



Elevating and Supporting Black Volunteer Tutors In Partnership with HBCUs

HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University

Phase 1 Report - Spring/Summer 2021



our mission

The Petey Greene Program (PGP) supports the academic goals of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people through high-quality volunteer tutoring programs, while educating volunteers on the injustice manifest in our carceral system.

our vision

We envision a world in which all incarcerated people have access to high-quality academic programs and we strive to inspire our alumni—both students and tutors—to become advocates, and to take on leadership roles that reimagine the criminal legal system.

our charge

In January 2021, the Petey Greene Program launched the research and design phase of its HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University (HU) to elevate and support Black volunteer tutors. During the 2021-2022 school year, the PGP will implement, evaluate, and iterate on the program model with volunteers at HU. The PGP will expand the program to additional historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), as well as predominantly white institutions (PWIs), in 2022 and 2023, with the support of a multi-year grant from the Pritchard Foundation.

our project team



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SUMMARY

PGP Volunteers Want To Make A Difference

Founded in 2008, the PGP operates the largest multi-state tutoring program in jails, prisons, and detention centers, recruiting nearly 1,000 volunteers annually from 31 colleges in seven states, tutoring approximately 2,000 people in over 50 facilities and reentry programs. In addition to supporting the educational progress of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated learners, the PGP's tutoring program has changed the trajectories of college student volunteers, many of whom go on to pursue careers in social justice.

From the thousands of incarcerated people we've supported over the years, we know that what they value most about our programming is the personal, supportive, human interaction the volunteer tutors provide, which they may otherwise be deprived of while incarcerated.

These volunteers not only get the opportunity to tutor incarcerated and formerly incarcerated learners, but through our justice-oriented leadership education, they learn about the causes of injustices that manifest in carceral systems. PGP volunteers tell us that they are inspired by making a difference in a learner's life to make a difference in the world. They want to do something about a system that funnels people, especially Black people, from failed schooling to prison.

The PGP has increasingly met this demand with training, workshops, and events that not only educate volunteers on how to be effective tutors in carceral settings, but also connect volunteers with the broader movement for change. The tutoring experience, coupled with our justice-oriented leadership development, helps volunteers become more focused on systemic change; charter on-campus organizations focused on awareness of the carceral state; and for some, pursue careers in prison education or criminal justice reform.

Black Volunteer Tutors Matter

Though we have done a good job of recruiting volunteers, training them, and preparing them for justice-oriented leadership, we have failed to recruit and adequately support Black volunteer tutors. The latter matters because the incarcerated population at the facilities where we tutor is disproportionately Black and Latinx, while our volunteer base is only 12% Black. This means that incarcerated learners are not receiving support from those who look like them or those who might share communal experiences of the carceral state.

While more research needs to be conducted to understand the impact of tutor-student match in prison and re-entry education spaces, contemporary research has emerged that highlights the importance of teacher-student racial match in traditional classrooms, and furthermore indicates that all students, regardless of race, benefit from having a Black teacher. (See Appendix - Works Cited)

The PGP also believes that those directly impacted by the criminal legal system should be the ones leading the efforts to reduce the harm of the carceral state and reimagining the criminal legal system. This is what history has demonstrated—whether it was Black college students leading the voting rights and voter education campaigns of the early 1960s, Black teachers in segregated schools helping Black students achieve in the face of limited resources and racist ideas, or most recently, Black college students leading campus-based movements to combat anti-Black policing and broader institutional racism.

PGP Seeks to Diversify its Volunteer Base by Elevating and Supporting Black Volunteer Tutors

The PGP has struggled to recruit Black volunteers in the past, in large part because of the colleges and universities we've partnered with. Our volunteer demographics reflect those of our campus partners, which are largely PWIs. On these campuses, we've targeted Black affinity groups with only moderate success.

Therefore, to diversify our volunteer base we will focus our efforts on recruiting and training Black volunteers from HBCUs located in the lower mid-Atlantic region, where the PGP has existing programs in carceral facilities or with reentry programs.

We also want to increase the support provided to Black volunteers who, along with Black prison educators that we are in a relationship with, have indicated that because of the racism embedded in the carceral state, or family and community history of incarceration, the environment of carceral facilities and concomitant policing practices can make the tutoring experience traumatic. The PGP wants to ensure that currently and formerly incarcerated learners see themselves in their tutors and that Black student volunteers are more involved in this effort to mitigate harm, increase educational opportunities, and change systems that also impact them directly.

To do so, the PGP has partnered with Dr. Bahiyyah Muhammad, an Associate Professor of Criminology in the Department of Sociology at Howard University and Founding Director for Howard's Higher Education in Prison Programming.

Together, we will develop a program that supports Black volunteers tutoring inside carceral facilities and reentry spaces, helping them to process their experience, and to lead justice-oriented efforts through campus-based education and advocacy. The lessons learned from this initiative will inform how the PGP expands to other HBCUs and influence the recruiting, training, support, and staffing model for our work with PWIs.

This model is an important intervention in response to recent anti-Black racism across the nation and movements for an anti-racist society and an anti-carceral society. We are also launching this initiative in the context of persistent racial inequity in higher education in prison (HEP) programs. Many of the programs offered to incarcerated students are led by people who don't share their racial, ethnic, or other markers of social location. This initiative is an initial step towards creating and sustaining a program that centers Black volunteer tutors, many of whom are also system-impacted, meaning that they or a family member have been impacted by the criminal legal system. The initiative will also help build a Black faculty and practitioner pipeline for prison education programs.

Phase 1 - HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University

During the Spring 2021 semester, Maco L. Faniel, Director of Tutor Training and Justice Education for the PGP, and Norma Dhanaraj, Regional Manager of the PGP Washington, D.C., worked with Dr. Bahiyyah Muhammad and HU students to answer the following questions about PGP's current model and how it should evolve:

- Why do Black volunteer tutors matter?
- Why do Howard University volunteer tutors matter?
- How has our program operated at Howard University?
- What are we getting right?

