**Education, Incarceration & Justice: Punishment and Opportunity in an**

**Era of Mass Imprisonment**

**Praxis Lab Final Report**

The Education, Incarceration, and Justice Praxis Lab launched the University of Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP) in spring 2017. A multidisciplinary collaborative effort, UPEP provides on-site college curriculum and programming to students incarcerated in Draper and Timpanogos prisons. Through a commitment to education equity, UPEP aims to build a culture of sustained academic inquiry inside Utah prisons and to create positive impacts on students, families, communities, and the broader society.

Everyone in the Praxis Lab are Co-Founders of the UPEP and worked diligently throughout the year to learn about college-in-prison programs throughout the United States, from the Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project at Auburn University to the Freedom Education Project at Puget Sound. At the time this course was designed and began in fall 2016, there was no regionally accredited four-year college-in-prison programming in the entire state of Utah. Thankfully, in 2017, the Utah State Legislature approved ongoing appropriations for Salt Lake Community College to provide college courses inside Utah prisons. We worked closely with SLCC in the development of UPEP to create a pathway to a four-year degree for incarcerated students.

The course was designed to expose all of us to various kinds of university affiliated college-in-prison programs throughout the country, and to learn best practices from the field. We studied mission statements and philosophies, funding structures, organizational charts, admissions procedures, memoranda of understandings between correctional facilities and universities, and much more. We are indebted to program directors and staff for sharing their knowledge, experience, and information – especially Dr. Robert Scott, Executive Director of the Cornell Prison Education Program; Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg, Director of the Education Justice Project at Urbana-Champaign; Dr. Mary Gould, Director of the St. Louis University Prison Program; Sean Pica, Executive Director of Hudson Link and; Brendan Ozawa-de Silva and Thomas Fabisiak of the Chillon Project at Life University.

As a class, we worked on the mission statement of UPEP for some time, and it continues to be a work in progress. The mission of UPEP is to provide a quality, sustained, and meaningful pathway to higher education for individuals incarcerated in Utah state prisons. Through embodying the mission of the University of Utah, the project aims toassist incarcerated students and non-incarcerated volunteers to live lives of impact, inside and outside of prison, and upon release. By fostering leadership, civic engagement, and critical inquiry, UPEP seeks to positively contribute to the prison, the University of Utah campus, our state, and the broader society by reducing recidivism and improving the welfare of post-incarcerated individuals, families, and communities.

This report includes clickable links to pictures, fliers, events, and program related documents that help to reflect our time together and the work completed (work that is ongoing!). A master link to all photos in our library is listed below, with event-specific links throughout the report. The report begins with bios from everyone in class, then transitions into program reviews for prominent college-in-prison and reentry programs throughout the U.S. Class field trips are highlighted next, then class media and guest facilitators. We then highlight final projects and strategic partnerships formed throughout the year. We close the report with plans moving forward and information about how to become involved.

All photos for the class: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/l6qtsbn1tjy7ri6/AAB1J3a0M_ROPwZwBYSk0wS3a?dl=0>

Marketing materials for class: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bzcs4b2976bjvqq/AACZHXqLPbrjujmSjgTI7HwSa?dl=0>

UPEP Logo

Button Designs

UPEP Handout

Events:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0bun1rgoggl73ku/AAAgbE7kJ11-Th5qnh8E_cuia?dl=0>

Flyer for Glendale Screening

Fliers for Campus Screening

Flyer for Union Noon Screening

Project documents: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2wyntl2l15ggm2t/AABvqMva6jbBPJtc69uM41Ola?dl=0>

UPEP Mission Statement

UPEP Alignment with University of Utah Mission

Frequently Asked Questions

Cover Letter to Incarcerated Students in Draper & Timpanogos

**Course Description**

The aims of this praxis lab were to explore the historically rooted relationship among education, incarceration, and justice in the United States. The US incarcerates more people than any other nation in the history of the world, with over 2.2 million people behind bars and over eight million individuals under some form of state control such as parole, electronic monitoring, or other form of government supervision. Current statistics indicate tat most people enter prison without a high school diploma or GED at the time of their arrest. In what has come to be popularly known as the school-to-prison pipeline, the absence of secondary credentials are posited as a predictor of criminal justice involvement, for many a revolving door of punishment and incarceration. Between 1970 and 2010, nearly all of the 700 percent increase in incarceration was concentrated among those with no formal college education and accessing college behind bars is unlikely, as less than 2% of all incarcerated people are enrolled in a degree-granting program. The issue of whether incarcerated people should have access to education is still up for debate and in this course we explored the reasons why access to education remains contentious, regardless of political leanings and moral commitments. We also wrestled with fundamental questions driving access to higher education in prison, such as: What do we think people deserve, and why? Why do we have prisons, and should we? From where do our collective desires to punish come? Whose responsibility is it to provide higher education? Do we imagine the same kind of higher education for incarcerated and non-incarcerated people, why or why not?

