



The Illinois Department of Corrections

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East Moline Correctional Center Launches Prison Education Program in Partnership with Augustana College

(EAST MOLINE) – East Moline Correctional Center is offering its first four-year Bachelor of Arts program for individuals in custody in more than 20 years. The Augustana Prison Education Partnership (APEP) launched August 31 with a cohort of 10 students.

Students are taking classes from Augustana College professors who teach the same courses on the college's main campus in Rock Island. The startup program offers a Communication Studies major with more majors to be added in the future. The liberal arts curriculum includes history, literature, mathematics, foreign languages, religion, science, and the arts.

“A college degree is invaluable for individuals in custody who are committed to turning their lives around and ensuring financial stability for their families,” said Illinois Department of Corrections Director Rob Jeffreys. “Studies prove that prison education programs drastically decrease the likelihood of an individual recidivating, which is a primary goal of IDOC.”

Augustana College modeled the program after the Bard Prison Initiative, which is featured in the 2019 PBS documentary *College Behind Bars*. APEP is following best practices from a national consortium of colleges and universities across the country.

“The Augustana Prison Education Partnership with East Moline Correctional Center exemplifies the transformative power of a liberal arts education,” said Dr. Wendy Hilton-Morrow, Vice President and Provost at Augustana College. “Just as with our traditional on-campus students, our incarcerated students will grapple with questions of what they know, how they relate to others, and who they want to become. At Augustana, students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to become leaders in a diverse and changing world. We anticipate the same will be true for our students at EMCC.”

APEP students do not pay tuition or any costs associated with the coursework. This program has been funded by the Austin E. Knowlton Foundation.

Mission: To serve justice in Illinois and increase public safety by promoting positive change in individuals in custody behavior, operating successful reentry programs, and reducing victimization.