

Tulane SoPA and Operation Restoration join \$4.7 million initiative to promote post-secondary education in prisons

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The Ready for Pell Initiative was developed in anticipation of the impending lift to a 26-year ban that prevented access to Pell grant funding for students in prison.
(Photo from iStock)

When the U.S. Department of Education expands its Second Chance Pell Program to include incarcerated students on July 1, 2023, the Tulane School of Professional

Advancement (Tulane SoPA), in partnership with Operation Restoration, will be ready to help those students navigate the process.

[Tulane SoPA](#) and [Operation Restoration](#) joins Ascendium Education Group, Jobs for the Future, and evaluating partner, RTI International, as one of 22 grant partners in the Ready for Pell initiative. The \$120,000 grant is part of a \$4.7 million multi-year initiative aimed at strengthening emerging post-secondary education in prison programs. The restoration of Pell Grants for learners who are incarcerated begins in the 2023-24 academic year.

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“Tulane SoPA has been working with the [College-in-Prison Program](#) since 2018,” said Vanessa Rodriguez, SoPA’s Assistant Dean for Student Support and Success. “Our faculty members teach for-credit classes that are required for the completion of a [Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences](#).”

The College-in-Prison Program is based at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) and Operation Restoration staff members directly manage the program and provide wrap-around support services to students both during and post-incarceration.

Tulane SoPA contributes curriculum and academic oversight, admissions, and operational support to the program, which was initially created through a partnership led by Tulane’s Newcomb Institute.

“The availability of Pell grants to incarcerated people will remove some of the financial barriers to education for our students at Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women,” said Syrita Steib, Founder and Executive Director of Operation Restoration. “Together, with the Tulane School of Professional Advancement, I believe that we are truly impacting the accessibility of education for an underserved population and improving educational equity.”

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