There are no simple nor apolitical answers to the above questions. Together, we read challenging texts, such as Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy*, Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow*, and Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. We came together to share experiences, feelings, and frustrations around how we think we should define and achieve justice in such a multidimensional world. These conversations were complex and often emotional. Digesting the violence and dehumanization at work in the U.S. criminal justice system and struggling with how we could conceptualize justice in a manner the lies outside of the punitive model we currently use is not an easy task. These conversations were also difficult because many of us had never been asked to think about prisons in these ways, especially as they relate to systemic educational opportunity in the U.S. Because the overwhelming majority of people enter prison without a high school diploma or GED at the time of their arrest, we knew the relationship between quality education and punishment was a deeply rooted one; we just didn’t quite know what to do about it. While we discussed many options at the end of fall semester, it made best sense to start our own program here in Utah given the need in our state and the mission of the University of Utah.

**Class Bios**

Instructors

Erin L. Castro, Ph.D., Director and Co-Founder, UPEP

Hello. I am an Assistant Professor of Higher Education in the Department of Education Leadership and Policy at the University of Utah. I teach courses for the Honors College and the Gender Studies program and am honored to be a MUSE Professor at the University of Utah. In 2017 I was awarded the Early Career Teaching Award, thanks in no small part to my wonderful students. I am a strategic organizing member of the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison, a coalition of college-in-prison programs across the U.S. My research centers on equity and access to quality postsecondary education, particularly for incarcerated and felony disenfranchised individuals. I have published articles in collaboration with incarcerated scholars and currently engage research on college in prison programs across the country examining issues of quality, curriculum, policy, and equity.

Roberto J. García, Ph.D., Co-Founder, UPEP

We requested a bio from Roberto and never heard back.

Students

Doug Nagie, Co-Founder, UPEP

My time in the praxis lab was during my second year at the U. I am a history major and French minor. I like music and politics. I am deeply grateful for my experience in this praxis lab, and I am confident it will remain one of the preeminent and most formative experiences of my life in education. Above all, I believe the class is a first step of a great program that is going to accomplish a lot of good for people, and I'm honored to have been a part of it.

Erin Feeley, Co-Founder, UPEP

My name is Erin and I participated in the praxis lab during my second year at the University of Utah. I am majoring in Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education. Due to this praxis lab and my HDFS courses, I became interested in the ways that incarceration disrupts families and communities. In particular, I am interested in how access to quality higher education during incarceration may impact intergenerational incarceration and education trends. Ultimately, I am committed to a career pursuing greater educational equity.

James Ehlers, Co-Founder, UPEP

My name is James and I am an Honors Finance and Entrepreneurship major through the David Eccles School of Business. I have been studying at the University of Utah for five years now and intend to graduate in the fall of 2018. Through my time at the U I have experienced many opportunities that have broadened my view of the world. I may not be on a track to graduate quickly but I have had the opportunity to write a full length literary novel, volunteer in the homeless community, and design a medical device that assists in the placement of bone screws in patients with osteoporosis. It was my experience with the homeless community that led me to the Education, Incarceration, and Justice Praxis Lab. My original intention was to find out the impacts of incarceration on the homeless community, but in the end, I found that there was an entirely new issue out there from which stemmed a portion of the symptom of homelessness. From these realizations formed my desire to work in this field further. I had intentions of going on to work in business law as an extension of my finance degree, but now I am looking for opportunities to volunteer my services to the Rocky Mountain Innocence Project.

Lauren Cardon, Co-Founder, UPEP

I am a Biomedical Engineering student here at the U. A few years back, I had the opportunity to live in New York City for 18 months, during which I came into contact with many amazing people of different backgrounds. Hearing their stories created within me an interest in the work that we have been doing with UPEP.

Ludovica Farese, Co-Founder, UPEP

I’m an International Studies Bachelor of Arts major with a chemistry minor interested in some day pursuing a career in the field of medicine. As a member of the Honors college, I decided to explore the options I had as a student and enrolled in one of the 2016-2017 Praxis Labs, and it was one of the best decisions I ever made. I learned so much from this course and it really opened my eyes to all the injustices that people face daily in the court system and in the Carceral system.

