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# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

**2017**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document serves to orient volunteers and others associated with the Saint Louis University Prison Program to our services and our partnerships with the Missouri Department of Corrections (MO DOC) and the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center (ERDCC) in Bonne Terre, MO. While we have taken care to cover most aspect of our program, new issues will arise. Please use this manual as a resource for your position with the Prison Program, but always use common sense and be prepared for new situations. Do not hesitate to ask questions any member of our program and please do not ever assume that a question is too simple or the answer too obvious to ask. We always want you to feel as though you have all of the information you need to effectively and confidently do your work with the Prison Program.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Community Outreach Coordinator at [oheirja@slu.edu](mailto:oheirja@slu.edu) or 314-977-3206.

As a person associated with the Saint Louis University Prison Program, please remember that you represent the University. It has taken time to cultivate a relationship with MO DOC officials, as well as to establish a strong program at the ERDCC. Therefore, it is imperative that you follow Prison Program procedures carefully. This program operates at the invitation of the Missouri Department of Corrections, and we hope to continue the program well into the future. Please do everything you can to ensure positive experiences for yourself, our students and others in the future.

### **Mission Statement**

The Saint Louis University Prison Program is a Jesuit inspired initiative that provides education to prison staff and people incarcerated in Missouri, promotes service, and conducts research on education and incarceration.

## **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY PRISON PROGRAM**

In 2008, SLU began offering Theology courses at the ERDCC. Upon the completion of these courses in 2010, the MO DOC invited SLU to expand the program, offering courses culminated in an Associate of Arts degree, to both incarcerated people and MO DOC employees. In 2015, the first cohort of students, staff and incarcerated, graduated from Saint Louis University with an Associate of Arts degree.

During this same time SLU began hosting events at the ERDCC to provide opportunities for all members of the ERDCC community (staff and incarcerated men) to encounter the arts and humanities. These events were the early activities of the Prison Arts & Education Program (PAEP), which continues to host speakers, events and workshops at our partner facilities. In 2016, the Prison Program expanded to include a College Preparatory Program at both the ERDCC and the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Greenville, Illinois. The Program also began PAEP programming at FCI in 2016.

The SLU Associate of Arts degree program is offered to incarcerated men and DOC staff at the ERDCC. College Prep courses are available to incarcerated men at the ERDCC and FCI and to incarcerated women at the FCI's Camp facility. PAEP programming is offered each month at both facilities to incarcerated people, prison staff, SLU faculty, and prison community members.

The SLU Prison Program operates under the College of Arts & Sciences. CAS faculty teach courses in their subject areas, and the A.A. curriculum reflects the core of the College.

### **Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center**

The SLU Prison Program operates at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center (ERDCC) in Bonne Terre, MO. The ERDCC is a 2600+ bed prison operating at maximum security. The facility is located approximately 60 miles Southwest of Saint Louis City. Programming at the ERDCC includes the AA Degree Program, College Prep courses and PAEP events.

It is important to understand that we consider everyone at the ERDCC to be part of the community that the Prison Program works with and is there to support. This community is made up of incarcerated men (it is a men's-only facility) and full-time and contract staff of the Department of Corrections. All members of the community are invited to participate in PAEP events and all members of the community (incarcerated men at the ERDCC, staff of the ERDCC and DOC staff at other facilities in the region) who are qualified can apply to the academic program.

## **Language**

The MO DOC refers to incarcerated persons as “offenders” and guards as “officers.” There are many other positions within the ERDCC including: clerical staff, wardens, social workers, etc. We generally refer to all employees of the facility as “staff”, unless they specify an alternative title. In an effort to acknowledge the humanity and dignity of all men incarcerated at the facility we refer to them as “currently incarcerated men” or “incarcerated men.” We refer to all of our students (staff and incarcerated) as “students.”

## **Federal Correctional Institution**

The SLU Prison Program also operates at the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Greenville, IL. The FCI is a federal prison facility housing approximately 1,000 incarcerated men in the main FCI facility and 330 incarcerated women in the Camp facility. This facility is located approximately 50 miles Northeast of Saint Louis City. Programming at the FCI includes the College Prep courses and PAEP events.

