Less law enforcement involvement and less criminal justice system engagement. So it's just a huge

Anne Precythe: positive occupier for inside our institutions.

Anne Precythe: From a public safety standpoint, 95% of the people that are with us, are going to return to our communities, and we want them to be better prepared

Anne Precythe: to receive jobs, continue education, whatever it is, they may be doing. And research shows that about 48%

Anne Precythe: of those that have been engaged in higher education, while they were incarcerated are less likely to return to prison so we're achieving a win, win,

Anne Precythe: for the inside community, inside our secure perimeters, as well as the outside community where people are going to live and become productive citizens. And then for strengthening families.

Anne Precythe: You know, we never know who are going to be role models, and our incarcerated individuals can be tremendous role models for their families and for their children.

Anne Precythe: When their children see them pursuing higher education, it makes them want to pursue higher education.

Anne Precythe: And when the families see the effort that these individuals have put into achieving their education, it shows that they really are making a change for the better.

Anne Precythe: You know, when I knew I was going to be doing this, the first thing I did was I went out to one of my local institutions to talk with the guys in our program.

Anne Precythe: And it was the most uplifting visit that I've had in a long time. I saw a man that had been incarcerated for 15 years and he was getting ready to come home in November, and he was in his fourth semester of pursuing higher education.

Anne Precythe: He told me that what he learned was-- he was in an information technology class because he's recognized that things have changed dramatically, while he's been incarcerated.

Anne Precythe: And he wants to be able to use the technology that's now available. He talked about the critical thinking that he has learned through his higher education opportunities.

Anne Precythe: But the most impactful thing to me as I asked the men in that class "what has participating in higher education done for you?"

Anne Precythe: It has given them hope. Hope that they deserve. Hope for something better in the future. Hope for something that they didn't know they could ever achieve or ever even have an opportunity at.

Anne Precythe: And that's something that we must provide inside our prisons, because so many of them are coming home and so many didn't take advantage of or even had the opportunities that many of us do

Anne Precythe: as we were coming along or even today. And these men and women, there are people, just like us. They made different decisions and they've had different challenges.

Anne Precythe: But at the end of it, they want a chance to be better people, whether it's better for the life that they're inside our institutions,

Anne Precythe: or whether it's better for the life that they have when they come out. To be productive, taxpaying, law-abiding contributing citizens to their communities and their families.

Anne Precythe: When we think about the obvious safer institutions, safer communities, and stronger families, that's the easy side to me.

Anne Precythe: But when we think about what an impact this really has on these individuals as people, that's the unexpected

Anne Precythe: advantage that we have, and it makes me, as a leader for the corrections leaders of United States,

Anne Precythe: it makes me so pleased that we're able to afford this opportunity. And without the assistance of the Pell grants, we would never be able to allow this for these individuals.

Anne Precythe: So it's a pleasure to be here and to talk about the value of this type

Anne Precythe: of opportunity for all of our men and women. Because it's something that they deserve, and I think we will benefit in the long run by the opportunity that they have. So thank you so much for allowing me to share our perspective on what the Pell grant means for us in corrections.

[0:08:06]

Derek Lowry: Absolutely. And thank you for your opening remarks Director Precythe and for sharing your insights on what you look forward to with the reinstatement of Pell.

Derek Lowry: Now I'd like to kind of shift to Sean Addie with US Department of Education Sean I'm going to pull up a few slides just to help emphasize some of your points. But more generally, I'd like you to talk about the reauthorization of Pell and the FAFSA Simplification Act.

Derek Lowry: Let me just get my screen up and we can begin.

Derek Lowry: Yes, so

[0:08:56]

Derek Lowry: Sean, in December Congress passed the FAFSA Simplification Act which lifts the ban on Pell grants for all people in prison that had been in place since 1994. What impact will the FAFSA Simplification Act have on prison education programs?

[0:09:11]

Sean Addie: Sure, so the FAFSA Simplification Act made several key changes to the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or the FAFSA.

Sean Addie: So, as you can see here on the screen.