- How do we develop a program that supports Black volunteers from Howard University, who tutor inside carceral facilities and reentry spaces, to process their experiences, and lead justice-oriented efforts through campus-based education and advocacy?

In brief, for this phase of the initiative, we were interested in understanding the PGP's current recruiting, training, and support model for Black HU volunteer tutors. Along with generating reflection on the PGP's model in focus group interviews, we also asked HU students to provide recommendations for what a program at their university should look like.

This report summarizes our findings and offers recommendations for Phase 2: Implementation of the HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University - Fall 2021/Spring 2022.

This report begins with a section that describes our research methods. The two succeeding sections focus on the history of partnership between the PGP and HU and the demographics of research participants. The next five sections discuss the PGP's current model for recruiting; training; support; justice-oriented leadership development; and staffing, while also offering recommendations for what each should look like going forward.

The final section of this report includes a plan for implementing the recommendations for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. In summary, we learned:

Recruiting

The PGP in D.C., along with the PGP campus-based organization at Howard University, does a good job of recruiting Black volunteer tutors. Black volunteer tutors attending Howard University are attracted to the mission and work of the PGP not only because they want to do something charitable, but also because they want to do something about a system that directly or tangentially harms them. More effort should go towards developing a long-term recruiting strategy that includes establishing relationships with key faculty, staff, leadership, and service-learning communities, and creating culturally relevant and Howard University-specific recruiting materials.

Pre-Service Training

Participants revealed that the PGP's Pre-Service Training is enjoyable and prepares them for tutoring incarcerated and formerly incarcerated learners in carceral spaces. More attention and content should focus on the biography of Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, Jr. and how his legacy is reflected in the work of the PGP.

System-Impactedness

Close to sixty percent of the participants identified as system-impacted either through their own interactions or the interactions of family members with the criminal legal system.

Participants revealed that they are often left on their own to process the impact of the tutoring experience because the PGP does not currently have a mechanism to support volunteer tutors facing direct or vicarious trauma because of the tutoring experience.

Justice-Oriented Leadership

The PGPs justice-oriented leadership educational events feature prominent activists and scholars, giving volunteers the opportunity to learn more about prison education, the criminal legal system, and efforts to bring about systemic change outside of the classroom, without having to worry about receiving a grade. HU volunteers who attended past events said they benefited greatly from it, and expressed the desire for justice-oriented leadership programming specific to Howard University.

Based on these findings, for Phase 2 of the HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University, the PGP will develop a support model and justice-oriented leadership model that (1) provides supports for the triggers that volunteers might experience from entering carceral spaces, (2) allows them to share truths connected to the volunteer experience, (3) helps them construct and understand their unique experiences with tutoring and the carceral state in general, (4) helps them apply the language of system-impactedness to their own experiences, and (5) guides them in developing on-campus education and advocacy programming.

PART 1 - UNDERSTANDING

Part 1 of the report explains the research methods used to analyze the PGP's existing program model, demographic data for those who participated in the research process, as well as historical background on the PGP's programming at Howard University.

STRATEGY AND METHOD

Participatory Action Research Approach

To understand the PGP's current model and make recommendations for Howard University students supporting the educational goals of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated learners in the DMV area, this phase of the initiative relied on qualitative research methods. More specifically, the findings herein were derived using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach that emphasizes participation and action by members of communities affected by the research.

In accordance with the collaborative culture among HBCUs, it was important to select a qualitative model that drew on the perspectives of key stakeholders. Therefore, the study design facilitated teamwork among students, staff, and practitioners, triangulating the perspectives of each to generate a shared understanding of how racial inequality, anti-Black racism, and oppression intersect with efforts to elevate and support Black volunteer tutors at HU. The project team chose this approach because it allowed for members of the volunteering community to work collaboratively in reflecting upon information obtained through focus group interviews, and applying it to the pilot's design.

This study strategically incorporated the PGP staff, former and current volunteers, prospective volunteers, and a Howard University faculty consultant. Participatory approaches were used in each stage of the project cycle, including during the focus groups, and debriefing sessions with the PGP staff.

The research for this phase of the initiative took place during the Covid-19 global pandemic; because of social distancing measures, all focus group interviews were conducted using a video-conferencing application.

Theory

This study utilized a Grounded Theory Approach (GTA). This theoretical framing allowed for qualitative narratives to be used in building the PGP's core understanding of the lived experience. This process allowed for the data to be incorporated into a PAR procedural undertaking. Using exploration, PAR and GTA assures that perspectives, voices, and thought processes are aligned with the participant's frame of reference. Rather than making the narrative fit into a theoretical framework, this study sought to elevate and center the narratives of all who participated in the three focus group interviews.

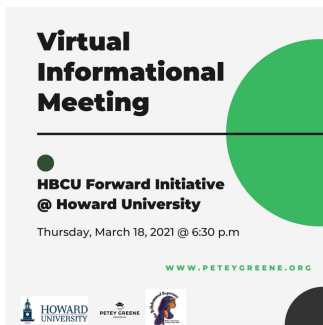
Participant Recruitment

Participants were selected for focus groups through a variety of digital means:



Class Drop-in

On February 24, 2021, PGP staff members conducted a short informational presentation in Dr. Muhammad's undergraduate criminal justice course. This included a brief presentation about the PGP and the upcoming focus group sessions and an invitation to the virtual informational.



Virtual Informational

On March 18, 2021 the PGP and Dr. Muhammad hosted a virtual information session to formally announce the HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University and to recruit research participants.

To generate interest in the virtual informational and focus group, the project team created a flier and an invitational email that was sent to current and former volunteers, the Howard University PGP student organization, Howard University College of Arts and Sciences listserv, the Office of University Communications, and to faculty who previously supported the program. The project team also consulted a staff reporter from the student newspaper. These individuals distributed the flier and invitation to their networks and within group chat messages. These efforts resulted in 34 participants who attended the virtual informational.

