



Conference 2021

Keynote Speaker – Sandra Brown

Day 1 – 12:30 - 1:00pm

Nothing New Under the Sun: Oppression via Illiteracy and the Prison Industrial Complex

My presentation will include an overview of the history of education in the United States and the criminalization of access to it: from slavery to Reconstruction, from Women's Suffrage to the Harlem Renaissance, and from Jim Crow to the current, "war on crime" era and the Prison Industrial Complex. My overarching theme centers on the weaponization of education to oppress and control marginalized groups, the link between illiteracy and incarceration, and the collective cost of such practices to society as a whole. My presentation will also entail my lived experience as a black incarcerated woman fighting to educate herself while serving a 22 year sentence. My lived experience will include how waitlist policies excluded me from vocational programs and my journey to becoming the first incarcerated female in Illinois to complete an academic internship, pledge and gain acceptance into the Gamma Pi Delta Honor Society, graduate cum laude from Ohio University's College Program for the Incarcerated, earn a Master's degree from CSUDH, and gain admission into a doctoral program. My presentation will conclude with proposals that work to address some of the egregious policies enslaving incarcerated populations via miseducation: all of which address the need for access to technology to address the digital divide exacerbating the weaponization of education against incarcerated populations.