What is the Liberal Arts in Prison Program?

**Aims**

- Land-grant mission in service to the state
- Credit-bearing courses in Vermont correctional facilities
- Enhance the educational experience of UVM students
Why liberal arts?

- Transformational
- broadly applicable, timeless skills--
  - Critical & comparative thinking
  - Effective communication
  - Self in civil society
  - Diversity of thought and perspective
  - Historical context
  - Problem solving
  - Creativity
## Correctional Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5% of the world’s population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% of the world’s prison population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>350,000 penal population (1970)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,200,000 penal population (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Department of Corrections annual budget:</td>
<td>~$155,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont spending per person in prison:</td>
<td>~$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont spending per K-12 student:</td>
<td>~$14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Recidivism Rate:</td>
<td>~60% (corrections failure rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Recidivism Rate:</td>
<td>~45% (corrections failure rate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can we do better?
Influencing Recidivism Rates

- 60% National Recidivism Rate
- 45% Vermont Recidivism Rate
- to 24% with a *high school education*
- to 10% with *two years of college*
- to 5% with *four years of college*

Johnson, Marcia Professor; Bauer, Katherine; and Tagle, Elizabeth (2011) "Proposal to Reduce Recidivism Rates in Texas – 2010 Update," *ECI Interdisciplinary Journal for Legal and Social Policy.*
Academic Year 2017-present
Jeffords Grant/LAPP Activities

• Taught 3 credit-bearing courses

  Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility
  *Classical Literature/Mythology*
  *Written Expression*

  North West Regional Correctional Facility
  *Introduction to Sociology*

• 20 students enrolled *(several unable to complete)*

• 3 UVM students served as Teaching Assistants
Quotes from students

• “This experience allowed me to engage in something that had purpose beyond these walls. I was able to engage and learn. I was able to feel like a real human being again and that meant everything.”

• “This program changed my life!”

• “It made me realize I can be a college student, even though I’ve made mistakes. It gave me hope!”
Looking Forward

• Fundraising/sustainable funding

• Expanding relationship with Department of Corrections

• Building relationships with people in prison

• Seeking technological supports/enhancements

• Developing cohort model; immersion = impact

• Building bridges from LAPP to college on the outside
How You Can Help

• Learn about mass incarceration; visit a prison
• Think strategically about correctional investments
• Consider an educational correctional campus in Vermont
• Make Vermont a leader in criminal justice reform
• For more information, contact Kathy.Fox@uvm.edu