Focus Group 1

Prior to the virtual informational, on **March 12, 2021** the project team hosted the first focus group with ten current and former volunteers from Howard University to understand current contexts as well as prepare for the virtual informational and subsequent focus group interviews. Specifically, all of these participants had completed the PGP's Pre-Service Training and had at least one semester as a volunteer tutor. These participants were recruited by Norma Dhanaraj, Regional Manager, Washington D.C.

Focus Group 2

On **April 2, 2021** the project team hosted the second focus group interview session. These seven participants were recruited from the class drop-in, virtual informational, and or digital invitations and may or may not have had previous experience with the PGP.

Focus Group 3

On [April 16, 2021](#) the project team hosted the third focus group interview session. These two participants were recruited from the class drop-in, virtual informational, and or digital invitations and may or may not have had previous experience with the PGP.

The registration process for each focus group included a short survey of demographic questions that provided general information about all participants. After completion of the demographic survey, participants received the link to participate in the focus group session.

	PARTICIPANTS	PGP STAFF	DURATION
Focus Group 1	10	3	2 Hours
Focus Group 2	7	3	2 Hours
Focus Group 3	2	2	2 Hours

Evaluation

The project team recorded each focus group interview session. The recordings were then saved and played back for coding to capture patterns in narrative responses to questions, probes, and statements shared. This first phase of data analysis provided Dr. Muhammad with a list of themes, unique keywords used in the data, and guidance for next steps.

All recorded focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim by Transcription, Etc., a D.C.-based and Black woman-owned firm. During this phase of data analysis, all saved computer files were imported into NVIVO, a qualitative analysis software. NVIVO was used to conduct a line-by-line analysis of the transcriptions of the focus group interviews. In addition, Dr. Muhammad analyzed notes that she took during the focus group interviews to triangulate data to provide for a rounded picture of Black tutor experiences.

The project team also analyzed demographic data that was collected from the online registration process to supplement the focus group transcripts with descriptive information. In addition, this demographic information was used to create probing questions for each of the focus group interviews.

BACKGROUND



PGP in the DMV

The PGP began supporting the educational goals of incarcerated learners in the DMV area during the Spring 2015 semester. This was a strategic growth area for the PGP since the organization owes its name to Ralph Waldo “Petey” Greene, Jr, a formerly incarcerated 1960s community activist and pioneering D.C.-based radio and TV personality, who dedicated his life to advocacy on behalf of incarcerated people.

Since the beginning of the PGP's work in the DMV area approximately 300 volunteers have supported the educational goals of students enrolled in high school equivalency programs at the following institutions:

- District of Columbia Central Detention Facility
- Howard County Detention Center
- Jennifer Road Detention Center
- Maryland Correctional Institution for Women
- Montgomery County Correctional Center
- Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Home
- Prince George's County Correctional Facility
- Youth Services Center

The PGP and Howard University

Washington, D.C., formerly known as Chocolate City, is also home to the renowned campus on the hilltop, Howard University. Established in 1867, by a congressional charter, HU is an institution inspired by Black people's hopes for education as a manifestation of freedom after almost 250 years of unfreedom. HU currently exists as a “private, doctoral Historically Black University, with an R2 Carnegie classification” that enrolls “more than 9,000 students [in] its undergraduate, graduate, professional and joint degree programs.” These students choose from over “120 areas of study within 13 schools and colleges.” As an HBCU, the University primarily enrolls students from the African Diaspora. A large proportion of its students are Pell Grant eligible.

Since its inception, HU has worked to “address the plethora of disparities that disproportionately affect the African American population” (See Appendix - Works Cited). This is reflected in one of its core values, leadership. Specifically, the University aims to:

continue to develop technically competent and moral leaders who drive change, and engage in scholarship that provides solutions to contemporary global problems, particularly ones impacting the African Diaspora.

-Howard Forward, 2019-2024

In its most recent strategic plan, HU identified expanding “experiential service-learning opportunities to teach awareness of local and global issues that align with the University’s mission” as a key objective. As an important institutional member of the Washington D.C. community, one way that the University plans to serve the community is through partnering with D.C. citizens, businesses, and K-16 institutions to enhance education outcomes of Washington D.C. residents. In the past, HU’s experiential service-learning model included an educational program with incarcerated people at Lorton prison, and currently includes a program with incarcerated adults, youth and returning citizens in the DMV area.

In the Fall 2014 semester, the PGP first approached Dr. Bahiyah Muhammad, Associate Professor of Criminology in the Department of Sociology, about initiating a partnership with HU to support the educational goals of incarcerated learners in the DMV area through volunteer tutoring. The PGP staff member at the time met Dr. Muhammad through work with the Inside-Out Program.

To Dr. Muhammad, the partnership was important not only because of the prior HEP work she was leading in D.C., but also because the program was connected to a highly respected Black native Washingtonian, Mr. Petey Greene.

With the guidance of Dr. Muhammad, the PGP recruited students through classroom drop-ins and meetings in residential halls. The PGP hosted information sessions for students where we provided pizza and beverages and facilitated conversations about mass incarceration and what it would mean to volunteer as tutors for incarcerated learners.

According to Dr. Muhammad, interest was initially high, evidenced by approximately 150 prospective volunteers signing up to begin the training process. At the onset of the partnership, prospective volunteers were trained to support students in Dr. Muhammad’s HEP courses. During the launch year of the partnership, interest began to decrease as prospective volunteers did not see themselves represented on the PGP marketing materials. Additionally, PGP staff stopped working with trusted Howard University community members in recruitment efforts and when holding other events on campus. Nevertheless, during the Spring 2015 semester, 12 volunteers from HU began volunteering at the Jennifer Road Detention Center.

Since the launch of the program, approximately 60 Howard University students have supported the educational goals of incarcerated learners in the DMV area.