Sean Addie: The new act reinstates access to federal Pell grants for individuals who are confined and incarcerated enrolled in qualifying prison education programs.

Sean Addie: The selective service registration will no longer be required for eligibility for aid. And the new law also eliminates the suspension of eligibility for drug-related convictions.

Sean Addie: The new law also contains several key components and sets evaluation, reporting, and technical assistance requirements.

Sean Addie: The law requires an external evaluation beginning no later than one year after enactment covering one, three- and five-year outcomes.

Sean Addie: There's an annual reporting requirement for prison education programs in the Department of Education beginning no later than one year after enactment of the law.

Sean Addie: And then, the law also directs the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to provide technical assistance and guidance to corrections agencies and education agencies.

Sean Addie: These are some key components of the law. The correctional education program must be offered by a Title IV eligible institution of higher education.

Sean Addie: The program must be approved to operate in a correctional facility by the appropriate state department of corrections or other entity that's responsible for overseeing correctional facilities.

Sean Addie: For example, a jail or by the Bureau of Prisons. The program must be determined to be operating in the best interest of students by the appropriate state department of corrections or other entity, so again a jail

Sean Addie: that is responsible for overseeing correctional facilities or by the Bureau of Prisons.

Sean Addie: The program must offer transferable credits to at least one institution of higher education in the state

Sean Addie: in which the correctional facilities located or in the case of a federal correctional facility in the state in which most of the individuals can find are incarcerated will reside upon release.

Sean Addie: These are some additional definitions that are contained in the legislation. The program must not have been subject to suspension emergency action and termination of programs.

Sean Addie: The program must satisfy any applicable educational requirements for professional licensure or certification. The program also has to offer

Sean Addie: education that's designed to lead to licensure or employment for a specific job or occupation.

Sean Addie: These are some of the criteria for operating in the best interest of the student.

Sean Addie: The criteria for determining whether prison education program is operating the best interest may be based on the following factors:

Sean Addie: the rate of continuing education post-release; job placement rates; earnings; rates of recidivism; experience, credentials, and rates of turnover a departure of instructors; the transferability of credits;

Sean Addie: and offering relevant academic and career advising services to students.

Sean Addie: So, the law provides a number of measures by which direction agencies must determine this.

Sean Addie: But we are still determining at the department what this might look like. Here, you can see some of the other components of the Act in terms of cost of attendance, these are

Sean Addie: a little bit more nitty-gritty in terms of the details, something for financial aid individuals or other individuals have to take into account: the cost of attendance needs analysis for Pell grant eligibility.

Sean Addie: As I mentioned before, with the best interest of the student.

Sean Addie: Also included in the legislation as a direction to the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General to select the technical assistance provider

Sean Addie: to assist corrections agencies and educational institutions with determining what programs are in the best interest of the student. We cannot yet say what entity, will provide this assistance, but we are very aware of how it's needed.

Sean Addie: Other provisions that the FAFSA Simplification act provides is reducing the number of questions on the FAFSA, eliminating some questions, asking for income verification, simplifying

Sean Addie: Other aspects of the FAFSA, and also providing more discretion for student financial aid administrators, as they seek to implement these new provisions for correctional education post-secondary programs.

[0:14:15]

Derek Lowry: Sean, thank you for covering some of the basics of the legislation with those slides and just highlighting some of the nitty-gritty details of it. I have two more questions for you Sean, could you tell us when you think the Pell reinstatement will actually go into effect?

[0:14:31]

Sean Addie: So, contained in the legislation is a date that the department must enact

Sean Addie: the program, and that is July 1, 2023. The department is still determining-- we have the discretion to implement it earlier, but the department is still deciding internally

Sean Addie: What that implementation might look like, so I think the important date is by July 1, 2023. That's the one day that we have written in stone.

[0:15:00]

Derek Lowry: Okay, thank you. And, I have one last question for you Sean. What are you most looking forward to in terms of Pell reauthorization being implemented? What are you most excited about? What do you think people will be most excited about once it's reinstated?