Hans Liu, Co-Founder, UPEP

My name is Hans Liu, and I was privileged to be able to participate the Education and Incarceration Praxis Lab this year. I am currently studying International Studies and History at the University of Utah, and I would love to attend law school and practice non-profit law, human rights law, or criminal defense law upon graduating from school. As a student, I was incredibly humbled, shocked, and challenged by learning about the crippling carceral issues facing our nation through this course.

Olivia Jones, Co-Founder, UPEP

My name is Olivia Jones. I am going into my junior year at the University of Utah and I am a double major in Ethnic Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies. I was born and raised in Utah County. I am very interested in issues regarding mass incarceration, immigration, and education inequality.

Mekenzy Toner, Co-Founder, UPEP

I am a Sophomore at the University of Utah with a major in Entertainment Arts and Engineering. I first got interested in the carceral state after taking Gender, Power, and Freedom and learning about the horrifying racial disparities in the system. I hope to use the knowledge I’ve gained in this course to make a narrative-centric video game to help educate the general public about hyperincarceration through an accessible medium.

Saska Rajcevic, Co-Founder, UPEP

I graduated from the University of Utah in May of 2017 with a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Political Science with an emphasis in Public Policy. Over the course of my studies and work in the community, I have grown motivated to work towards ensuring equity and creating greater opportunities for oppressed populations through advocacy and justice. I believe it is important to tackle apathy in regards to social issues and explore various viewpoints while working to engage community members in collaboration and collective action.

Danielle Sheremeta, Co-Founder, UPEP

We requested a bio from Danielle and never heard back.

**College-in-prison program review**

Throughout the course, students chose one prominent college-in-prison program or imitative aimed at serving currently/formerly incarcerated people in the U.S. to research. Students reached out to their respective program, created a handout, and then gave a presentation for the class. We used these presentations as a way to learn about what kinds of programs exist, what they do, and how they go about working with and inside prisons. We are thankful to all of the programs’ staff who assisted us in gathering information and materials. We researched the following programs:

* Education Justice Project at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
	+ “Prior to moving to Utah, I worked with the Education Justice Project (EJP) as an academic tutor, instructor, and general volunteer. I learned a great deal about prisons and how college-in-prison programs work. I met wonderful students through EJP, individuals from whom I continue to learn, and admire much about their program. For example, their outreach to EJP alumni is incredible and far-reaching. EJP works with families of their students and focuses on reentry throughout the entire state of Illinois.” –Dr. Erin Castro
* [The Cornell Prison Education Program](http://cpep.cornell.edu/)
	+ “What I appreciated most about the Cornell Prison Education Program (CPEP) was the time investment the project made in extracurricular activities to go along with the coursework. On a traditional campus, involvement in clubs, research projects, and publications can be among the most meaningful experiences for students, so it was wonderful to see a program achieve such rich involvement opportunities to incarcerated students as well. CPEP has a fantastic debate team, theatre club, regularly published magazine, and high caliber lecture series which draws experts from around the nation. I would love to see these components become part of the UPEP package as the project grows.” – Erin Feeley
* [Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison](http://www.hudsonlink.org/)
	+ “What I found most compelling when researching was that they had such a great community for former students to be a part of after release.” -- Olivia Jones
* [Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project at Auburn University](http://apaep.auburn.edu/)
	+ “The program was quite unique among programs run by colleges in its emphasis on art. More than anything, I was incredibly impressed by the quality of artwork being produced by the students.” -- Doug Nagie
	+ "Meeting Kyes, the Director of Alabama Prison Arts and Education Project (APAEP), in person was amazing. She was so kind and even gifted me one of APAEP's Anthologies and a T-Shirt. I spent the entire plane ride home reading it, bookmarking my favorites and even crying at a few. The emotion is so raw, and that book is easily one of my favorites." – Mekenzy Toner
* [Prison University Project](https://prisonuniversityproject.org/)
	+ “I researched the Prison University Project. PUP was started by Jody Lewen shortly after Pell Grant funding was removed in 1994. The initiative is based out of San Quentin prison and the coursework is accredited through Patten College. One of the things I found interesting about the program was its establishment as a 501(c)3 and not being part of a university. Also, the level of work this program does outside of being just a college in prison program is quite astounding.” – James Ehlers
* [Freedom Education Project Puget Sound](http://www.fepps.org/)
	+ “Throughout our praxis lab, we regularly discussed the ways that race, gender identity, class, and other factors interact with incarceration in the United States. While there is a high proportion of men currently incarcerated, the fastest growing rate of incarceration is among African American women. As we surveyed may of the nation top college-in-prison projects, however, it was disheartening to see how many projects only served men’s prisons. What I appreciated about the Freedom Education Project of Puget Sound (FEPPS) is that it provided a model of what college-in-prison projects can look like in women’s prisons. FEPPS is only operating in women’s prisons in Washington state. It is doing some wonderful work and provides excellent transition services to women’s in the project who are approaching their release date.” – Erin Feeley
* [Saint Louis University Prison Program](https://www.slu.edu/prison-program)
	+ “The program I studied was the St. Louis Prison Program, a college-in-prison program that works with St. Louis University to provide Associate of Arts degrees and educational courses to a number of incarcerated individuals. The program, run by Dr. Mary Gould, uniquely provides a parallel education for both those incarcerated and correctional staff members. To me, this demonstrated an excellent method of promoting a collaborative learning environment truly dedicated to empowering people through education in prison.” – Hans Liu
* [Bard Prison Initiative](http://bpi.bard.edu/)
	+ “In the fall semester, the college-in-prison program that I researched was the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI). The thing that stood out to me the most in researching this program was the rigor and standards the program held. It helped me realize that when offering education in prison, none of the quality of the experience needs to be sacrificed. When we went to start the University of Utah’s Prison Education Project (UPEP), that was something I really wanted to keep in the program—high quality education.” – Lauren Cardon
* [Project Rebound, San Francisco State University](http://asi.sfsu.edu/programs/project-rebound)
	+ Unlike the majority of college-in-prison programs, Project Rebound focuses on individuals post-incarceration. Project Rebound is a program started in 1967 designed to assist formerly incarcerated people reintegrate into a college setting. Since the program’s inception, it has served hundreds of students obtain four-year degrees and beyond.
* [Underground Scholars, University of California Berkley](http://undergroundscholars.berkeley.edu/)
	+ “The Underground Scholars Initiative is a student group at UC Berkeley that supports all current and prospective students impacted by mass incarceration. USI also helps prospective students with their application to UC Berkeley to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to attend the university. They also provide current students with peer counseling, mentoring, tutoring, scholarship information, and multiple other resources. USI is a wonderful group that has made a positive impact on the lives of multiple students affected by mass incarceration in the Bay area. Though this program is quite different from the other ones we learned about in our class, I think their different take on solving the problem of mass incarceration is clever and admirable. USI provides its students with a safe environment in their University as well as the opportunity to be part of a student group focused on each and every one of their students’ successes. I think it’s important to have a group like this on any college campus because it makes students feel like they’re not alone and that there’s someone who cares about them on campus.” -- Ludovica Farese