Along with volunteering, in the early days of the partnership, Howard University students created a campus-based PGP organization to not only recruit new volunteers but also coordinate events to help the broader campus community learn more about mass incarceration and the carceral state. These events included:

- Info sessions on campus to spread awareness about the need and opportunity for HU students to volunteer with the PGP
- Delta Week participation: Delta Sigma Theta invited the PGP to speak on a panel about challenges faced by incarcerated students working on their educational goals, and to participate in a discussion about students volunteering inside prisons. Speakers included Dr. Muhammad, one of her students at the D.C. Jail, two PGP staff, and a PGP campus leader at HU.
- Mixer events for PGP tutors to mingle and share their tutoring experiences

Demographics of the Carceral Facilities

Howard University volunteer tutors have primarily supported the educational goals of incarcerated learners at the D.C. Jail and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS)-Youth Services Center (YSC). Over 85% of the incarcerated people in these facilities identify as Black or African American, as shown in the tables below.

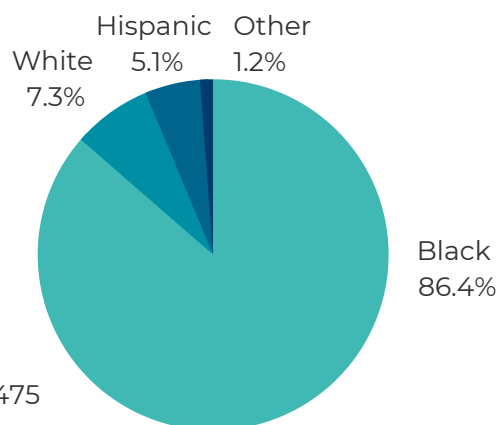
DYRS - Youth Services Center (FY2018, most recent public stats)

RACE	AGE	GENDER (BINARY)
African American: 98%	14 and Under: 8%	Male: 80%
Latino: 2%	15: 24%	Female: 20%
Other: 0%	16: 24%	
	17: 27%	
	18 and Older: 17%	

2021 - Total Daily Population: 53 Youth

Source: <https://dyrs.dc.gov/page/youth-snapshot>

D.C. Department of Corrections (April 2021, most recent public stats)



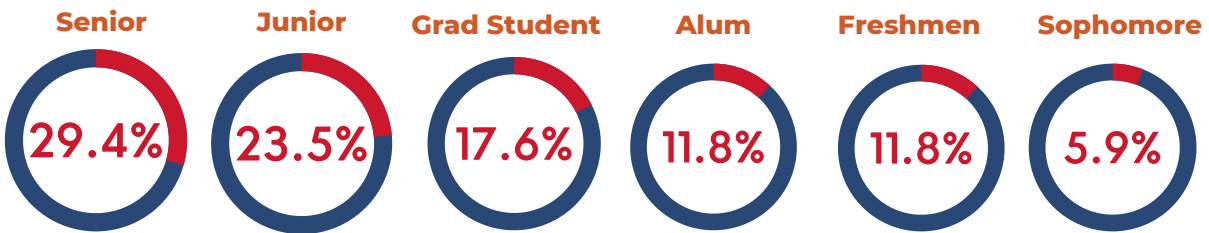
2021 – Average Daily Population: 1475

Source: <https://doc.dc.gov/page/inmate-demographics-and-statistics>

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

This section of the report details findings from survey data collected during the focus group registration process.

The study sample was majority female, system-impacted (that is, personal or family history of incarceration), and had previous experience in taking a criminal justice or juvenile justice course at Howard University.



Education

College and Major

Most participants (76.5%) were from the Howard University College of Arts and Sciences (COAS). Within the college, most were Sociology (17.7%) and Chemistry majors (17.6%), followed by those who had undecided majors/minors (11.8%). Other reported fields of study included Criminology, Afro-American studies, Psychology, English, and Entrepreneurship, at six percent for each discipline.

76.5%

College of Arts and Sciences

64.7%

Previously enrolled in a course focused on criminal justice or juvenile justice at Howard University.

Enrollment in Criminal Justice Courses

Most of the participants (64.7%) reported previously taking, or being currently enrolled in, a course focused on criminal justice or juvenile justice at Howard University.

System-Impacted Participants

A majority of participants identified as being system-impacted individuals. In the registration survey, approximately 53% of participants indicated they had a family history with the criminal legal system and/or were directly involved themselves. This finding is important because more than half of the individuals in this study are carrying these longitudinal experiences with them as they navigate through college and beyond.

52.9%

of participants indicated that they were system-impacted (directly or through family history with the criminal legal system).



Although participants completed the demographic survey prior to the session, during the focus group there was confusion about the meaning of “directly-impacted” and “system-impacted”, and who can and cannot identify as such. Because of this confusion, the percentage of individuals who reported being system-impacted may be larger than the reality. For the purposes of this report, “system-impacted” is defined as any person who has been affected by the criminal legal system, through their own interactions and/or their family members.

PART 2 - FINDINGS

This section highlights the study findings derived from the three focus group interviews. Study findings are categorized by one of the elements that comprise the PGP's program model: (1) recruiting, (2) training, (3) volunteer support, (4) justice-oriented leadership education, and (5) staffing. All findings emerged through qualitative analyses of the transcribed focus groups, facilitator notes, and meetings with PGP staff.

Findings illustrate how participants are the experts and can provide useful advice and ideas for developing programming and practices that can work to benefit all involved.

RECRUITING

Current Model

Each semester (Fall, Spring, Summer) PGP staff work with campus leaders at each partner university to hold informational sessions and advertise the PGP's volunteer opportunity on campus. PGP staff also reach out via email to potential applicants who have expressed interest in volunteering with the PGP.

Findings

Focus group participants learned about the program through a variety of means. There was no systematic process that all participants shared, except that they learned about the program from word of mouth. Students learned about the program from their peers on campus, recommendations from course professors, in-class presentations about the program, through Dr. Muhammad's advocacy work on-campus, student organizations doing similar work, and current PGP campus leaders. During focus group interviews, participants shared relevant details:

I specifically remember it was freshman year. Second semester of freshman year I was in a biology lab and somebody came in completely unrelated. Like it was a former student in the biology lab explaining her research and at the end just randomly—her name was [redacted], actually, and she was a Petey Greene, Howard University campus representative and also like an executive board person. And completely at the end she did a random plug and she was like, Petey Greene Program. And she kind of like explained it a bit and it caught my eye like from the beginning, like from the rip, and I was like this is something that I wanted to do.