It is important to understand that we consider everyone at the FCI to be part of the community that the Prison Program works with and is there to support. This community is made up of incarcerated men, women, and full-time and contract staff of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. All members of the community are invited to participate in PAEP events and all incarcerated people who are qualified can apply to the academic program.

## **Language**

The Federal Bureau of Prisons refers to incarcerated persons as “offenders” and guards as “officers.” There are many other positions within the FCI including: clerical staff, wardens, social workers, etc. We generally refer to all employees of the facility as “staff”, unless they specify an alternative title. In an effort to acknowledge the humanity and dignity of all people incarcerated at the facility we refer to them as “currently incarcerated men and women” or “incarcerated men and women.” We refer to all of our students as “students.”

## **DEGREE PROGRAM**

The AA program at the ERDCC consists of two sections of students, one of incarcerated students and one of students who are employees of the MO DOC. Most staff students are employees of the ERDCC, but our admission is open to staff at other facilities. These two sections follow the same course schedule in achieving the degree. The students in the Degree Program are admitted using the standards of the College of Arts and Sciences. They are students at Saint Louis University, in the same was as any other person

enrolled in classes at the University. All students enrolled in the program have a high school diploma or its equivalent, and many have previous college experience.

### **COLLEGE PREP PROGRAM**

The College Preparatory Program prepares incarcerated people for future college experiences. A cohort of no more than 20 students takes noncredit classes, led by SLU faculty or community members who are experts in their field, to develop their collaborative learning and study skills. The students from this program either matriculate into the Associate of Arts Degree Program or will be better prepared for a college degree program upon their release. These courses are offered to incarcerated men at the ERDCC and FCI and to incarcerated women at the FCI Camp facility.

### **PRISON ARTS & EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The Prison Arts & Education Program (PAEP) provides intellectually stimulating educational experiences for incarcerated persons, prison staff, and community members that foster human connection, an appreciation for the arts, and resources for positive self-expression and personal growth with the purpose of transforming lives.

The Arts and Education Program at the ERDCC and FCI has three primary components:

- **Inside Out Speaker Series**, a bi-weekly series of talks, readings, and programs attended by 100 community members of each facility (incarcerated men, women and staff) and SLU faculty, staff and students;
- **Workshops**, usually in a sequence of five monthly meetings on drawing, creative writing, literature, and culture;
- **The Inside Out Annual**, which includes contributions from participants in our workshops, speakers in our Inside Out events, and other creative activity at ERDCC and FCI.

### **BECOMING A VOLUNTEER WITH THE SLU PP**

#### **Working with the MO DOC**

All volunteers who plan to enter the facility on a regular basis must go through the Volunteer in Corrections (VIC) credentialing process, including sending an application, two letters of recommendation, results from two TB tests (available at no charge through SLU Employee Health) to the Institutional Activities Coordinator at the ERDCC, an interview at the ERDCC and one 6-hour training sessions sponsored by the Missouri Department of Corrections. The orientation requires a reservation and the

Prison Program Outreach Coordinator will help register you for the session. The orientation will inform you of the MO DOC's policies and practices relating to the prison system in Missouri. This training is required for anyone volunteering with incarcerated students.

Please keep in mind that these trainings are part of the MO DOC's larger volunteer program. The training provides an orientation for working inside the prison, but it is not specifically geared to our program. It is an excellent introduction to the cultural differences between the university and the MO DOC. The Program Coordinator will provide you with the application and guide you through the application process. The Prison Program Coordinator, Academic Director and Director will help orient you to the specific work of the Prison Program within the MO DOC.

The Rules for Entering the ERDCC are attached to this document as Appendix A. Please remember to bring your Proxy card and VIC ID into the facility and **leave your cell phone in the car. Cell phones are not allowed in the facility and forgetting to leave your cellphone in your car could be considered reason to terminate VIC status.**

### **Working with the Federal Bureau of Prisons**

The credentialing process for the FCI involves a brief application process and an on-site training. More information will be provided as needed. Please contact the Community Outreach Coordinator with any questions or concerns.