**Field Trips**

Our class took three field trips during Fall 2017.

The 6th Annual [National Conference on Higher Education in Prison](http://www.nchep2016.org/) in Nashville, TN.

November 3-5, 2016 our class traveled to Nashville, Tennessee to attend the 6th Annual National Conference on Higher Education in Prison. The purpose in attending the conference was to introduce students to the rich and growing network of prison educators across the country. All too often, it is difficult to see and understand what happens (and what is possible) inside prisons. Meeting and learning from experts in the field, the goal was to help and inspire us to imagine what could be possible in providing postsecondary educational opportunity to incarcerated people in Utah.

We traveled by plane and stayed at a hostel downtown. Our plan was delayed out of Salt Lake City and all eleven of us ended up on different rerouted flights to Tennessee! Luckily, we all ended up in the same place after traveling all day long.

We rented two vans and spent two days interacting with conference attendees, who included directors of college-in-prison programs, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students and activists, academics, college administrators, community volunteers, correctional staff, and individuals interested in and committed to expanding postsecondary educational opportunity inside prisons. The students from Utah, as our group came to be known among the conference attendees, were the youngest people in attendance. Our group from Utah prompted interesting and important conversations about involving more undergraduate students in this work.

Once we arrived at the conference, we were all free to attend whichever sessions seemed most interesting. On the second day, our class traveled by bus with other attendees to visit the Turney Industrial Complex. Prior to arriving at the conference we submitted all necessary paperwork to travel into the prison so that we could be screened for a criminal background check. The drive was 1.5 hours and once we arrived we had to leave all belongings in the car, step through a metal detector, go through a pat down, and listen to a short explanation regarding rules inside the prison. Once inside, we met with a small group of students who comprised the first cohort of students for the newly established program, [Tennessee Higher Education Initiative](http://www.theinitiativetn.org/). We then toured the large prison, visiting the library and a classroom, and then briefly met with the warden.