Many participants remembered the first time they learned about the program and how excited they were to become involved. Others were familiar with working inside a facility and sought to supplement their previous experience with additional opportunities provided through the PGP:

It really starts when I joined Just Us, which is another organization on Howard's campus... when I found out about Petey Greene, which was through, actually, just a fundraiser at the dorm, it may have been [redacted] and [redacted], or maybe [redacted]. I think [redacted] was there though. I just found out about it and I was like what are you guys fundraising for. And they were like oh it's the Petey Greene Program. I'm like what's that. They're like, oh, we tutor incarcerated students. I was like what, like really. So I literally signed up on that day and I was really excited about the opportunity.

In all situations, participants learned about the program on-campus, at Howard University. These conversations began with the PGP presence on the actual campus. In addition to supplementing their previous experience, the same participant reflected on her engagement with the program in her dorm. Being able to ask questions allowed her to decide at that moment that she wanted to get involved.

Social media also served as a means for getting the attention of students. Some participants felt that the PGP should be publicized more, as one participant shared:

So, I heard about it through GroupMe during our second semester when we were all in quarantine. And I had seen a flyer for it, and I immediately clicked on it because I saw I'm pretty sure it was [redacted], who was advertising for it because she wanted more members to join our executive board. I immediately clicked on it and I was just like how do people not know about this. Like how is this not more publicized than it is?

Participants were excited about the program regardless of how they came to learn about it. They wanted as many people as possible to learn about the opportunity. For individuals who were currently participating in other student organizations related to criminal justice, they wanted more structure and reliable programming and felt the PGP offered this. Based on these findings, the PGP should build upon the enthusiastic interest of HU volunteers while increasing the avenues by which the PGP is publicized and integrated on campus, and also updating recruitment materials to better connect with the HU population.

Recommendations

Continue and expand on-campus engagement with volunteers.

Engage with interdisciplinary faculty across the campus, including faculty in the humanities to get their support in recruiting volunteer tutors who are already grappling with ideas of justice in their studies.

Implement a process to recruit university staff to support recruiting and justice-oriented leadership development. This would include educating staff on the variety of ways in which they can become involved with the organization.

Create a long-term recruitment process in partnership with current campus students and PGP volunteer tutors.

Create culturally relevant promotional flyers that include Black women and non-gendered individuals, reflecting the Howard University student population.

Create a PGP course that is part of the Howard University curriculum, which could be aligned with the internship courses offered in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Initiate a partnership with the Howard University Chapel to connect PGP to HU's current service learning programming.

Include in recruitment materials and on the PGP website that system-impacted Black volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to apply.

TRAINING

Current Model

The PGP's current training model, refined during Summer 2020 in response to the PGP's strategic plan and Covid-19, requires an extensive time commitment from new volunteers. During the Pre-Service Training, volunteers learn how to be effective and ethical tutors for in-person and virtual settings. The current version of the Pre-Service Training not only prepares volunteers to tutor virtually, in-person, and with returning citizens, but also has an increased focus on ethical volunteerism and intentional engagement. PGP staff facilitators and new volunteers meet virtually for four hours over two days. In addition to refined and enhanced content, the Pre-Service Training incorporated virtual components that made the process easier to navigate. The Pre-Service Training includes the following four modules:

MODULE 1
THE CARCERAL STATE
& PRISON EDUCATION

Volunteers learn about the set of interlocking institutions, logics, and practices that produce "punitive processes of criminalization and control," like incarceration, parole, and probation. This helps volunteers understand the broader contexts of the carceral state that produce the need for carceral and reentry education programs. Volunteers learn how the carceral state framework shapes our approach to educational support and how to avoid carceral humanism in their volunteering.

MODULE 2
RE-ENTRY
& EDUCATION

Volunteers learn about reentry programs that exist to help mitigate the challenges faced by formerly incarcerated people and their families when attempting to thrive and reach their freedom dreams post-incarceration. We also think about how education as a part of the wrap-around services provided by reentry programs might mitigate some of the difficulties system-impacted people and their families face after incarceration.

MODULE 3
TUTORING
STRATEGIES & TECHNOLOGY

Volunteers learn about tutoring procedures, tools, and strategies to conduct tutoring sessions. This module also focuses on the practices of setting goals and sharing feedback with students during tutoring sessions.

MODULE 4
INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENT
& ETHICAL VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers engage in learning about how to be an ethical volunteer and how to conduct healthy, collaborative, and intentional tutoring sessions.

Findings

Overall, participants felt that training was done well. Participants learned a great deal from the entire process. They enjoyed the pre-assigned readings for the training sessions because it further contextualized the tutoring experience in the macro effects of mass incarceration. Students especially stated their appreciation for the training's use of person-centered language. A few students shared the following comments about their training experience:

I took my training in 2019. I would have to agree with [redacted], that it was extremely insightful. I know prior to that training I was already aware not to call people who are incarcerated inmates, or use certain terminology. Actually, you taught me that, Dr. Muhammad, how to properly address someone who's been incarcerated. I also feel like it provided a lot of information for individuals who never had the experience of going inside a facility. Me, I had prior experience. I've visited family members, so the things I was hearing inside the training were normal to me; I was used to it. I knew what to expect. But I feel like Petey Greene did a good job with providing lots of information for individuals who haven't had that experience.

The training was very informative. As someone who has been impacted by incarceration, I even learned a lot about it. You know, just starting like the history, learning different terminology about it. And, one thing that I really loved about the training was how the Petey Greene Program made it a safe space. Like they continuously said at the beginning have an open mind, have an open heart, don't basically judge others for their questions, ask whatever you want. Take the opportunity to learn because, again, not as many people -- at least according to the demographics of the program -- not as many people have been impacted by incarceration. And I took my training fall 2020. But, yeah, they made it like a safe space.