## **CLASSES**

### **Teaching Assistants**

It is the intention of the SLU Prison Program to have a Teaching Assistant assigned for each cohort of students. TAs are assigned for one year and their position will be evaluated at the end of each term (9-week class session). Teaching Assistants (TAs) with the Saint Louis University Prison Program provide individual and small group tutoring. TAs will assist students in improving academic achievement by helping students become more independent, confident and self-directed learners.

The role of the TA in the classroom will change with each instructor. TAs attend all class meetings and provide tutoring support to students outside the classroom. TAs play a vital role in the SLU Prison Program. In addition to identifying and assisting students in need, TAs support students who are unable to attend class (which is a potential problem for incarcerated students). TAs also remain in contact with the

Program Coordinator and Academic Director and are an additional point of contact for the Prison Program.

### **Incarcerated Class**

The A.A. degree program class of incarcerated students meets in the Education Building of the ERDCC. This is accessed through the front entrance of the facility. Someone from the SLU Prison Program administrative team will accompany you to the classroom on your first visit to the facility.

As mandated by law, incarcerated individuals do not have Internet access. In some cases, the students will not have access to a computer, typewriter or word processor, and will submit handwritten assignments. Thus, instructors for and volunteers working with the incarcerated student class face a lack of resources available to students. If you would like to discuss this with an instructor from a previous course, the Program Coordinator can arrange for that. If you would like to visit the ERDCC library to see the resources available, this can be arranged.

Instructors for and volunteers working with the staff class should expect that all of their students have access to computers, can conduct library and Internet research and will regularly check their email. The SLU Prison Program requires that each staff student has reliable Internet access and regularly checks their SLU email address.

### **Classroom**

The classroom for the incarcerated students is in the Education Building. Classrooms have a whiteboard and markers and some have a television and VCR/DVD player. If you intend to use media in your classroom please let the PP Coordinator know so that use can be arranged.

### **Staff Class**

The section of AA degree staff students meets in the Training Center, which is on the ERDCC campus but outside of the main facility. The classroom is small (comfortably fitting 20 students), but has a projector, podium and instructor station. All students must have computer and Internet access at home or at work. There are two computers and printers, provided by SLU, available to them for word processing. At the end of each class session a student should be designated to call the Control Center to request that someone locks the building. It is often the case that they will determine one student responsible for having a key to the Training Center and locking the door after each class.



## **TEACHING POLICIES**

The Prison Program has a few additional policies not found in other programs at SLU. This section will explain these differences.

### **Books**

This Prison Program operates at no cost to all of its students, including the cost of books and supplies. The program has an inventory of books from previous course offerings and the Program Coordinator or Academic Director will provide you with this list. The Prison Program Director must approve all book purchases.

Book orders must be submitted to the Program Coordinator at least seven weeks prior to the first day of class and approved by the Academic Director or Director. Once the Program Coordinator orders the books and receives them from the bookstore, they will be given to the instructor. The instructor is responsible for transporting the books to the ERDCC on the first night of class, distributing them to the students, collecting them at the end of the term, and returning them to the Program Coordinator. The books will have a number on them, as well as a label stating that they are property of the SLU Prison Program. Please make sure the students fill in the book sign out sheet that will be included in the instructor's box of books, and return the sign out sheet to the Program Coordinator. If an incarcerated student is found with a book that is not labeled or signed out to them it could result in an infraction at the facility. In an effort to not contribute to the punishment of any of our students, please be diligent about assigning and collecting books.

All of our students are given a dictionary, thesaurus and writing guidebook that they can keep throughout the duration of the program.

### **Supplies**

If at any point your students require pens, paper, or folders, please tell the Program Coordinator who can order them for you. At the start of the semester the Prison Program purchases supplies for each cohort and you will be asked to distribute them. Please do not purchase your own supplies and bring them to the facility. The Prison Program is aware of what is permitted and what is not and makes purchases accordingly. If there are specific supplies you need for your class please notify the Program Coordinator when you submit your book orders. The Program will purchase the supplies and have them approved by the facility.