Unlike typical academic conferences, this conference is more intimate and connective. All food was provided by the conference organizers and effort was made on behalf of everyone to meet new people and share ideas and resources. On Friday evening, we had dinner together in one of the ballrooms at Belmont University and listened to a number of speakers, including the President of Belmont University, Dr. Robert C. Fisher, and representatives from the Tennessee Department of Corrections. As a class, we wrote [thank you’s](https://www.dropbox.com/s/84pt5w4ikfdr86q/Thank%20you%20post%20nashville%20trip.jpg?dl=0) to program directors we met at the national conference. We thanked them for sharing information about their programs.

There are a number of highlights from the conference – too many to list here, but a few are reflected in our pictures and comments from students:

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zr89a3glvcnv5f9/AABakIjsXBP38idDlwZ5UqOPa?dl=0>

“As someone who rarely ventures outside her suburban Utah home, the adventure to Tennessee and meeting the amazing people behind the prison reform projects was incredibly humbling. I realized that hyper-incarceration is not a clear-cut issue, but rather a series of layers and foundational blocks of patriarchy and racism that have been built for years, and have only recently begun to be broken down. I think the most humbling experience to me was going to a panel titled “How to help those who have hurt others.” The panel discussed sexual assault cases, and how to help those who you know has hurt someone else. It was a touchy subject for me, yet allowed me to look internally at my own biases. I realized that while I was there advocating for hardcore prison reform, I had only a month prior been furious at the minimal sentence given to Brock Turner for raping an unconscious woman. I wanted him to be thrown in jail and punished for his crimes. I wanted justice for anyone who had ever suffered at the hands of sexual assault, and I had been taught that justice was punishment for the offender. It was at this conference I realized how much the prison system serves the short-term desires of people like me. I longed to see Brock Turner locked up, but listening to those on the panel, I realized how little that would change. One person locked up wouldn’t eradicate rape culture. It wouldn’t teach young people consent. All it would do was satisfy a community’s need to see someone punished, and the cycle would start over. At the panel, the speakers explained a rehabilitation process, aimed at helping both people heal. It was rooted in communication and education. One person spoke about a class concerning women’s history, where one of her students claimed that until taking that course, he would abuse women because he didn’t see them as people. It was difficult for me to stomach someone who could only view women as objects. However, I realized caging someone up for a patriarchal idea that has been reinforced for centuries would only satisfy a superficial desire of punishment. People deserve education, and they deserve a chance. To blame and lock up individuals for following patterns we as a society refuse to address and remedy has led to more people harming others, and allowed those in power to harm others by sitting atop a carceral state held up by racism, sexism, and classism. While I know it will take a while, realizing this during the course of the conference and this class has encouraged me to seek an alternative to punishment, and break the cycle.” -- Mekenzy Toner.

“The experience in this class that was most meaningful to me was visiting the Turney Industrial Complex in Nashville, Tennessee. As it was my first time ever in a prison, I had a million thoughts going through my head as I first entered. I remember walking up the stairs and trying to imagine what it would feel like to be walking into this new and foreboding place knowing that you were possibly never going to come out. It was also a great learning experience because we saw that even in a prison that is trying to implement a college-in-prison program like the one we are aiming for, there can be tons of flaws and institutional issues. We saw them firsthand as we tried to speak with the students in the program. I thought it was interesting that not everyone felt that way, though, and there seemed to be differing opinions on the program among people that you would not necessarily expect to disagree on a point such as that. I also vividly remember the visit to their library. I was pretty impressed, and we had much more freedom to roam and it was obvious the guards did not like that. It is an experience that I will always remember.” – Olivia Jones

The [Draper and Timpanogos Prisons](https://corrections.utah.gov)

On Monday, December 12, our class visited the state of Utah prisons in Draper. We visited one men’s facility and the Timpanogos women’s facility. We worked with Victor Kersey, the Institutional Programming Division Director at the Utah Department of Corrections to facilitate this visit. Like our visit to the prison in Tennessee, we all had to submit personal information to clear a required background check.

Once we arrived at the prison, Dr. Kersey and Captain Young greeted us and introduced us to other key personnel working in the programming division. They took us on a tour of the prison. When we arrived at the Timpanogos facility, Dr. Kersey took us to a classroom where students were in class. In the classroom, we had the opportunity to speak with the students and professor. The conversation was highly enthusiastic. It was the first opportunity we had to speak directly to students incarcerated in Utah. Notably, the women we spoke to expressed their frustration at the lack of programming opportunities that were available to them and were eager to hear that we planned on working in both the men’s and women’s prison.

