

June 2021

# Call for Submissions

11th National Conference on Higher Education in  
Prison  
November 11-14, 2021  
Denver, CO

Hosted by the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison

The 2021 NCHPEP Planning Team is pleased to announce the Call for Submissions for the 11th National Conference on Higher Education in Prison, which will be held in person in Denver, CO (November 11-14). After compiling the 2021 Virtual NCHPEP Exit Report and inviting feedback and ideas from anyone who was interested through a standing survey and public Planning Sessions (which will continue through October), the theme that will frame the 11th NCHPEP is

## What is To Be Done?

Posed more than a century ago,<sup>1</sup> this burning question has since inspired generations of revolutionaries to interrogate the intersections of theory and practice, to reflect upon their own positionalities in the face of power and oppression, and to seek the most effective strategies to collectively organize and build resistance. We expect many answers to this question, given the diversity of views that make up the field of higher education in prison, including those of current and former students, program directors, teachers, activists, scholars, and other community members.

In light of this vision, which speaks to a renewed commitment to make NCHPEP a space of knowledge exchange and an occasion to enliven political conversations in the field, a few changes have been made to the submission formats. In order to question traditional conceptions of conference structures, the 11th NCHPEP will host presentations that privilege collaboration, mutual support, and participation by inviting submissions for **Open Conversations; Roundtables; Workshops; and Meetings**.

Those who are currently incarcerated will be able to participate in the 11th NCHPEP via a virtual connection which can be arranged for any of the presentation types. Additionally, they will be able to send a pre-recorded presentation, appoint a delegate who will read their work, or take part in a remote three-day session that will be held the week following the in-person NCHPEP (November 17-19). The details of this extra virtual session, through which we hope to accommodate anyone who cannot travel to Denver, will be announced at the beginning of the Fall. All other submitters are expected to be physically present at the conference: information on Registration and Financial Aid will be provided in July. Please check our website for updates: <https://www.higheredinprison.org/2021-nchep>

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1902 by Vladimir Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement* (you can read it here) is considered one of the most influential political pamphlets of the radical Left. Lenin's work deals with how the intellectuals and the working class can collaborate and organize in the struggle against oppressive power, in a praxis of mutual exchange. Lenin borrows his question from Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky's novel of the same name, which was written during his political incarceration (Chernyshevsky endured solitary confinement for almost two years in the second half of the nineteenth century). *What Is To Be Done?* has variously informed anti colonial political discourses (e.g. Ho Chi Minh) and revolutionary movements. The Black Panther Party, most notably, thoroughly recognized the importance of scientific socialism for its own ideology (see here) while maintaining a nuanced and critical view of some of the Marxist-Leninist stances on race and positionality. And yet, Angela Davis recounts how Lenin permeated the political education of the Black Panthers, beyond any elitism: "If I still retained any of the elitism which almost inevitably insinuates itself into the minds of college students, I lost it all in the course of Panther political education sessions. When we read Lenin's *State and Revolution*, there were sisters and brothers in the class whose public school education had not even allowed them to learn how to read. Some of them told me how they had stayed with the book for many painful hours, often using the dictionary to discover the meaning of scores of words on one page, until finally they could grasp the significance of what Lenin was saying. When they explained, for the benefit of other members of the class, what they had gotten out of their reading, it was clear they knew it all—they had understood Lenin on a far more elemental level than any professor of social sciences." (An Autobiography, 192)

For all the 11th NCHEP formats, the submission portal will open on Friday, June 25, 2021 at 12:00pm ET. The deadline for submissions is Monday, July 26, at midnight ET and Monday, August 16, at midnight ET for those who are currently incarcerated.

Currently incarcerated scholars can submit through the ConfTool portal (<https://www.conftool.org/nchep-2021/>), including with the support of a delegate, or via mail to the following address:

Alliance for Higher Education in Prison  
Attn: NCHEP Submission  
1801 N. Broadway, Room 417  
Denver, CO 80202

**Notifications of acceptance or decline will be sent in August and September, respectively.**

The 11th NCHEP Planning Team is committed to protecting the health of national conference participants and as such is actively monitoring the national and state response to COVID-19. At this time, we are moving forward with our planning efforts for an in-person conference. However, if large gatherings will be considered a public health risk in the fall of 2021, we will either postpone the conference or consider an alternative format that can prioritize people's health and safety. If the conference is postponed, all accepted proposals from the earlier date would remain invited to participate at the later date. Please consult the current health guidelines for indoor events in Denver, CO: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/indoor-events>

We will continue to announce all deadlines and updates on the 11th NCHEP website: <https://www.higheredinprison.org/2021-nchep>

# 2021 Call for Submissions

## *I. Open Conversations*

In an effort to carve out a space for needed debates among scholars, students, and activists, we solicit **individual applications** to take part in open conversations centered around predesignated themes inspired by community discussions, recurrent areas of scholarship, and several past NCHEP Exit Reports. The National Conference is offering the following topics:

- Prison abolition;
- COVID-19: lessons and challenges;
- Abolitionist teaching and antiracist pedagogy;
- The perils and promises of technology;
- Trauma-informed pedagogy;
- White supremacy and higher education.

