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To learn more about the Higher Education in Prison Landscape Project, visit:
<https://www.higheredinprison.org/higher-education-in-prison-landscape-project>



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Volunteer Training Manual



FPEP

**The Florida Prison
Education Project**

Volunteer Training Manual

Mission

To provide educational opportunities to incarcerated and formerly-incarcerated people in Florida, to research the benefits of prison education, and to integrate the study of justice into the University of Central Florida curriculum.

Goals

The Florida Prison Education Project seeks to:

1. Offer college-level courses to those who are incarcerated and provide those who have been released from prison the opportunity to continue their education.
2. Develop curricular support and engage UCF faculty and students in prison education and related areas of civic engagement.
3. Support research on prison education, recidivism, and mass incarceration.
4. Make public policy recommendations based on research.

Curriculum

FPEP's proposed curriculum is based on guidelines and recommendations outlined in the U.S. Department of Education's Reentry Education Model (2012), the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prison's Education Program Assessment Report (2016), and the National Endowment for the Arts Prison Arts Resource Project (2014). It is an evidence-based curriculum that integrates a broad-based liberal arts education, the development of cognitive skills (e.g., social cognition, problem solving, and control over life events), and practical real-world skills into each course.

Alignment with UCF Strategic Plan

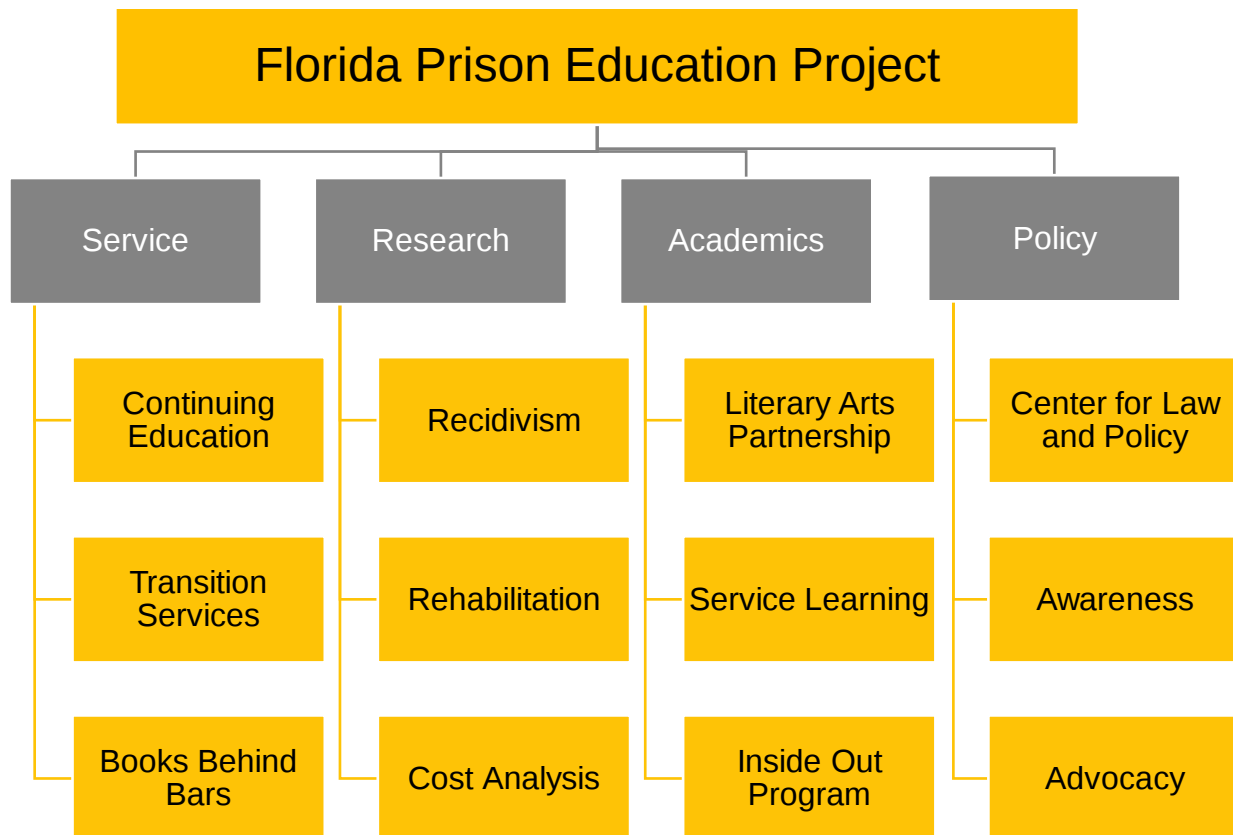
The Florida Prison Education Project aligns with UCF's Priorities:

1. It increases student access and inclusivity by offering a high quality undergraduate education to at-risk imprisoned populations and provides UCF students with high impact service learning, intern, and research opportunities.
2. It strengthens UCF faculty by providing opportunities to teach in prisons.
3. It grows UCF research and graduate programs in legal studies, education, psychology, criminal justice, business, social work, art, theatre, English, and music.
4. It makes a significant impact by affecting thousands of lives and contributing to the safety and well-being of our community.

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5. It provides a model of innovative higher education by partnering with state agencies to extend opportunities to those who are incarcerated.

Organization



Funding and Impact

- Selected as the UCF Community Challenge Initiative
- \$29,000 in NEA Big Read grants (2018, 2019)
- \$65,000 NEA Artworks grant (pending)
- \$250,000 NEH Public Humanities Community Conversations grant (pending)
- 5,000+ books donated
- 4 courses offered to 42 men incarcerated at the Central Florida Reception Center
- Plans to extend offerings to Lake, Kissimmee, Zephyrhills, Sumter, and Lowell CIs

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Applying to Participate in the Program

To participate in the Florida Prison Education Project you need to:

- Apply by completing the Florida Department of Corrections application form (this form requires your Social Security number and other personal information)
- Attend and complete an FPEP/FDOC Training and Orientation Session
- Submit a syllabus for approval (please use the FPEP syllabus template)

Training and Orientation

- FPEP offers training and orientations in the fall semester
- Teaching a class for FPEP is a semester-long commitment
- Depending on the prison where the course is scheduled, you may be teaching in a location that is 1 ½ hours away
- FPEP cannot reimburse for mileage at this time

Visiting and Teaching in Prisons

In many ways teaching at a prison is similar to what you would typically experience in your UCF classroom. You will find a group of engaged and committed students who are anxious to learn. There are, however, some important details you will want to consider as you prepare for your first visit to a prison.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Keri Watson (keri.watson@ucf.edu) or Terry Ann Thaxton (terry.thaxton@ucf.edu).

What can I bring into the prison?

- Short answer: not much. The fewer things you bring into the prison the better. It is permitted to bring in a book, notebook (no wired binding), lecture notes, and writing utensils.
- You cannot bring in your cellphone, jump drive, cds, tobacco products, chewing gum, food, or drink.
- Do not bring money to the prison
- Please let us know as soon as possible if there is medication that you will need to bring into the prison as it will require special permission.

What should I wear?

- For both men and women, it is a good idea to avoid wearing too much blue, which is the color of the prison uniforms.

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- The dress code for men is not too strict. What you teach with will probably be appropriate: dress pants or jeans, closed-toe shoes, and a shirt with a collar.
- Women have to be more conservative with their clothing. It is best to wear baggy clothing, dark colors, no leggings, no open-toe shoes, no tank tops, skirts or dresses should be ankle-length, minimal makeup and jewelry.
- As we enter the prison we pass through a metal detector, so you will have to remove your belt if it has a buckle, shoes if they have any metal, jewelry, or cuff links.

What is the classroom like?

- We have a diverse group of between 10 and 20 twenty students in our classes. They will ask you many questions and will be genuinely interested in you and your work.
- Our classes typically last two hours (1:00pm-3:00pm).

What is security like?

- This is a maximum security prison. As we enter the facility, it is possible that you will be patted-down by a guard (similar to a TSA experience).
- We do our best to assure everything runs smoothly, but there are some things that are out of control. While we are educators, we must remember the officers' main concern will always be security. It is imperative that we always treat them with respect and follow their instructions.
- You will be given a personal body alarm when you enter, which you will fashion to your clothing (belt loop or pant pocket).

Is there anything else I should know?

- Language is important in the prison. We do not refer to men in our program—or in the prison more generally—as *prisoners*, *felons*, *convicts*, or *inmates*. Instead, in our classroom, we refer to the *men*, *incarcerated students*, or simply *students*.
- Many of the men have full time jobs, waking up at 5am or earlier. If a few students appear tired, it is likely a reflection of the conditions of the prison—not your teaching.
- We are committed to making this a rewarding teaching and learning experience for you and our students. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, concerns, or would simply like to talk through your visit with us.

THANK YOU

Please know that you are making a tremendous difference in the lives of our students.