[0:15:16]

Sean Addie: I think, to piggyback on Director Precythe's

Sean Addie: comments,

Sean Addie: the hope that it's going to give people who are incarcerated that their lives will improve. That

Sean Addie: you have a high school equivalency and now you can do something that's next that's needed for

Sean Addie: yourself but also provide for your family, to set an example, to break those cycles of incarceration and cycles of poverty.

Sean Addie: I just I think it's going to provide a lot of hope for the people who are incarcerated. I think, also the fact that it's for everyone who's incarcerated and eligible. You know it's--

Sean Addie: someone maybe not coming out of prison, but they're still able to access it to improve themselves. And as the director was saying that helps

Sean Addie: with institutional safety and security. But, also helps the mood of the prison. So, I just think it's going to open a lot of

Sean Addie: doors for people who are incarcerated, and their families, and their loved ones in the communities. It's really a transformational thing, if done right.

[0:16:22]

Derek Lowry: Thank you, Sean. Thank you for answering my questions. And at this point, I want to thank you both for participating in this panel.

Derek Lowry: But before we transition to the next guest, I wanted to just say thank you, but also add, if you if there's anything else you'd like to add or include please do as well.

Derek Lowry: Or something that I, maybe didn't ask you that you want to include.

Derek Lowry: Okay, thank you both for joining us today, and thank you for sharing.

[0:16:51]

Sean Addie: Thank you.

[0:16:52]

Derek Lowry: In thinking about how students leave prison and want to continue their education I'd like to turn to Romarilyn. How does Project Rebound provide resources and support for returning citizens pursuing education and starting programming?

[0:17:04]

Romarilyn Ralston: Thank you so much for that question, Derek. It's really important to answer and thank you so much for this opportunity to share a little bit about Project Rebound and our work.

Romarilyn Ralston: Project Rebound was created by Dr. John Irwin in 1967. John Irwin was formerly incarcerated. He served five years in prison in the late 1950s.

Romarilyn Ralston: When he was released from prison he earned his undergrad degree from the University of California Los Angeles, UCLA. Went on to UC Berkeley,

Romarilyn Ralston: earned his Ph.D. and started teaching at San Francisco State. And in 1967, he created Project Rebound as a way for other incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people to matriculate into the CSU system.

Romarilyn Ralston: But the Cal State University system is the largest public university system in the country.

Romarilyn Ralston: And Project Rebound was housed at San Francisco State for almost 50 years before it expanded outside of San Francisco State University.

Romarilyn Ralston: In 2016, eight additional campuses joined San Francisco State and created this nine-campus consortium of programs.

Romarilyn Ralston: And Cal State Fullerton is one of those programs, where I serve as the program director. And Dr. Brady Heiner is our founder and executive director.

Romarilyn Ralston: And we support incarcerated students across the state actually. We have campuses now from Humboldt to San Diego and much of our work is done through correspondence with incarcerated students. We

Romarilyn Ralston: help them prepare for transfer. So, currently right now California has approximately 14,000 incarcerated people

Romarilyn Ralston: enrolled in college courses inside of our 35 prisons. And that's really amazing and really due to some really progressive legislation back in 2014.

Romarilyn Ralston: And so we connect with those students inside those prisons, we help them develop a transfer plan, we offer academic advising some of our campus programs have

Romarilyn Ralston: outreach that goes inside of the prisons and offer a whole host of

Romarilyn Ralston: matriculation supports. We review transcripts, help students determine what majors would be best for them, based on the credits that they have. We also help

Romarilyn Ralston: students when they are released because we're a campus program. We're on those 14 campuses, so we're kind of the warm handoff

Romarilyn Ralston: that incarcerated students really need, because there's such a big difference between

Romarilyn Ralston: inside learning and being a student on campus. Our program helps to support students in that transition and in that reintegration. And that's what our model is: supporting formerly incarcerated people

Romarilyn Ralston: in their success with higher education and reintegration. We provide all of that support for them, while they're inside, and when they leave prison, we're here to help them navigate

Romarilyn Ralston: the humongous campus systems that we have here in California and throughout the CSU. We provide a number of resources from textbooks support, to counseling,

Romarilyn Ralston: transportation, meal support, Cal State Fullerton's campus is the only one that has a transformative housing project. So we provide housing, scholarships internships, but most of all

Romarilyn Ralston: a safe space and a community where formerly incarcerated students who are reintegrating into the community and enter the campus environment

Romarilyn Ralston: can do so with people who have a share lived experience with them. So, Project Rebound centers the leadership of formerly incarcerated people.