## Rules for the Classroom

Please observe the following rules set by the facilities:

- Conversations beyond to scope of the program are not possible (this includes private interactions about a student's case, or internal affairs of the institution).
- Written communication between meetings must be via the Education Office and limited to questions about assignments. The volunteer must (by regulation) turn over all correspondence via postal service to IAC and must refuse all telephone contacts.
- As a volunteer, you can never be on a student's visiting list.
- Communication of any kind with student's friends, relatives, and significant others is prohibited by the rules of each correctional system.
- Only course assignments may be given to the professor. All other materials, of any kind, will be refused.
- There can be no monetary exchanges of any kind. The volunteer only brings on site what is necessary for teaching.
- The volunteer must (required by regulations) report any matter that is a violation of the institution's rules and regulations.
- The volunteer cannot do for one student what is not done for all.
- Regulations strictly prohibit "pats on the back" and hugs. Thanks for understanding.

These rules are also available at the end of this manual as Appendix B.

## EXPECTATIONS

In addition to following all of the guidelines in the SLU faculty manual (available at [http://www.slu.edu/organizations/fs/fac\\_manual/](http://www.slu.edu/organizations/fs/fac_manual/)), the SLU Prison Program has a few extra expectations of its instructors.

- All volunteers must follow the schedule, which has already been approved by the Director of the Prison Program and the Deputy Warden at each facility.
- Volunteers must never change the date of a tutoring session without the approval of the Academic Director (who will seek permission from the facility).
- Volunteers should never make logistical plans with the students in the class without first having them approved by the Prison Program administration.
- Volunteers must maintain open lines of communication with the Program Coordinator and the Academic Director. **Any questions about the program or the facility must go through the**

**Prison Program administrative team.** It is important that correspondence with each facility be channeled through one person.

- Volunteers must be available to travel to their respective facility for tutoring sessions and any interviews necessary for the VIC process.
- Volunteers with the ERDCC will be expected to pass a drug test, administered at the facility for all applying for VIC status.
- Volunteers must be amenable to the particularities of the SLU Prison Program, such as accepting the lack of resources available to students and aiding in the transportation of books to the facility.
- Volunteers must complete the VIC application process, including the orientations provided by the each facility.
- Volunteers must be able and willing to follow the rules of each facility.
- Volunteers must be able to meet the confidentiality standards of the University, available at <http://www.slu.edu/x40229.xml#Confidentiality>
- All requests for materials or any other questions must go through the Program Coordinator.

## **VOLUNTEERING WITH OUR ADVISORY BOARDS**

### **External Advisory Board**

The Prison Program External Advisory Board is comprised of members who are passionate about higher education, higher education in prison, community service, the criminal justice system, and/or policy change in higher education and/or criminal justice systems in the United States. This Board has two primary goals to assist in the development, growth and sustainability of the Saint Louis University Prison Program: community engagement and fundraising.

The External Advisory Board meets quarterly, each meeting lasting approximately two hours. This will be an action-focused board, and each member will have responsibilities for assisting program leaders to accomplish our stated program goals. In addition to quarterly board meetings, members should anticipate an average of one hour-long meeting monthly for subcommittee conference calls and two-hour service commitment to the Prison Program biannually. Service opportunities will be offered by the Prison Program administrative team and Board Members are invited to offer additional suggestions.

For more information on membership, please contact the Community Outreach Coordinator.

### **Faculty Advisory Board**

The Prison Program Internal Advisory Board consists of University faculty and provides support to the administrative team in matters of curriculum, faculty recruitment, and admissions. Internal Advisory Board Members promote the goals of the Prison Program within their department and throughout the University. The board meets biannually.

For more information on membership, please contact the Community Outreach Coordinator.

**SLU Prison Program Administration**

Please do not hesitate to contact any of us if you have questions, comments or concerns.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Rules for Entering the Prison Facilities**

The following are rules for entering both facilities. It is important you follow these rules exactly.