“Every time I go inside a prison, it is a completely foreign experience. Each aspect of how the prison operates is charged with tension, struggle, and a need for order. Despite almost a year of learning, there is still so much I don’t understand about the dynamics and power structures that construct prisons. It is extremely disturbing, but, at the same time, with each visit we all take one step closer to being able to create a space with incarcerate people where one can shed the role of “offender” and take on the role of “student”. When we had the opportunity to speak to some of the women taking a course in the Timpanogos facility, it was easy to hear the desire to learn in each women’s voice. Their questions probed us for descriptions of the courses we might offer and who might be able to take them. While we couldn’t provide answers to these questions that day, the questions stuck with me, motivating me to continue to contribute to the significant work load that lay before us.” – Erin Feeley

The [Salt Lake County Jail](https://slsheriff.org) at Metro

On Monday, November 11th, 2016, our class visited the Salt Lake County Jail. We coordinated with Jail Programs Division Commander, Captain Matt Dumont, to set up the visit and everyone in the class had to go through a background check. Our desire for visiting the prison was to learn about the educational resources and opportunities available to incarcerated individuals in our community.

“Our class visited Salt Lake county jail guided by a sergeant, who took us through essentially the whole facility. We saw the processing area, cell blocks, and garden in particular, with a tour of the jail's education area and a short discussion with the educators. There we learned that the jail's programming is somewhat more limited than many education programs in prisons, explained by the employees as a consequence of the jail's shorter average sentences. They do, nonetheless, have a GED program, as well as classes offered to people young enough to still be eligible for high school. At the end of the tour, we had a final Q&A with a panel of officers and guards of the jail.” –Doug Nagie

**Events**

Our class hosted four events in Spring 2018. Our goal for the spring was twofold; 1) we wanted to raise awareness about postsecondary educational opportunity in our local Salt Lake City community and 2) we wanted to promote our new program, The University of Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP). In order to accomplish these two goals, we scheduled a number of community events and held meetings with stakeholders across campus to assist in building the infrastructure for UPEP.

[Education, Incarceration, & Justice: A Panel Discussion on Higher Education Programs in Prison](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/education-incarceration-and-justice-a-panel-discussion-on-higher-education-programs-in-prison-tickets-33175878947?ref=enivtefor001&invite=MTE3MzgxMDgvRXJpbi5DYXN0cm9AdXRhaC5lZHUvMA%3D%3D&utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=)

Wednesday, April 5, 2017, 8:00-9:30am, Episcopal Diocese of Utah

In collaboration with the Salt Lake City Bar Association, we hosted a morning panel event at the Episcopal Church in downtown Salt Lake City. With the help of Clemmens Landau, Zimmerman Jones Boohe and ACLU of Utah Board Member, the panel carried Continuing Legal Education credit to help attract attorneys in our area. The panel consisted of Professor Jensie Anderson, Legal Director of the [Rocky Mountain Innocence Center](http://rminnocence.org/), Sean Pica, Executive Director of Hudson Link, Dr. Erin Castro of the University of Utah, and Clemmens Landau as moderator.

The event was well attended by local attorneys, including representatives from the Disability Law Center, the Salt Lake City Public Library, the Salt Lake Chapter of the NAACP, Juvenile Justice Services, and others. The panel included a continental breakfast and conversations ranging from issues related to legal representation of incarcerate individuals in Utah to currently educational opportunities and resources currently available in Utah prisons. There was a strong interest in the specifics of other college-in-prison programs and how such a program could be replicated in Utah.

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ba0i57r17owk73p/AAB9ebHjI63hlF7-iMHlO4OBa?dl=0>

[First Degree Film Screening: Can a College Behind Bars Stop the Revolving Prison Door?](https://www.dropbox.com/s/hzrf296k4gokmk5/Lunch%20event.jpg?dl=0)

Wednesday, April 5, 2017, 11-12pm, Union Ballroom, Lunch served

First Degree is an award-winning short film that shares the story of three students enrolled in a college-in-prison program in Sing Sing maximum security prison in upstate New York. Through the narratives of these three formerly incarcerated individuals, the film helps audiences to feel how powerful higher education can be in helping individuals start new lives.

The event was well attended by students, staff, faculty, and community members. Following the film, Dr. Castro, Doug Nagie, and Sean Pica took the stage to answer audience questions. The discussion was highly productive and gave the campus a community to express their questions, concerns, and hopes. Many liked the idea of a developing a college-in-prison program in our community but had a lot of questions about how such a program could be developed and what roll the University of Utah would play in such a program.

Pictures: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/53jp4h6qwernbhd/AABKXGGz1AMqIOOhHbtej8Ga?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/53jp4h6qwernbhd/AABK-XGGz1AMqIOOhHbtej8Ga?dl=0)

Two Film Screenings: Zero Percent

We wanted to host two film screenings, one on campus and one was off campus, to attract people in our community. We served dinner at both events and had a sign-up sheet for participants to provide contact information. We compiled those names and began a listserv for UPEP.

