



Higher Education Seminar Series Brownbag
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“Have you ever been convicted of a felony?” The presence of prior criminal history questions in college admissions.

Thursday, November 21st, 2019 -- 12:00 to 1:00 pm
Collegiate Room- Union -- **refreshments will be provided*



In 2019, the Common Application removed the required collection of criminal history information on the common portion of their application platform. Their announcement was a reversal of a stance it took just a year prior to keep questions regarding prior criminal history required for undergraduate applicants. Common App’s announcement drew much attention, and was the culmination of numerous and ongoing efforts by government agencies, private and philanthropic foundations, and student organizations requesting to have the question removed from initial screening processes for undergraduate admissions. At the same time, the numbers of colleges and universities providing higher education in prison has grown, with a large boost from the federal Experimental Sites Initiative, Second Chance Pell Pilot Program.

Little is known about how prior criminal history information is used during admissions processes. This lack of clarity points to serious equity concerns regarding access to postsecondary education for formerly incarcerated people and those with prior criminal histories. Our research examines a small set of institutions that have made commitments to serving incarcerated people through credit-bearing college-in-prison programs. We restrict our analysis to institutions that use the Common App because of the platform’s wide usage and because of the change announced in 2018 to remove questions about prior criminal history from its standard application. Given the national attention placed upon higher education in prison, we are especially interested in how Second Chance Pell participating institutions respond to the Common App change.

Sponsored by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy

Direct questions about this event to Marilyn Howard (Marilynn.howard@utah.edu) or 801-581-6714
