

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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Annual University Fair promotes college attendance to juvenile offenders

The Situation

Located in St. Anthony, the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections Center houses between 130 to 150 incarcerated youth. These youth attend high school on site during their time of incarceration. Prior to 2010, students had no direct contact with colleges or universities to answer their questions, receive promotional presentations, understand the benefits of higher education, investigate programs more fully, and gain a sense of campus life. This shortfall of exposure to the opportunities and benefits of higher education contribute to the already long list of reasons youth offenders do not seek higher education after high school. Other reasons juvenile offenders do not attend college include a short fall of financial resources, familial support, pertinence of information about attending college, and the lifelong benefits of having a college degree.

Our Response

The University of Idaho Extension in cooperation with the faculty of the Juvenile Corrections Center High School organizes and hosts an annual University Fair to highlight the benefits of attending college, to reduce preconceived opinions that juvenile offender students are not capable of attending college, and to expose the students to a broad variety of programs and fields of study offered by different colleges or universities they could attend. Unlike other university fairs held at public high schools, this fair is designed to specifically meet the needs of incarcerated juveniles. Based upon input received through interviews and meetings with the faculty at the Juvenile Corrections Center, the 2010 University Fair was comprised of seven presentations given by representatives from colleges and universities and covered



programs each school offers, application processes, job interviewing skills, and applying for Financial Aid. These institutions included Eastern Idaho Technical College, Brigham Young University – Idaho, Idaho State University, ISU’s Financial Aid Department, WYO – Tech, and the University of Idaho.

The 2011 annual University Fair included speakers from the same universities and colleges, and also a representative from the Idaho State University Counseling and Testing Center who presented on methods and testing that assist in helping youth select a career.

The 2012 annual University Fair included similar speakers, with the addition of a University of Idaho Extension presenter covering methods of saving money for college.

Program Outcomes

- Each year over 150 incarcerated youth attend the annual University Fair at the Juvenile Corrections Center.
- After the 2011 University Fair, 98% of attendees answered, “Yes” when asked if a college education would help their future.
- In 2011 attendees gave the following statements of how the University Fair was beneficial to them:
 - “It gave them hope to go to college”
 - “The information was straight from the source”
 - “It gave them interest in new colleges”
 - “Information on different career choices”
 - “Showed how college could improve their life”
- In 2011 100% of responding attendees said that the University Fair was beneficial to them.
- Prior to the 2012 University Fair only 58% of the attendees were planning on attending college after high school.
- After the 2012 University Fair 91% of attendees were planning on attending college after high school.
- In 2012 the juvenile offenders were asked what were some of the challenges that reduced their likelihood of attending college. Their responses included:
 - “Financial issues, no high school diploma, lack of credits, a criminal record, and being a slow learner.”
- According to the 2012 attendee survey results, only 30% of the youth had attended the 2011 University Fair, with only 8% reporting that they attended the 2010 University Fair. This large turnover of new attendees every year demonstrates a continual need for an effective University Fair that broadens their educational pursuits.

The Future

The annual University Fair at the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections Center in St. Anthony will continue to be held, and will include previously represented colleges and other presenters that are relevant to student’s higher education interests.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections Center in St. Anthony

Shawnee Burt, Idaho State University, Campus Recruiter

Annalee Avery, Eastern Idaho Technical College, Campus Recruiter

William Reichard, WYO–Tech, Campus Recruiter

Sherri Dewey, Financial Scholarship Counselor, Idaho State University

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