* [Glendale Public Library](https://www.dropbox.com/s/5nbctuc6k23oioq/TuesdayFlier.jpg?dl=0)

University Neighborhood Partners (UNP) helped us to host this successful event. Individuals from organizations throughout the Salt Lake Valley, such as Prisoner Advocacy Network, NeighborWorks, Salt Lake Community College, United Way, Juvenile Justice Services, a State Senator, and more attended this event. Many families—kids and parents alike—participated in the film screening. Some came that night planning to attend the event while others wandered into the screening from other areas of the Glendale Library. The screening was accompanied by a dinner prepared by All Chay. Child care was also provided during the screening with the help of UNP.

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6aayq3buvzcgwhs/AAA4JvAidvnBV8ohquSA8-iha?dl=0>

* [College of Education, University of Utah](https://www.dropbox.com/s/y63d6rx35s9ry00/WednesdayFlier.jpg?dl=0)

Faculty, staff, and administrators from across our campus attended the screening. Individuals from the community, including representatives from the Commission of Criminal and Juvenile Justice, the Boys and Girls club, Planned Parenthood, and Golden Spike Outreach, also attended.

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yljmbw3nhotjjoa/AADVabqzr0NatpI4s_Iw7icSa?dl=0>

K-UTE Radio

Sean Pica interviewed with K-UTE Radio during his visit. While on air, Mr. Pica discussed his own college-in-prison program—Hudson Link. He also answered questions about college-in-prison programs in general and the development of such a program in Utah specifically. Interview available at: <http://kuteradio.org/talkshows/sean-pica/>

**Media**

Sean Pica’s visit to the University of Utah was featured in the Daily Utah Chronicle:

Richards, C. (2017, April 6). College classes in maximum security: “The only thing I needed.” *The Daily Utah Chronicle*. Retrieved online: <http://dailyutahchronicle.com/2017/04/06/college-classes-maximum-security-thing-needed/>

* “Pica said that of the hundreds of prisoners that have graduated from the program and been released, less than one percent have returned to prison. On [average](https://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism/Pages/welcome.aspx), 76 percent of released prisoners in the United States return within five years, comparatively. “There’s no magic here,” Pica said, speaking of the program’s success. “There’s no wondering how it works. You bring college to an uneducated population — and that’s it.”
* The Hudson Link program, and others like it, inspired University of Utah honors students to pursue a similar project. A group of students in an honors praxis lab worked this semester to start the University of Utah Prison Education Project. Dr. Erin Castro, a professor involved in the project, said UPEP was started to “develop a culture of academic inquiry inside [Utah] prison[s]” and help incarcerated Utahns receive credit through the U. “What’s really important is to enroll incarcerated students as University of Utah students,” Castro said. “That is the goal.”

**Guest Facilitators**

In order to gain deeper insight into the experiences of college-in-prison programs, our class hosted four guest facilitators throughout the year.

[Victor Kersey](https://corrections.utah.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1117:victor-kersey&catid=28&Itemid=180), Institutional Programming Division Director, Utah Department of Corrections

Monday, September 26th, 2016

Dr. Kersey served as a guest facilitator for our class before our trip to the national conference. He discussed current educational opportunities for people incarnated in Utah State Prisons and answered lots of questions about the potential of establishing a college-in-prison program here in the State of Utah. Dr. Kersey remains a liaison between UPEP and Utah Department of Corrections.

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7ukg8btosr1f99q/AAAShnBxJ_HXwP5mYFWMZZVCa?dl=0>

Johnny Page, Activist & Speaker, Case Manager at Ceasefire

Monday, October 3rd, 2016

Johnny Page is a formerly incarcerated student, activist and speaker who spent over twenty years incarcerated. Upon his release from prison in 2014, Mr. Page became an advocate for the right to access higher education during incarceration as well as access for formerly incarcerated people on traditional college campuses. He coauthored the work Higher Education in an Era of Mass Incarceration: Possibility Under Constraint published in the spring of 2015 in the *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education*. In the spring of 2016, he earned his undergraduate degree in Psychology from Governors State University. Mr. Page works as a case manager for Ceasefire, a violence prevention organization based in Chicago. He is currently applying for graduate school.

Johnny visited our class and served as a guest facilitator. Say more here. He also met with a student group afterward.