Romarilyn Ralston: Most of our staff are formerly incarcerated. We are in a unique position to support formerly incarcerated students in their reentry and in their navigation into higher education.

[0:21:27]

Derek Lowry: Thank you, Romarilyn. I have one other question for you. Could you discuss wide Pell reinstatement and its impending 2023 implementation is so important for incarcerated citizens?

[0:21:40]

Romarilyn Ralston: Another great question. The Pell grant reinstatement I think is huge, especially for our students in our community.

Romarilyn Ralston: Formerly incarcerated people generally come from low-income communities. They're usually Black, Latinx, indigenous people. And paying for tuition

Romarilyn Ralston: is sometimes a challenge for us. We need to have access to Pell grants, while we're incarcerated and when we leave prison.

Romarilyn Ralston: So it's really significant for a lot of incarcerated people across this country who lost access to Pell grants, in 1994 through the Crime Bill now regain access to those federal dollars to continue their education.

Romarilyn Ralston: Here in California, we have other resources for incarcerated students outside of Pell grants, and so that helps with the 14,000 incarcerated students, that we have in our prison system. But

Romarilyn Ralston: Other states don't have you know the resources that California has so it's hugely important

Romarilyn Ralston: to provide folks who are marginalized who come from poor communities, who still have dreams and aspirations of earning that college degree, to have the funds

Romarilyn Ralston: to support with that. Because we know through research that the more education one has the less likely they are to recidivate, which brings me to a really great point about Project Rebound.

Romarilyn Ralston: In our history of Project Rebound, since 2016 through the expansion, we have a zero percent recidivism rate.

Romarilyn Ralston: And that's because of the value of education and what it provides individuals with criminal records. It takes us out of that lane where you know we're always struggling for

Romarilyn Ralston: acceptance. We're now on campus. We're in a campus Community where there is acceptance, there is support, there's opportunities for employment on campuses

Romarilyn Ralston: and to build the social networks and connections that one needs to succeed post-release. So it's really important to have access, not just to Pell dollars, but also, having that safe community and network to support someone when they're released.

[0:24:08]

Derek Lowry: Thank you for sharing Romarilyn. Thank you for participating in the panel and sharing the work of Project Rebound.

[0:24:16]

Romarilyn Ralston: Thank you.

[0:24:20]

Derek Lowry: Yes, so President Warmack, thank you for joining us first of all, and I think I'd like our first question for you to be--

Derek Lowry: just to kind of give us a feel for how your programs are operating right now in South Carolina. And can you tell us about the courses Claflin is running in South Carolina prisons and why you decided to start the program?

[0:24:37]

President Warmack: Sounds good. This is something that I have a deep passion

President Warmack: around prison education. I am a 2019 Eisenhower Fellow.

President Warmack: And all of my research at Eisenhower Fellow has been on prison education.

President Warmack: And so I've been doing this prior to the Second Chance Pell. So when I took a job at Claflin it's a program I implemented not knowing that will get a chance to get a Second Chance Pell or anything of that magnitude.

President Warmack: And so, this is something I've been doing for about 10 years as sort of a passion and a labor of love it's something I'm committed to.

President Warmack: Because my father had multiple experiences with the prison system. My little brother is serving a 42-year sentence in the penitentiary right now.

President Warmack: And, you know, part of that is for me-- it's not just theoretical for me. I've done the research. I understand it from a theoretical perspective.

President Warmack: But as a child growing up and experiencing it all throughout your life, you know it becomes more personal so theory comes into practice.