- Processing of visitors should commence no earlier than 15 minutes prior to scheduled visiting hours. Visitors will not be allowed on institutional property any earlier than 15 minutes prior to scheduled visiting hours.
- Vehicles are to be secured at all times while on state property. No unattended children or pets can be left in vehicles while on state property.
- Once the visitor leaves the visiting room, except for medical reasons, the visitor will not be allowed back in.

Visitors may only bring items from the following list into the visiting room:

- Oxygen or asthma inhalers;
- Necessary prosthetic devices;
- \$100 in change per adult visitor;
- Clear/transparent bag or pouch for change;
- Automobile keys (after inspection by visiting room staff);
- Their personal winter coat or jacket; and
- Any other item determined necessary by the Corrections Officer II and approved by the Shift Supervisor.

Dress Code for Male or Female:

- Clothing must not be excessively tight, transparent or otherwise revealing;
- Clothing must not be gang-related, camouflaged, no racial slurs, inflammatory or inappropriate language;
- Skirts, dresses and shorts must be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee cap, no wrap-around skirts or dresses permitted. This restriction does not apply to children 6 years of age or younger.
- Slit dresses and skirts are not permitted when the slit extends higher than 2 inches above the top of the knee;
- If a dress or skirt has fasteners, all fasteners will remain closed so that the garment is not open more than 2 inches above the top of the knee (example: a skirt with buttons from the waist to the ankles may be unbuttoned to make the garment length no more than 2 inches above the top of the knee);

- Slacks/jeans/sweatpants – no holes or slits permitted and no writing on rear of the garment.
- Shirts, blouses and dress tops must cover the chest and stomach and have sleeves that cover the shoulders; display of cleavage and midriff is not permitted;
- Appropriate undergarments must be worn;
- Shoes must be worn at all times, except by infants not walking.
- Any visitor altering their clothing upon leaving the front lobby will be terminated immediately.

A FULL SET OF VISITING ROOM RULES IS POSTED INSIDE THE VISITING ROOM.

More information will be provided prior to your first visit to each facility.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Rules for the Classroom**

Please observe the following rules set by the facilities:

- Conversations beyond to scope of the program are not possible (this includes private interactions about a student's case, or internal affairs of the institution).
- Written communication between meetings must be via the Education Office and limited to questions about assignments. The volunteer must (by regulation) turn over all correspondence via postal service to IAC and must refuse all telephone contacts.
- As a volunteer, you can never be on a student's visiting list.
- Communication of any kind with student's friends, relatives, and significant others is prohibited by the rules of each correctional system.
- Only course assignments may be given to the professor. All other materials, of any kind, will be refused.
- There can be no monetary exchanges of any kind. The volunteer only brings on site what is necessary for teaching.
- The volunteer must (required by regulations) report any matter that is a violation of the institution's rules and regulations.
- The volunteer cannot do for one student what is not done for all.
- Regulations strictly prohibit "pats on the back" and hugs. Thanks for understanding.

## **APPENDIX C**

### Process for becoming a Volunteer in Corrections at ERDCC

The Prison Program Coordinator will help you with this process (it is not as daunting as it might appear).

The following materials must be sent to:

Beth Bess, Institutional Activities Coordinator

ERDCC

2727 Highway K

Bonne Terre, MO, 63628

- A VIC application, given to you by the Program Coordinator
- 2 letters of recommendation
- Results from two TB tests, which can be administered at SLU Employee Health, located at 3655 Vista Ave. The test is a two part process and can be taken Monday - Wednesday (7:30 am - 11:00 am and 1:00 pm - 3:30). You then must return two days later for the test to be read (which is why you cannot take the test on Thursday or Friday---the test must be read on the second day). The process takes very little time--the shot takes about 5 minutes and the reading about the same. You don't need an appointment, but if you want to call ahead, the number is 314-268-5499.

In addition to the application materials, you will have to have an interview with an MO DOC employee and take a drug test, administered at the ERDCC.

Finally, you will need to attend VIC orientation training. This training is administered by the MO DOC. The Program Coordinator will assist you in registering for the training. You will receive travel reimbursement if you have to attend one outside of St. Louis. The orientations are about 6 hours long and only take place on Saturdays.