Open Conversation participants are not required to present a formal academic paper: instead, they should be ready to share their informed opinions and knowledge on the topic selected, and to engage in conversation with the other panelists and the audience through a series of thought-provoking questions.

### **Format Details**

Discussants will be allotted five minutes to present their opinions on the topic (not aided by any visuals or PowerPoint presentations), followed by five minutes to offer their questions to the attendees.

Length: 75-minutes.

Participants: Three to five participants will be selected to participate in each Open Conversation.

Moderator: Each session will be provided with a moderator who will help facilitate the conversation.

### **Submission Requirements**

1. Name and contact information;
2. 250-word overview illustrating your take on the selected topic;
3. Two/three questions you would like to ask other participants and the audience.

## *II. Roundtables*

The National Conference will accept prepared roundtable sessions from **groups of submitters** on significant subjects related to higher education in prison that will feature three to four discussants and a moderator. While similar to 'Open Conversations' (open to individuals), this format welcomes submissions from pre-formed groups of discussants together with their own appointed moderators. Participants are not required to present a formal academic paper: instead, they should be ready to share their informed opinions and knowledge on the topic proposed, and to nourish further exchanges with the other discussants and the audience through a series of thought-provoking questions.

### **Format Details**

Discussants will be given five minutes to present their opinions on the topic (not aided by any visuals or PowerPoint presentations), followed by five minutes to offer their questions to the attendees or other participants. The moderator will facilitate the discussion.

Length: 75-minutes.

Participants: Three to four discussants and a moderator.

### **Submission Requirements:**

1. Names and contact information of each of the roundtable participants (discussants and moderator);
2. Title of the roundtable discussion;
3. 250-word overview illustrating the way the roundtable will approach the topic;
4. Five questions that will circulate among the discussants and the audience.

### *III. Workshops*

No matter what kind of work you do in the field of higher education in prison, the annual National Conference on Higher Education in Prison offers an important chance for collaboration and co-learning. The workshop format will offer participants the opportunity to exchange knowledge and give feedback to each other's practices. Workshops should be designed around discussions and activities related to a particular aspect of the work of higher education in prison. Workshops could address (but should not be limited to) the following topics:

- How to deal with institutional pushback and skepticism;
- How to leverage academic and personal skills and experiences;
- How to navigate one's privilege and power in the prison classroom;
- How to publish scholarly research and writing;
- How to transition to campus after incarceration;
- Mutual Aid, fundraising, and development efforts;
- Writing a graduate school application.

#### **Format Details**

Workshop leaders create a space for the conference attendees to learn practices and exchange knowledge related to a particular aspect of higher education in prison.

Length: 75-minutes.

Participants: One to three workshop leaders.

#### **Submission Requirements:**

1. Name and contact information of the workshop leaders;
2. Title of the workshop;
3. Overview of your goals and objectives (500 words max.). Please detail the methods and materials you will use in order to engage the workshop participants and ask yourself the question: What would I want the attendees to learn from this workshop?

## *IV. Meetings*

The National Conference on Higher Education in Prison assembles a vast network of people involved in the work of extending quality higher education in prison. While the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic put a temporary halt on our ability to host in-person meetings for those active in the field, the 2021 NCHEP in Denver offers an important opportunity for renewed face-to-face meetings. Are you part of a community that could use a space for convening a meeting this year? Have you imagined a community connection, or set of connections, you would like to see supported or brought into a shared space, in person? If so, please consider applying for a meeting at this year's conference.

You will be asked to specify the time that works best for your group in the meeting application, so that we can do our best to accommodate all requests based both on the hotel's availability and the number of applications for meetings received.

### **Format Details**

To submit a meeting proposal, please provide a completed meeting space proposal. Please be advised that the submission will ask you to provide a brief written statement (250 words max.) that outlines the purpose of the meeting, how the meeting will be used to achieve the goals you have in mind, and some sense of what the meeting experience will involve.

Length: 75-minutes.

Participants: One to three meeting facilitators.

### **Submission Requirements:**

1. Name and contact information of the meeting facilitators;
2. Title of the meeting;
3. Brief written statement (250 words max.) outlining the meeting's goals and objectives.