President Warmack: So for me, I understand the importance of a second chance. I understand the importance of a person that can be rehabilitated.

President Warmack: And so often I find in our prison systems in the United States of America they're not built to rehabilitate.

President Warmack: They're built to incarcerate. And so we wanted to create programs that have-- be a part of the solution, not the problem, and so we have been intentional.

President Warmack: We are the first HBCU or four-year institution that's offering bachelor's degrees in the state of South Carolina within the system. We have an outstanding executive director by the name of Dr. Belinda Wheeler who is leading a lot of that work.

President Warmack: We have three programs that we're working on in a pilot format. We're doing one in criminal justice, just because we know that's been a need and

President Warmack: desire from a lot of individuals we had that's incarcerated--conversations with. We are doing one in psychology just from the mental perspective, and what goes beyond that.

President Warmack: And one in organizational management/entrepreneurship. And so, from a business model interdisciplinary degree, that folks can come out and be able to have the ability to get gainfully employed.

[0:26:32]

Derek Lowry: Thank you for that answer, President Warmack. And I kind of have a follow-up question on that one answer though. When you talk about

Derek Lowry: the programs that you are running in South Carolina, could you also just talk about the need for these programs that you've seen as you've been building these out?

[0:26:46]

President Warmack: Sure, and so we're in the

President Warmack: early stages will we're piloting now and we'll get an offer, of course, as you know, COVID

President Warmack: hurt a lot. So we were one of the first institutions in a state that's offering virtual in the prison as well. So in May will start off in three prisons as a pilot, but our goal is to scale it for the entire state, but also globally.

President Warmack: And so, when we think about these degree programs our programs just wasn't for the

President Warmack: sake of doing a degree program. It was something that you know when we did a

President Warmack: sampling of interest of individuals that were there, but we also want to make sure those degree programs that we had a platform and a format, if we had to pivot online with COVID,

President Warmack: we can be able to still not interrupt their education experience. But also too,

President Warmack: having conversations with multiple partners around wraparound services and how do we think about strategically not just educating them, but getting them gainfully employed

President Warmack: with degree programs that they found that we're passionate for them and they thought that could be useful as well. We didn't want to come in and do a STEM degree and do all of these different pieces

President Warmack: that didn't align with their passion, their understanding, and their commitment to the work that they want to do once they release.

[0:27:54]

Derek Lowry: Thank you.

Derek Lowry: I think my next question for you, President Warmack is, can you talk about the sort of on-campus resources Claflin has developed for returning citizens specifically coming to campus?

[0:28:05]

President Warmack: Sounds good. We are, we are doing a couple of different things.

President Warmack: In two weeks we've purchased a building in downtown Orangeburg. We believe in holistic community development so that's economically, that's personally, to psychologically, socially.

President Warmack: And so, our prison education, our Center for Social Justice, all of our community outreach programs will be there. We want to be in the community.

President Warmack: Orangeburg is not a large metropolitan city. It's maybe 13 blocks from the main campus.

President Warmack: But for us, we feel like it's because we're in the downtown community outside of our traditional gates,

President Warmack: it puts us there. We will have a space designated there for our prison education program, so we will have multiple resources for conference rooms, computer labs, all of those pieces that are there for folks who are

President Warmack: being released or have already been released and have the opportunity to come to be engaged in the work. Our Director will be housed there as well, that will be her

President Warmack: office space. And the interns and everyone there will be in that location. But we have also been very strategic about creating meaningful partnerships throughout the state.

President Warmack: We are an education partner. We know our niche; that's our piece. But we know these

President Warmack: individuals can't be successful without the whole wraparound services, so we work with folks that are doing mental health components. We are working with the county and the city about housing. We are working with the folks that can do trauma. We're working with the University of South Carolina

President Warmack: Social Justice Institute with the law school about providing legal services. So, we will be able to provide a one-stop shop once they are released to be able to get all of those services with the partners that are there as well.

