

From: Higher Education in Prison <prison-ed@googlegroups.com>

Date: Monday, March 15, 2021 at 8:06:33PM UTC-5

Subject: Introducing new prison-ed email list manager and some further changes

To: Higher Education in Prison <prison-ed@googlegroups.com>

Dear Higher Education in Prison email list,

On Feb. 15th, Rob Scott announced that posts sent to pris...@googlegroups.com would now be moderated, would require the use people-first language, and would be limited to announcements, news, and events (rather than an open 'discussion').

Today we announce that Lisette Bamenga has joined as a second manager of this national email list. Lisette is an Academic Coordinator at Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison and she manages their program at Taconic Correctional Facility, a medium security prison for women.

From both of us: We are going to do our best to uphold community standards with respect to language use and tone on this list. We would like to re-affirm that using people-first language, for instance as [called for by Eddie Ellis](#), and outlined in the [underground scholars language guide](#), is the preferred way to respect the humanity of our students and people in carceral settings.

We invite people to use this [google form](#) to request new subscriptions to this listserv. We have added a link to the bottom of this and all future postings to this list so it is easy to find and share the link.

What else? There have been quite a few people who have recently sent emails (which we have not posted) that were conversational, or were brief notes essentially saying “congratulations” or “I agree”, and in one case calling for us to overturn the practice of humanizing language that is the standard for this email list. We will not be posting any emails like these and please understand that we do not have time to have a conversation with each person who tries to post such messages. There is no further comment on these posts — they are too diverse to generalize about. The email list is for announcements, events, and news about higher education in prison. We will use our best judgment to moderate posts while maintaining community standards.

Here are some options if you feel strongly about an announcement that is posted:

1. Respond to the sender directly;
2. For those who want an unmoderated discussion space, maybe you could create a reddit

page. We realize that people may look forward to such discourse — we are happy to post an announcement regarding its inception if such a space is created.

Have a good night!

Rob & Lisette

robs...@cornell.edu

lbam...@hudsonlink.org

From: Rob Scott <robscott@cornell.edu>

Date: Monday, February 15, 2021 at 3:09:44PM UTC-6

Subject: HEP Announcements and News (only) -- a big change to this email list's format

To: prison-ed@googlegroups.com <prison-ed@googlegroups.com>

Dear Higher Education in Prison Community,

The “Higher Education in Prison” email list (pris...@googlegroups.com) was created Oct. 12, 2010 with <50 subscribers to host a conversation about the struggle to offer humanizing higher education in prison across different regions of the United States. The email list was set up as an unmoderated forum for discussion and announcements, with subscribers committing to person-first language, a tone of respect, and a shared commitment to counter mass incarceration and the various systems that undergird it (e.g. institutional forms of racism, sexism, classism, other -isms in the criminal justice system, various political myths, motives, and the apathy that perpetuates them).

I have been the administrator of this email list for the past 10 years. As such, I have often tried to keep my own voice and opinions out of list conversations, because I have ultimately had to be the person deciding whether a subscriber should be allowed to join & post, or be moderated, or in rare cases even banned from the list. I have endeavored to administrate the list based on principle rather than upon my personal preferences about who is saying what. In general, almost everyone has been able to post whatever they chose to write to the list. That said, I have heard from many people that the unmoderated “anyone can post anything” style of this email list has led to frustration and hurt by many members of the community. I too have found many conversations painful. I have grappled with what I can do about this. On several occasions I have asked others to consider taking over the email list in its current form, though I can understand why no one ever offered to do so... after 10 years of administrating this email list, my aggravation has combined with fatigue and I feel that it is time for a change.

Effective immediately, I am announcing that this email list is for news and announcements only. All posts to the list will be moderated going forward. List submissions that share news, events, and opportunities formulated in humanizing language will continue to be shared with all subscribers via prison-e...@googlegroups.com once they are approved by a moderator. However, there will no longer be an unmoderated conversation on this email list. If you have a question or survey to share on the list, just make it clear who people should respond to, and we can post those on the list as well.

The list has 1,527 subscribers right now. I hope that it will remain an important source of information for the higher education in prison community, but I am also aware that some of you may be frustrated by the loss of “conversation” that was possible here. To that end, I suggest that people organize an online call (via zoom, etc.) where people could work together to propose an alternative forum for online conversation within the field of higher education in prison. Thus, all would be welcome to decide whether they want to limit their subscription to news and announcements (here) or join an online conversation at some new location hosted by someone else. I am happy to share what I know about hosting email lists with anyone who is interested – they take about an hour to set up... but they can live on for decades and create lots of additional work down the road! The creation of a new discussion forum could be announced right here on this email list because that would be an announcement.

Before sending this email today, I consulted with several colleagues who are subscribed to this email list and who are doing important work – but I want to be clear that this format change is not a response to any particular person, post, program, or online discussion. All are welcome to send me feedback, but I am firm in my decision that I can no longer administrate an unmoderated email list. Please allow me to pass the torch, and let the online conversation continue elsewhere.

In solidarity with all those who struggle for justice,
Rob

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