

news

AU correctional education program continues to add new sites

EVAN LAUX
News Editor

After postponing development over the summer due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Ashland University is expanding their Correctional Education department by implementing 24 new sites.

The program now has an outreach of 100 sites in 11 different states and the District of Columbia Jail. One such site in North Dakota adds the State to the list of Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

“We had a handful that we would’ve opened in the summer but since COVID started affecting us in February and March we had changed our mind early on about expansion,” Denise Justice, executive director of correctional education said.

According to Justice, the program adds new sites almost every semester, sans summer 2020. In fall 2019, 10 sites were added, and then 18 more in the spring semester of 2020.

“For the most part we have people and prisons all over beating our doors down,” Justice said. “Ashland has been the forefront of correctional education in the country for many many years.”

AU began its first correctional education endeavors at the Ohio State Reformatory in 1964, making it the longest continuously running program in the US. In the 1980s, AU became a college provider in the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (DRC) and has seen steady growth ever since.

“When I started in 2015 we had around 500 students and now we have about 3500 incarcerated students working on their associate and bachelors degrees, that’s significant growth and even more students than we have on the main campus,” Todd Marshall, vice president of correctional education and innovation said. “We’re in discussions with about half a dozen more states who would like us to come. And in some states where we’re at, we might be in four or five prisons but eventually they want us to be in every prison in the state.”

Up until 2018, Justice worked for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC) as the school superintendent for all of the adult prison education programs.

“Ashland has supported people being on the state, regional, and national correctional education association board, Ashland won the contract to publish the Correctional Education Association journal,

three of us that work for Ashland are past presidents of the International Correctional Education Association (CEA) and we’ve been doing conferences and presentations for a long time so we have colleagues nationwide,” Justice said. “When we started getting the

business degrees in hopes of starting their own businesses.”

AU’s program offers six bachelor of arts and two associate of arts degrees in general studies, multidisciplinary studies, business, communication and religion among others.



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Pell Experimental Sites Initiative in 2015, we already had a broad base that knew about us and that allowed us to expand really fast.”

The initiative, launched by the U.S. Department of Education, provides need-based Pell grants to people in state and federal prisons through partnerships with 65 colleges in 27 states.

“The Pell grants go right to the university, it’s revenue to AU,” Marshall said. “That revenue covers all of our expenses that go to site directors, the instructors and technology and textbooks for students. Plus after it’s paid all the expenses, that money goes back to campus, faculty, sports programs and the whole university.”

The Pell Second-Chance Experimental Sites Initiative requires that you have a release or release consideration date. Similarly, AU’s program requires that applicants must be within 10 years of their release or release date consideration.

There are no stipulations on crime that would bar a person from receiving Pell eligibility and therefore AU eligibility. A satisfactory disciplinary record is required to become enrolled in AU’s program however; this is based upon each individual facility’s policy.

Marshall says that incarcerated individuals with a good disciplinary record jump at the opportunity to get their degree while in prison.

“A lot of the incarcerated individuals’ main concern with education is that they want employability when they are released,” Marshall said. “Because if you have a felony it’s definitely going to be harder to find a job. In fact a lot of our students go for communication and

“We continue to evaluate our curriculum semester to semester, as we follow AU’s ‘Accent on the Individual,’ we want to provide the curriculum that meets student needs and is best for them so we continue to evaluate that,” Marshall said.

The program is conducted primarily on online learning appli-

graphy and other components. The students are allowed to complete coursework and contact their instructors from the devices.

To access other assets a corrections student might need, they must seek assistance from site directors.

“Site directors are generally full time Ashland employees and they

Coburn Art Gallery celebrates 100 years of women’s suffrage with “Woman of Resilience” exhibition

TERESA HAHN
Reporter

On Aug. 31, 2020, the Ashland University Coburn Art Gallery celebrated the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by opening their exhibition titled “Woman of Resilience.” The exhibition will be open until Oct. 1.

The amendment was ratified on Aug. 18, 1920 and gave women in the U.S. the right to vote. 100 years later, the exhibition portrays the same important message: go out and vote!

