

# Langston provides education for Oklahoma prison inmates

By Lea Houston  
Staff Writer

Langston University and the School of Business are partnering with several correctional facilities to give inmates a second chance on their education by offering them a Pell grant program.

This allows incarcerated Americans the opportunity to pursue education with the overall goal of having a job once they are released from prison. The Pell grant program is a scholarship from the federal government that allows people who qualify based on income levels to receive grants to go to college.

Though Congress outlawed the use of Pell funds for those who are incarcerated, in 2015, the Department of Education and the Obama administration created a pilot program where people who are incarcerated can qualify for funds. With the Trump administration renew-

ing the program, Langston University was able to apply for the Pell grant program in 2015; Langston was accepted along with 67 other colleges in the country.

"This is a rewarding experience," said Dr. Nancy Alexander, chair of the Department of Business and Administration.

With this program, Alexander has had the opportunity to teach an Introduction to Business course, which will help the inmates learn, step-by-step, how to start their dream business. Working alongside principles who are responsible for education at the correctional facilities, Langston University requests anyone interested in the program to attend an informational informing them about the program and fill out a questionnaire.

Langston University is offering three degrees in the second chance Pell grant program – a Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Liberal

Arts and Bachelor of Rehabilitation Counseling.

Depending on what course is taken, inmates can have an 8- or 16-week course in an in-person or online setting.

"A lot of the inmates feel as if the world has forgotten about them or no one cares about them due to the feeling of them not being successful or educated," Alexander said. "However, they are always excited and honored that we're there to help better their future."

Langston University is one of three HBCUs that have been approved for the program. Through Langston, the program is offered at two women's correctional facilities in Oklahoma – Kate Barnard Community Correction Center in Oklahoma City and Dick Conner Correctional Center in Hominy. They are also looking into working with Mabel Bassett, which is male correctional center in McCloud.

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— Josh Snavely,  
dean, School of Business

"There's a lot of logistics with teaching in a prison, from financial aid to advising to selecting classes to technology in the classroom," said Josh Snavely, dean of the School of Business. "We're basically creating a mini university on the inside of a prison."

In spring 2017, the program started with seven students and it now has about 90 stu-

dents in the second chance Pell grant program.

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## NCNW hosts 'FAFSA Night' for students

By Kammie Onyekwere  
Staff Writer

The National Council of Negro Women hosted "FAFSA Night" on Feb. 26, in the computer lab of University Women's.

At the event, students were able to work one-on-one with financial aid advisers to fill out their 2020-2021 FAFSA applications.

Shay Jackson, junior accounting major and treasurer of NCNW, coordinated the event. She said a lot of students wait to fill out their FAFSA until the last minute, and she wants students to know the sooner they fill out their applications, the more money they could possibly get.

"And being prepared for the next year is really important," Jackson said.

Jackson works in the financial

aid office and sees students procrastinate in completing their FAFSAs, and then they often don't receive the money they were anticipating.

The deadline for the 2020-2021 FAFSA is June 21, 2020. Financial aid counselor Sue Hart suggests that nobody waits until the deadline to complete it. Hart also mentioned the new verification process in place for students who are selected to make changes or updates to their FAFSA application. The process is called "ProVerify."

"This process helps the counselors have more time to talk to students on individual bases, to advise them about their loans and recommend other sources of funding besides loans," Hart said.

Financial aid counselors also recommend that students not take out loans unless they absolutely have to because the more

money they borrow, the more they'll have to pay back.

Shaylyn Dodd, junior animal science major, completed her 2020-2021 FAFSA application at the event with help from Hart. Dodd said this was her first time doing her FAFSA application without her parents' help.

"The atmosphere was welcoming and everyone was there to help one another," Dodd said.

NCNW plans to host another "FAFSA Night" in fall 2020.

**Right:**  
Sue Hart, financial aid counselor, assists Shaylynn Dodd with completing her 2020-2021 FAFSA.

Photo by  
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