I also like how they assigned readings. They made sure that we didn't really have an excuse to say we didn't know much about mass incarceration or the Petey Greene Program, or anything like that. And then also I liked how they taught us how to be tutors. Because I tutored like in high school, I was tutoring a fifth-grader though. You know, like I wasn't tutoring someone who was currently incarcerated, who may be older than me, or we may be around the same age. They gave us the resources whether it be like navigating the software that we used or using different handouts, or different methods to tutoring. They taught us how to be an effective tutor so that we could make the most of our time, and also help them to achieve their goals as well. And so, I would say the trainings were definitely effective and informative.

Even those participants who identified as system-impacted learned new things during their participation in the training. In addition, the training helped maintain their excitement about participating in the program. A participant shared:

So, my training was actually, I thought it was very insightful. Before I went to Howard, at that point, I had educated myself and I was aware of how unjust this system was from, you know, how black people, especially black men, are targeted much more. And then they get into the system, and then even when they get out it's like the sentence doesn't really end. But even then with the training, I felt like they had educated me on like terminology that you don't really think about. You know, because it's so normalized to say things like inmate and other degrading terms, and you don't even realize how much that's been normalized and how degrading it could be. So I thought the training was very good. I don't remember anything that I thought was negative.

Despite these successes, focus group participants also reported that they need more attention to their mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. More work should be done to focus on volunteer tutor supports.

Additionally, focus group participants also wanted to learn more about the organization's namesake, D.C.-based community activist and radio and television pioneer Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, Jr. This would include actual photographs, voice narratives and documentary footage of his life. Students felt that this information would be beneficial to them in a variety of ways, especially in helping them to talk about the program with their families or loved ones.

Recommendations

Continue upgrading the training sessions to align with the use of technology.

Continue incorporating critical readings for volunteer tutors to learn about the macro level of impacts of mass incarceration, specifically on Black individuals, families, and communities.

Incorporate primary resources connected to the life of Ralph Waldo "Petey Greene" Jr., addressing who he was, and how he lived his life in D.C. Highlight the connection between the program name and the individual, and how other PGP sites pay homage to the organization's namesake.

Engage the living family of the organization's namesake in the D.C. area, including on panels and justice-oriented leadership events for the PGP.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Current Model

The PGP's current program model includes the following:

- Mid- or End-of-semester Debrief: PGP staff meet with tutors to gain feedback from tutors about their experience during the semester, and utilize feedback to improve the volunteer's current experience and or future programming.
- Volunteer Appreciation Event: PGP regional staff and tutors come together to share a meal in-person (typically at a Black-owned venue), connect with other tutors and PGP staff, share tutoring experiences, and build community in the D.C. region.
- Attendance Form Follow-up: PGP staff check attendance forms weekly. Each form has space for tutors to share how their tutoring session went overall, how engaged their student was, share any concerns or incidents with PGP staff, and request support. PGP staff then follow-up with tutors as needed.
- Staff Presence As Needed: Throughout the semester and in continuous communication via email with tutors, PGP staff reiterate their availability to tutors via phone or email as needed.
- Service Learning Forms and Reference Letters: PGP staff complete any required forms for tutors' service-learning courses. PGP staff also write recommendations for tutors applying to internships, other volunteer opportunities, and higher education programs.
- PGP's College Bridge Writing Program at the D.C. Jail: Tutors commit to participating in an additional weekly workshop (facilitated by a local university) to help tutors prepare feedback for incarcerated students on their writing assignments.
- PGP Student Organization Events: Tutors in each region are invited to attend events that take place at Howard University. The student organization is responsible for organizing three events each semester, such as a fundraiser, an informational session about volunteering with the PGP, or an awareness event about incarcerated students and issues pertaining to the carceral state.

Findings

The support model is vital to the success of volunteer tutors, especially at HBCUs. During focus group sessions it was learned that most student participants come to the volunteer tutor experience with a variety of direct impact trauma from the collateral consequences of mass incarceration on themselves and their families.

Students felt it was difficult to talk to their family members about their participation in the PGP. In some instances, family conversations were not supportive and included questioning the student's reasoning for wanting to participate in a program that would require them to voluntarily enter a prison or jail. One student shared:

And I told my mom; I told my dad, and they were like, are you crazy, you're going to go tutor in an incarcerated facilities, again, with society's idea of fear, the society's idea of the other, and ostracization. And so they were a bit intimidated, but at that point, I was over 18 I was like 'I'm going to do what I want, but I was just telling you guys just for courtesy.'

When another student mentioned their participation with the PGP to their parent, they had a similar response as the parents mentioned above:

And although my parents possibly had some timidity, like they were a bit timid about it, for me, once I set my mind on something or I see something that touches my heart that I want to do, I just kind of go for it.

During this session of the focus group, it was difficult for students to engage in conversations about their lived experience. A few participants shared that the session was the first time that they shared the ways in which they were directly impacted by the system.

I had an uncle that was incarcerated and when he reentered he came back to live with myself and my mom and my family. And, unfortunately, his life was truncated due to gun violence four months after he was released. So, even my first time telling that story to Just Us, I had never shared that, and I was tearing up not even realizing like the trauma. I didn't realize how traumatic that was. At the time I just compartmentalized it; I'm just like, you know, I need to graduate; I was a senior in high school, things of that nature.

Although the participant who speaks above about the trauma experienced, the volunteer student "compartmentalized it" instead of dealing with it. This is a dangerous method of continuation. Even if it is an action that helps the volunteer tutor continue moving forward, it does not address the trauma that will continue to grow as they continue to engage the system. Black individuals, and students specifically, have been historically seen as "superhuman" which has worked to erase their pain and sorrow. The pain, sorrow and trauma that Black volunteer tutors are carrying must be addressed in real ways.

Still, while some students are fully aware and open about being directly impacted by incarceration, others are not. One participant stated:

This is something I've been wanting to do for the longest time, because, I mean, now that everybody's been talking about it, I am impacted by it.

