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Columbia Joins White House in ‘Fair Chance’ Initiative

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This summer, Columbia joined with the Obama administration and twenty-four other colleges and universities from across the country in launching the White House’s Fair Chance Higher Education Pledge — a call to action for all institutions of higher learning to give people with criminal records, including the formerly incarcerated, a fair chance to seek education and employment.

Columbia has long provided educational and employment opportunities to people with criminal records. Last year it extended this commitment by launching its Justice-in-Education Initiative, which offers courses in local prisons and helps former inmates continue their education at Columbia and elsewhere.

An estimated seventy million Americans — nearly one in three adults — have a criminal record. Research shows that removing barriers to their education reduces recidivism and benefits the economy.

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