The exhibition was curated by Priscilla Roggenkamp, Patricia O’Neill Sacha and Judith Sterling and includes the works of 22 female artists. Visitors will experience many different mediums and perspectives for the same themes: strength, suffrage and social issues.

The exhibition features work from 2019 AU alumnus Kiana Ziegler, Cynthia Petry and Roggenkamp. Artist Sarah Curry’s works consistently feature teenage girls and female empowerment.

“22 women have come together to create works that have something to say,” Roggenkamp said. “The artwork as they hang together in the



TERESA HAHN

“The Queens” - by Erin Mulligan

gallery are greater than each individual piece. They speak to one another and create a conversation open for all to engage in.”

Preparing the gallery, Petry tried to draw in a diverse crowd.

“When I think about programming, I’m thinking about art majors and minors, the campus

help the students fill out application paperwork, financial aid paperwork, access records and hand out textbooks and technology at the beginning of the semester,” Marshall said. “Ideally they meet with students on a weekly basis to help encourage them or say ‘hey you’re falling behind in this class or you missed an assignment.’ In essence, they are the university in a suitcase, they’re our boots on the ground. They do a little bit of everything.”

Many of AU’s tenured and tenure track faculty members teach in corrections as well as adjuncts.

“If a faculty member is teaching, that member might be teaching from a classroom, from their office or from a coffee shop,” Marshall said. “And we have instructors in other states, so they just have to login and they can upload their content and interact with their students whenever they’re on the web. It’s just like what’s happening on campus right now due to COVID.”

Marshall says that most students in the program are highly motivated and work full time jobs outside classes.

“They’re normal working adults that might work in the kitchen, cleaning, doing yard work and then they get up early or stay up late and that’s when they do their homework,” he said.

Read the rest on AU-Live.

Group X in full swing with face-to-face and online exercise classes

EMMALEE LAMOLINARA
Reporter

Group X classes are back in full swing this fall semester here at Ashland University. Classes officially started back up on Sept. 8.

The exercise group offers 5-8 different classes that are free to all AU Rec Center members and students of Ashland University. Exercises take place in 30-person occupancy aerobics studios and other areas around the building.

There are eight different classes offered: yoga, dance conditioning, cycling, spin, dance aerobics, cir-

cuit training, REFIT and Group X mix up.

“This fall will also have a nice surprise change to the schedule as we are going to start doing a one class on Saturday mornings,” Group X dance aerobics and yoga instructor Sydney Moore said.

All the other non-Saturday classes are offered every week at the same time.

The Rec Center and Group X have worked in tandem to allow the classes to fit COVID-19 policy and protocol. No more than nine people including the instructor are allowed to be in the aerobics studio at one

time and all participants must wear masks.

Each Group X staff member is certified and highly trained, while also due to the pandemic, everyone that walks into the Rec Center needs to wear a mask at all times while in the building.

“This is a great way to get students up and moving during these hard times of dealing with the pandemic,” Moore said. “It is so important to exercise during the pandemic because exercising gives us endorphins, which are tiny neurochemicals released by our body when we workout. They reduce pain

and contribute to our anxiety, and stress, it boosts our self esteem, and the list could go on. It’s all about feeling good and comfortable in your own skin! This pandemic has brought so much stress and uncertainty that the one thing it shouldn’t take away from us is taking care of our bodies.”

Group X is implementing online class options, which can be accessed at 2020recreationmovement.com. As of right now, the group is uncertain if all classes will be offered virtually but that may change further into the semester.

“I started Group X because I was

already certified in REFIT before I came to AU,” Group X cycling and REFIT instructor Olivia Lowery said. “I really love the message of REFIT has about body positivity and loving your workout and I really wanted to share the message here with AU’s campus. Group X is just a group of amazing instructors who want to share their classes with others on campus. Our instructors love what they teach and I think that is what makes the classes fun, it keeps people coming back.”

Group X classes are currently underway Monday-Thursday and Saturday.

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