

SBA ASPIRE CHALLENGE SOLUTION

Contestant Capacity:

1. Organizational Background: Claremont Lincoln University (CLU) is an accredited Southern California graduate university providing innovative social justice education with a global imperative. CLU's degree and certificate programs – in ethical leadership, interfaith action and social impact - are designed to prepare graduates through revolutionary engagement skills to take an active role in the public domain. With forward-thinking faculty as mentors and global thought-leaders and change-agents assisting in developing curriculum, our students engage in rigorous academic inquiry where it meets the practical needs of the world. CLU's student body is primarily adult professionals already engaged in or interested in working in critical social action fields. Due to this focus, they are largely lower income students, and during the current 2016-17 school year, 72.5% attend on full or partial scholarships. Our student body is multi-cultural, at 56% persons of color. Although CLU has not previously applied our highly successful entrepreneurial certificate programming directly to formerly incarcerated individuals and ex-offenders, many of our deans and faculty have previously worked with persons with this experience and are aware of many of the issues surrounding mass incarceration. CLU is hosting an all-day Exchange on the topic on March 25th, entitled, *Barred for Life: Mass Incarceration and Rehabilitation - Recommendations for Policy Makers*. We look forward to adding the community of the formerly incarcerated to the already diverse student population we serve.

2. Background of Management Team: Dr. Anita Leffel, Dean of CLU's MA in Social Impact, will lead this collaborative project with partners Dr. Renford Reese of the Reintegration Academy and the Prison Education Project, and Constance Anderson of the Pacific Coast Regional Small Business Development Corporation (PCR).

Dr. Anita Leffel came to CLU from the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she was director of entrepreneurship programs. She launched a number of student-focused initiatives including a mentorship program involving more than 50 community professionals, taught entrepreneurship to African nationals through the White House's Mandela Washington Fellowship Institute, and conducted entrepreneurship trainings in Mexico and South Africa, and in Kenya through USAID.

Dr. Renford Reese is the founder and director of the Reintegration Academy and the Prison Education Project. He has been a professor in the political science department at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona for the past 20 years. The author of five books, Dr. Reese serves as the inaugural visiting fellow of the Institute for Global/Local Action & Study at Pitzer College. In 2009, Dr. Reese was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Scholars Award and lectured in the American Studies program at the University of Hong Kong. He was featured on ESPN's "Realizing the Dream" series.

Constance Anderson, Director of the Pacific Coast Region SBDC, manages 15 business advisors and 10 instructors and oversees PCR's Entrepreneurial Training Institute and SCORE consulting. Constance is a member of the City of LA Mayor's Office, Minority Business Development Agency, the National Association of Female Executives, YWCA of Greater LA, and Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles. She is certified as a NxLevel Instructor and Fast Trac Growth Venture facilitator. She is a graduate of the Executive Leadership Program at UCLA's School of Management and the American Bankers Association Graduate School of Compliance.

Entrepreneurial Education Delivery Solution

1. Participant Recruitment Plan: Recruitment will be coordinated by collaborative partner, the Reintegration Academy/Prison Education Project, which has a successful 8-year history of partnership with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO). The DAPO is responsible for oversight of parolees from all 11 of California's correctional facilities. DAPO is responsible for protecting the community by enabling parole agents to have an active part in the local community's public safety plans while providing a range of programs and services that offer parolees the opportunity for change, encouraging and assisting them in their effort to reintegrate into the community. Our collaborative project's two cohorts of up to 15 participants each will be recruited and screened through the DAPO for appropriateness for participation in the program.

The first cohort of parolees, served in the fall of 2017, will be graduates of the Prison Education Project (PEP), coordinated by Dr. Renford Reese. PEP is the largest volunteer-based prison education program of its kind in the United States. The goal of PEP is to create a "Prison-to-School Pipeline" and provide in-custody students with the cognitive tools necessary to function as productive citizens. With the assistance of 700 university student and faculty volunteers, PEP has serviced approximately 4,000 inmates in California's correctional facilities since 2011. This cohort will run for 10 weeks in the spring of 2018.

The second cohort of participants will be served in the spring of 2018 through the Reintegration Academy, also coordinated by Dr. Reese. They provide a 10-week educational program for parolees. Participants are immersed in academic, life skills, and career development instruction. Along the course of the program, participants earn incentives and receive assistance including meal cards, gift cards for transportation and to purchase business casual clothes, and laptop computers. The program also hosts a job fair for the participants, inviting more than 25 local employers to meet, greet and interview participants. At the graduation banquet, each participant receives a certificate of completion.

From 2009 to 2015, 120 parolees have graduated through the Reintegration Academy's program. At the 3-year mark, 24 out of 28 participants in the 2012 graduating class either had a job and/or were enrolled in college. This is an 86% reintegration rate with only a 14% recidivism rate. At the 2-year mark, 23 of 26 participants in the 2013 class, 88%, have remained out of the system and are enrolled in college and/or have a job. At the 1-year mark, all 26 participants in the 2014 class had remained outside of the system.

2. Classroom Instruction: Claremont Lincoln University will utilize a specially modified version of Dr. Leffel's Entrepreneur-in-Training™ curriculum, designed for use with participants who are not previously experienced in or familiar with business. This training has been successfully applied with nascent entrepreneurs in Africa, Mexico and in United States university settings where the student goal has been to design and launch a new business enterprise. The material is designed as a roadmap, taking the student from idea and opportunity formation, through customer development, management and team formation, financial and legal acumen, to writing a business plan and pitching it to potential investors.

Each module has required deliverables that must be completed before the next module is available for study, and all modules build toward a finished business plan model by the end of the 8-week period. Modifications will include the addition of videos, readings and participatory activities that will give the students a more complete experience within the classroom setting. An online instructor will facilitate. An on-site PCR counselor will review the Entrepreneur-in-Training™ deliverables and work with the program participants throughout the duration of both cohorts.

3. Mentoring: Mentorship services will be provided by the Pacific Coast Regional Small Business Development Corporation (PCR), a mission-driven organization providing services, educational and financial programs and consulting to assist small business owners in becoming successful members of the Southern California business community. Through contracts with the Federal Government, the State of California, and partnerships with private institutions, PCR provides financial, educational and consulting services. In addition, PCR has been certified by the U.S. Treasury as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). PCR's financial programs include loan guarantees, disaster bridge loans, and direct (environmental) loans to businesses located within the State of California. Educational services provided include the Lottie Center for Business Excellence, small business seminars, PCR's Small Business Consultants Program and Small Business Start-Up Guide. Volunteer mentors from PCR, primarily made up of current and retired business executives, will attend each of the 8 Entrepreneur-in-Training™ curriculum sessions, providing one-on-one assistance to the participants as they work through the module exercises and envision their finished business enterprise.

4. Community Connections: During the 9th week of each cohort, the Reintegration Academy will host a job fair for the participants, inviting over 25 local employers and prospective business associates to meet, greet, and interview participants. This has been a major component of the process since the program's inception.

Access to Capital:

1. Access to micro-lending: PCR volunteer counselors will assist student participants through individual exploration of loan opportunities that are appropriate to their particular project. PCR works with approximately 35 banks throughout Southern California that offer loans to small businesses at all stages of development, including options such as the California Small Business Loan Guarantee, SBA Community Advantage Loan and Community Advantage Loans.

2. Connection to capital and funding opportunities: PCR volunteer counselors will work with their assigned student participants on a one-on-one basis at PCR offices, providing personalized coaching and assistance in preparing documents and presentations for meetings with potential loan providers as discussed above, as well as deeper work on final business plans.