[0:29:41]

Derek Lowry: Thank you, President Warmack. This is kind of an extra question on top of that one, but I think in creating those one-stop shops, do you find that the one-stop shops are just a lot more efficient

Derek Lowry: at getting these program participants all the services they need in one co-located place? Because reentry is also a big part of what they're going to need, as they do the post-release education planning as well.

[0:30:07]

President Warmack: Right. And again, what we have been very focused on is doing what we do well. Sometimes folks get into too many lanes and the

President Warmack: traffic begins to look like Atlanta, Georgia.

President Warmack : And so,

President Warmack: we want to make sure that is seamless and that process in our strategic focus is education. That's what we're focused on.

President Warmack: But we're bringing partners that specialize in those other areas to provide those resources, you know, and so I am still we're still in conversations that not even us being the centralized place.

President Warmack: We will be able to point them in direction for resources.

President Warmack: To your point, without having these full wraparound services, you can give me an education, but if I can't find a job

President Warmack: then it does me no good. And you can give me this education, but if I have nowhere to live. And, if I can you can give me this-- I can be released, I can get this education, while I'm incarcerated.

President Warmack: But then, if I still have this outstanding child support stuff that is on there and I hadn't got gainfully employed yet,

President Warmack: the probability of this recidivism is going to be extremely high. So what we're trying to do is knock down some of those barriers proactively instead of reactively,

President Warmack: and allowing these individuals to have you know, once they are rehabilitated a life they deserve. I am

President Warmack: unapologetic about the understanding and the impact of Black and brown folks that are incarcerated.

President Warmack: It's not just them. It's the impact on their families and their family's families. So, there are some generational pieces that come behind that and some

President Warmack: sociological and psychological pieces that are there, and if do not dealt with, we miss it. So wraparound services are essential for them.

[0:31:47]

Derek Lowry: Thank you, President Warmack. I have one more question for you and I think it'll be a question that probably a lot of folks in our audience

Derek Lowry: will be interested in. The question is, what do you recommend for a college that wants to start teaching in a prison setting and how should they go about getting started?

[0:32:03]

President Warmack: Well, I think there's there's probably going to be an

President Warmack: influx of folks

President Warmack: interested in coming to this space. And I think some for the right reasons and some for the wrong reasons, right. Any time since 1994, the reinstatement of Pell grants back into the opportunity folks who are incarcerated

President Warmack: that becomes for some institutions and organizations a revenue stream. But for us, I continue to say it's bigger than revenue. For us, it's a transformation of lives and giving folks an opportunity, who fundamentally believe deserve it.

President Warmack: Go into it

President Warmack: for the right reasons and also be committed to ensuring that it is about the

President Warmack: people that are there and ensuring that they have the opportunity and set the right programs that are there. And it takes--it's not an overnight deal. We've been working on this for two years. This has been two year

President Warmack: very meticulous strategic process before we're able to begin courses this upcoming May. And so, understand it's a process. It won't happen overnight.

President Warmack: And think about your niche as an institution or organization and what you have to offer

President Warmack: to the mix. You can't be everything to everyone. And so, figuring out what you do well, and how you bring in other partners that specialize in those other pieces. And, last but not least, contact our guru Dr. Belinda Wheeler.

President Warmack: She is a wealth of resources and knowledge; she would be more than willing to have conversations. I will be willing to do the same.

President Warmack: And again, for me, organizations take on the personality of their leader. And so, as the president of this organization, this is something I believe in.

President Warmack: It's just something that I do. So, I am committed to it with resources and committed to and from a theoretical and practical perspective as well. So you have to be committed to it to see it through.

[0:34:01]

Derek Lowry: Thank you. I just want to say thank you for sharing your insights President Warmack and also for answering our questions for the audience today. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

[0:34:10]

President Warmack: No, I think that we are we're excited too. We want to thank the Vera Institute for their outstanding work and their commitment, ongoing and advocacy with this very important topic.

President Warmack: And so we look forward to continuing to partner. And, thank you for allowing Claflin University and myself to be a part of this panel discussion.

[0:34:27]

Derek Lowry: Thank you for participating.

[0:34:29]

President Warmack: Thank you so much.

[0:34:30] END

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