




TO: James M. Jeffords Grant Program for Policy Studies Award Committee

FROM: Kathy Fox, Director, Liberal Arts in Prison Program 

DATE: 08/13/18

SUBJECT: Jeffords Grant Final Report

I am writing to report on the use of the \$9,435 Jeffords grant I was awarded on April 7, 2017, for use in FY18 in support of the Liberal Arts in Prison Program (LAPP) in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The deliverables included in my proposal:

*1 - A credit-bearing course delivered in a Vermont correctional facility during AY 2017-18*

LAPP provided two credit-bearing courses during AY 2017-18: *Mythology* in the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility (CRCF) and *Introduction to Sociology* in the North West Regional Correctional Facility (NWRCF). Ten students were originally enrolled in each section, though several students were unable to complete the courses.

*2 - An enhanced educational experience for participating UVM students*

Three UVM students served as teaching assistants for the courses (1 at CRCF and 2 at NWRCF). Working with an incarcerated population provides unique insights on the nature of our criminal justice system, implicit bias, disparate impact, and the goals of incarceration (retribution, incapacitation, deterrence, and rehabilitation). The teaching assistants exercised their duties with care, diligence, and respect. They were deeply invested and engaged in the success of the LAPP students as well as in their own learning.

*3 - The further development of the program and preparation of participating faculty (the unique challenges of offering higher education in correctional facilities cannot all be anticipated, many are only learned by doing)*

As anticipated, we encountered a number of challenges during the spring semester. Those challenges have served as the basis for on-going discussions with the Department of Corrections about how we can work together to overcome obstacles. Our most recent meeting with DOC officials was on June 8, 2018 at which we discussed how we might use technology to reach a broader audience, identify and assemble cohort groups, and provide LAPP students with access to educational and research materials via a secured server. Additionally, participating faculty

(Fox and Evans) met with interested faculty several times during the year to educate them about the program and build support.

*4 - The first installment of data and information that will support fundraising efforts and will, over time, inform Vermont and DOC policy with regard to sentencing, incarceration, and inmate services*

Data collected included survey data on the LAPP student experience as well as assessment information related to academic progress (writing skills in particular).

Other Academic Year 2017-18 Accomplishments:

- Fundraising/leveraging – In addition to the Jeffords Grant, LAPP also received a CAS Bishop Joyce Grant’ both grants supported the delivery of two courses. The courses themselves then served as the basis of a fund-raising appeal that yielded \$52,000. Additionally, LAPP established a relationship with VSAC and supported LAPP students’ applications for VSAC non-degree grants yielding \$15,850 in external scholarship support. The \$9,435 Jeffords grant translated to more than \$86,000 in financial resources.
- Senator Leahy’s interest in justice reform has lead to talks regarding the possibility of federal funding to support UVM LAPP and other justice reform efforts in the State of Vermont.
- UVM LAPP was invited to participate in a plenary session at the convening of the Bard Prison Initiative Consortium for the Liberal Arts in Prison at the University of Notre Dame in April 2018.
- Christina Mengert, Assistant Director of College Programs of the Bard Prison Initiative spent two days on UVM’s campus in October 2017, educating interested faculty members.
- A UVM LAPP website was created.

I am enormously grateful for the Jeffords grant support, which has helped build a strong foundation for the Liberal Arts in Prison Program.