Black volunteer tutors must be given a safe space for dialogue and the opportunity to self-identify at a time that is best for them. This means that they may never decide to share their truth on the topic, and that must be clearly acknowledged as being okay and respected.

Oftentimes, it is assumed that those individuals who are directly impacted by incarceration have become habituated with engaging with the system. This understanding fails to account for the trauma experienced when a family member or loved one is incarcerated. One student shared the following:

Like she said there's just a rollercoaster. But I think sadly I have become a little more desensitized towards it only because I've been going through it basically my entire life. I have a very vivid memory of my father being like arrested at my kindergarten graduation because he had a warrant out. Like I remember these things, and so you never really forget these things. And it just manifests in different ways. And I think it just has to be kind of a healing process.

I have a friend whose dad is a cop and I never realized how like antsy I am around him just because like I've seen his handcuffs before and it just triggers that. So, I feel like there has to be sort of like -- there's already sensitivity towards it, but I feel like people should realize that every situation is different. But at the end of the day it impacts so many people in different ways.

So like me, I always just buried myself at school like I pushed myself.

While some participants struggle to cope with the effects of engaging with carceral space, others find ways to continue being a volunteer tutor. Participants shared the following statements:

I used to practice like a lot of spiritual things before I would go into facilities and after. So the kind of music that I would consume on the ride there, on the travel there I would pray, like I would just kind of center myself again back to this point of like preparing myself to be as much of a vessel, as much also as a sponge like able to learn and able to give as possible. And like prepare myself to be in the space where I felt like individuals were facing a lot more complex problems than I was on my day-to-day, and being able to engage in that way.

For me, going in and out of the facilities, it wasn't new to me, so I feel like it wasn't that big of a shock, you know, like dealing with something emotionally. I don't know if everyone gets what I'm saying, like it wasn't a big emotional event for me when I started tutoring and being and going in and out of facilities inside D.C. So I feel like ways that I've always coped with my involvement in the system and my connection with the criminal justice system, and having family members incarcerated, is that I always just talk to God, always, every day. And I'm also a very spiritual person, so I indulge in spiritual activities that just bring me happiness and they bring me peace and I just get to relax.

The importance of self-care when engaging in tutor work in and outside of carceral space must not be underestimated. Not all students are as reflective as the student below:

And I think, going forward, like ways that my time tutoring impacted my own self-care I think I started to become more intentional, like little things. Like understanding the joys of my liberation or the things that I was taking for granted like my immense privilege.

The quote above is a reminder of the importance of assuring programming is centered around the health and wellness of the participants. They should not be left to their own abilities to address the many layers of trauma, pain, and grief that accompany being Black in America, more specifically, with being a Black volunteer tutor in America's carceral system.

As far as what the Petey Greene Program offers, like I think they do encourage you to try to sustain your mental health because, you know, the work that you're doing is not easy and it's going to take a toll on you mentally and emotionally.

It is incumbent upon the PGP to assure that all participants are in sound health. This includes mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health.

Recommendations

Campus leaders and other PGP student organization members should not be required to tutor with the PGP, but instead, should be allowed to express interest in volunteering with the PGP and/or enthusiasm for engaging with the PGP community on campus through events led by the PGP student organization.

Compensate campus leaders.

Identify, implement and publicize the PGP's organizational stance on defining what it means to be "system-impacted".

Immediately incorporate trauma-informed practices into PGP's programming and policies.

Acknowledge the multiple needs of Black volunteers in their position as tutors and within their lives outside of their tutor role.

Recruit, train, and educate the entire volunteer. Use a holistic approach to empower volunteers with tutoring skills, as well as life skills in navigating Black anti-racism in their everyday lives.

Address the intergenerational trauma that participants bring to the program.

Include supports for the triggers that participants experience from entering carceral spaces.

Help volunteers understand how to talk about their PGP experience including how to engage in healthy conversations with their families, friends and others about tutoring incarcerated people.

Create additional safe spaces for volunteer tutors to share their lived experiences of being Black and directly impacted by the criminal legal system.

Incorporate supports for participants to go beyond person-first language into ways of how to apply this language to their own experiences.

Recommendations, Continued

Allow participants to share their truths connected to the programming, such as during training, educational evening sessions, etc.

Facilitate and help volunteer tutors construct and understand their unique narratives that center around the criminal legal system.

Subsidize transportation costs in advance instead of through reimbursement.

Offer work-study opportunities.

Incorporate program supports that are not connected directly to the volunteer tutor experience.

Work within a Participatory Action Research perspective to incorporate (from the start) the voices of Black volunteer tutors in the building out of supports for participants.

Incorporate the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) assessment in supports and training practices.

Incorporate a closing ceremony in the program for family to attend.

JUSTICE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP MODEL

Current Model

A key feature of the PGP is the way we prepare and engage with volunteers to not only provide high-quality tutoring in support of the academic goals of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people but also what we do to help volunteers become justice-oriented citizens. The PGP volunteer tutors learn how to tutor in carceral settings and how to tutor those impacted by the carceral state. Our volunteer tutors also learn how to tutor specific content. Finally, volunteers learn about the injustices manifested by the carceral state so that they can engage ethically, avoid carceral humanism, become advocates, and take on leadership roles that reimagine the criminal legal system.

The PGP promotes justice-oriented citizens—those who understand the root causes of injustice and pursue systemic change—by not only providing college students and community members with the opportunity to tutor but also educating volunteers on the need and opportunity to affect systemic change in the criminal legal system. In the past, we have hosted workshops and events on college campuses, featuring experts on the carceral state as well as local and national advocacy organizations promoting justice for people impacted by the criminal legal system.

For much of our first twelve years, each semester, PGP staff or the PGP campus-based organizations, typically hosted about 30 different events on different campuses focused on social justice and systemic change, so that volunteers and broader campus communities could understand the processes that produce mass incarceration and grapple with how to approach systemic change. In response to the global pandemic and in accordance with our strategic plan, we formalized these events in the form of webinars open to all volunteers, regardless of their region or university, and open to the public.

