



JSRI Supporters,

Thank you to everyone who joined us this past Wednesday at Loyola to hear from Dr. Stanley Andrisse about his recently released memoir, [From Prison Cells to PhD](#). Dr. Andrisse shared his journey from incarceration as a young adult to receiving his MBA and PhD from St. Louis University and a position as a professor at Howard University College of Medicine.

Dr. Andrisse provided us with a glimpse of the systemic racism pervasive throughout the criminal legal system, sharing that, of the five people he was arrested with, the two white people never saw the inside of a prison. **"The prosecutor saw hopelessness in my Blackness and hope in their whiteness."** Dr. Andrisse also drew a comparison between the legal system and the history of violence against Black people in America. **"Life in prison is the modern day noose. We aren't hanging people in the streets but we are throwing them away."**

Dr. Andrisse also grounded us in the reality that **we live in the country which not only has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, but also the highest rate of solitary confinement in the world.** In 2019, JSRI worked with the ACLU of Louisiana and Solitary Watch to release a report on the use of solitary confinement in Louisiana which included survey responses from 709 people in solitary confinement in Louisiana. Over 70% of respondents had been in solitary confinement for over one year. (Read the full report [here](#)).

Dr. Andrisse's non-profit organization, [From Prison Cells to PhD](#), provides hope and opportunities that lead to real change not only for individuals but also in systems through legislative advocacy. Over the past five years Dr. Andrisse and I worked together to pass legislation to ban the box on college applications in six states including Louisiana and restore the Pell grant for incarcerated students. Legislative change depends on people in power recognizing the human dignity of people impacted by incarceration. As Dr. Andrisse shared, **"Once we see people in prison as human beings it won't be difficult to pass legislation to support education and jobs. It would be easy to do those things if we change the narrative."**

The paramount message that Dr. Andrisse shared is, **people impacted by the legal system deserve the opportunity to pursue education at every level.** "The average GPA of students in our program is 3.75. I am not an exception."

JSRI is leading the launch of a prison education program at Loyola University New Orleans. Next week, I will travel with Dr. Marcus Kondkar, chair of the JSRI advisory board, to Rayburn Correctional Center in Angie, Louisiana to begin the admissions process for incarcerated students and correctional officers to enroll in for-credit courses to be taught in-person by Loyola faculty this Fall semester. The program will strive to bring the full Loyola experience to the prison and integrate the students into our community, thereby contributing to **Loyola University New Orleans' mission to welcome students of diverse backgrounds and prepare them to lead meaningful lives with and for others; to pursue truth, wisdom, and virtue; and to work for a more just world.**

As we embark on this new journey, we welcome your insight and support! Please consider making a [donation](#) to JSRI to support educational opportunities for people in prison.

Thank you Dr. Andrisse and thank YOU for supporting JSRI!

Best Wishes,

Dr. Annie Phoenix
Executive Director
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Loyola University New Orleans

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