For the Fall 2020 webinars, we averaged over 200 participants, comprised of volunteer tutors and many people in the social justice and prison education fields. (Watch the recordings here: [The Carceral State And Education](#), [Approaches To Reentry](#), [Reentry and Education: A Student Perspective](#))

For the Spring 2021 semester, we hosted three webinars focused on justice-oriented leadership, understanding how Covid-19 has impacted incarcerated people and the educational services they receive, and current demands to reimagine the criminal legal system. (Watch the recordings here: [What Does It Mean To Be A Justice-Oriented Citizen?](#), [COVID-19 and Prison Education: A Student Perspective](#), and [Defund, Decriminalize, Abolish: What do they really mean?](#))

Findings

Volunteer tutors benefited greatly from justice-oriented programming. This gave students the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom without having to worry about receiving a grade. It promoted a sense of freedom for participants to engage with the content in ways that differed from content received through traditional classroom lectures.

The evening sessions allowed for participants to not have to choose between work and attendance. This was important to Black volunteer tutors who often navigate the world having to make mutually exclusive decisions between work and extracurricular endeavors.

Recommendations

Create justice-oriented education program specific to Howard University.

Incorporate information about Black children of incarcerated parents that are affected by incarceration. Many of the participants self-disclosed that they were children of incarcerated parents and family members. Continue justice-oriented programming and leadership opportunities for students.

Continue to offer programming during the evening. Consider offering a few programs on the weekend.

Incorporate a Justice- Oriented Leadership Retreat for participants.

Allow freshman and sophomores to also have leadership opportunities within the organization.

Incorporate a closing ceremony in the program for family to attend.

PART 3

FALL 2021 - SPRING 2022 IMPLEMENTATION

Based on these findings, for the second phase of the HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University, which includes the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters, the PGP will focus most of our attention on developing the support model and the justice-oriented leadership model for Howard University volunteers tutoring incarcerated and formerly incarcerated learners.

For the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters, Howard University volunteers will tutor incarcerated learners at the D.C. Jail and the Youth Services Center located in Washington, D.C. Volunteers will be tutoring students enrolled in several different programs including GED, high school equivalency, high school diploma, college readiness, and college in prison. In addition, as the PGP continues to develop programming in response to the coronavirus pandemic, Howard University volunteers may have the opportunity to tutor incarcerated learners at the following locations:

- Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Home in Alexandria, VA
- Howard County Department of Corrections in Jessup, MD
- MLK Achievement Center (youth reentry program) in Washington, D.C.
- Maryland Correctional Institution for Women in Jessup, MD
- Prison-to-Professionals (reentry program) in Baltimore, MD

RECRUITING GOALS

SUMMER 2021

- Update website and application to specifically say that system-impacted people are welcomed and encouraged to apply to be volunteers.
- Update website and application to specifically say that no prior tutoring experience is required to be a volunteer and that PGP will provide training to make sure that they are ready to volunteer, and ongoing training to build their tutoring practice.
- Include a question about system-impactedness on volunteer application and tutoring acceptance form for returning volunteers.
- Generate volunteer applications by creating a flier and sending an invitation email to department heads and professors (criminology, social work, education, etc.), relevant student orgs, HU applicants, PGP's focus group attendees, and other students identified by Dr. Muhammad.

In preparation for Fall 2022 launch

SPRING 2022

- Create a long-term recruitment process in partnership with Howard University. This process should include building relationships with volunteers, key faculty, staff, leadership, and service-learning administrators.
- Create culturally relevant promotional materials representative of our current diverse volunteer base and the type of volunteers that we want to attract.
- Create Howard University-specific promotional materials.

TRAINING GOALS

SPRING
2022

- Include a more robust profile of Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, Jr.
- Enhance content on harm-reduction and trauma-informed practices.
- Upgrade pre-reading offerings aligned with content of each module, especially related to re-entry and education, and trauma.

SUPPORT GOALS

SUMMER
2021

- Using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) model, build a support model that incorporates (from the start) the voices of Black volunteer tutors in building out a support model for participants. This support model will:
 - Include supports for the triggers that volunteers might experience from entering carceral spaces.
 - Share truths connected to the volunteer experience
 - Help volunteer tutors construct and understand their unique experiences with tutoring and the carceral state in general.
 - Help volunteers go beyond person-first language into ways of applying the language of system-impactedness to their own experiences.
- Develop evaluation metrics and tools

FALL
2021

- Host at least two check-in meetings per month
- Schedule two focus group meetings
- Conduct end of semester evaluation

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT GOALS

SPRING
2022

- Host volunteer and student appreciation event
- Conduct end of semester evaluation

SUMMER
2022

- Conduct end of year evaluation

JUSTICE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP MODEL GOALS

FALL
2021

- Collaborate with PGP student organization at Howard University to coordinate one event per semester specific to the concerns of the Howard University community

SPRING
2022

- Events can focus on the Black family and Mass Incarceration; What does it mean to be system-impacted; Black prison educators.

STAFFING MODEL



Maco L. Faniel, Director of Tutor Training and Justice Education, will manage the design and implementation of the HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University. He will work closely with the Regional Manager, Washington, D.C. to support volunteer recruiting and training. Faniel will also work closely with the project consultant, Dr. Bahiyah Muhammad, to develop and implement the support model for the Howard University volunteers. Maco will also work with the Howard University PGP student organization to develop the campus-specific justice-oriented leadership model. Lastly, Maco will work closely with the incoming Director of Communications to develop culturally relevant promotional materials representative of our current diverse volunteer base and the type of volunteers that we want to attract.



Norma Dhanaraj, MSW, Regional Manager, Washington D.C., will manage the recruiting process, volunteer management, and volunteer programming at the Youth Services Center and other facilities, as well as collaborative reentry programming with Prisons-to-Professionals and other reentry partners.



Dr. Bahiyah Muhammad, Associate Professor of Criminology in the Department of Sociology at Howard University and Principal Consultant of The Dr. Muhammad Experience (DME) Inc. will be principally responsible for developing and evaluating the support model using a Participatory Action Research model.

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