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/o45j9o5a4qbe0zc/AABUA6L59FD47kKAspPwctxWa?dl=0>

[Mary Gould](https://www.slu.edu/prison-program), Director of St. Louis Prison Program

Monday, January 23rd, 2017

Dr. Mary Gould is the Director of the St. Louis Prison Program. As a guest facilitator for our class, she answered some nitty-gritty questions about how to develop a college-in-prison program. Providing some answers and advice, she gave us access to St. Louis Prison Program’s faculty manuals, student manuals, student application, and more. These were incredibly valuable resources for the class as we developed UPEP’s foundational documents.

During Dr. Gould’s visit, she also attended meetings with key stakeholders across campus to answer questions and provide guidance on developing a new college-in-prison program through the University of Utah.

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6y4ooa5db3lwerx/AABqcrElTBw6goa4ma6nIemua?dl=0>

[Sean Pica](http://www.hudsonlink.org/), Executive Director, Hudson Link

Tuesday, April 4th – Thursday, April 6th, 2017

Mr. Pica traveled to Utah to help us elevate college-in-prison programming and promote the launch of UPEP. In addition to his demanding career as the Director of Hudson Link, Mr. Pica has dedicated a significant amount of his time advising college-in-prison start-ups and promoting college-in-prison initiatives across the nation. The chance to bring Mr. Pica out to Utah for the public launch of UPEP was an incredible one. He offered experience and a good amount of humor to each of our events. He also offered audiences a real human story that demonstrates the transformative nature of access to higher education in prison.

During Mr. Pica’s visit, he shared excellent advice, encouragement, and fun with the class. Due to his wealth of experience, both as a former student in a college-in-prison program and as the current executive director of a successful college-in-prison program, he had many stories to share with the class. Mr. Pica is also a wonderful person whom we all enjoyed getting to know a bit better on some fun excursions, such as our hike up to ensign peak. Enjoy the fun pictures found below!

Pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/u4avmzanrtzoyhf/AABBYyvVH9tNjvNW0QZKKDyOa?dl=0>

**Final Projects**

The third goal of the spring semester was to build the infrastructure of UPEP. We coordinated with leading programs across the country to determine the internal documents needed to launch a successful college-in-prison program. We are so grateful for the support and kindness of program directors and coordinators who were generous with their resources and advise. Below is a list of all outcome documents created during the spring semester with names of students who designed the documents in coordination with programs across the country.

Admissions & curriculum materials – Lauren Cardon & Ludovica Farese

We drafted an admissions application and associated rubric for evaluation, an outline for the UPEP Board of Advisors, as well as solicited suggestions for an admissions committee. We started by using St. Louis University’s college-in-prison program’s application as a template, with permission from Dr. Mary Gould, the program director. With input from Dr. Rebecca Ginsburg, from the Education Justice Project, and Dr. Rob Scott, from Cornell’s college-in-prison program, we were able to adjust the application to UPEP’s needs. To develop curriculum materials, we began mapping out a curriculum pathway for future UPEP students. To do this, we examined the general education requirements of both the University of Utah and Salt Lake Community College and consulted with Dr. Darling, TITLE of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Utah. We worked with Dr. Castro to draft possible admission committee members and advisory board members.

Budget, fundraising & donation projections – James Ehlers & Danielle Sheremeta

This project brought together funding and resource needs and a large part of this work was identifying potential donors for the project. We applied for one grant in the spring through the [Newcomers Club of Salt Lake City](http://www.newcomersclubsaltlakecity.org/), an organization that works to connect newcomers (and old-timers) in the Salt Lake area, offering community members a chance to engage in the local community and support local projects. In May 2017, we found out that we won a small grant to support UPEP! We also drafted a list of needed supplies for students inside the prison by reaching out to other programs to see what kinds of materials they use. We drafted a projected budget for UPEP and discussed possible fundraising opportunities.

UPEP volunteer training & recruitment materials – Saska Rajcevic & Olivia Jones

In this project, we developed training and recruitment materials for UPEP. After reviewing materials from other College-in-Prison programs and utilizing the knowledge gained from the first semester of the class, we drafted a Faculty Manual for program instructors as well as a Student Manual for UPEP students. These manuals will provide guidelines for students enrolled in UPEP and professor who may work for UPEP in the further. To do this, we took a lot of inspiration from other project’s manuals, such as Chillon, EJP, and others. We included our mission statement, answers to FAQ’s, tips for working in the prison environment, and other things of that nature. We also created a Google Form for prospective volunteers and faculty to reach out and work with us. We also created a fillable form to recruit those who would like to participate in the program in various volunteer capacities.

Marketing & Logo development – Mekenzy Toner

I worked on logo design, fliers, and button designs. Everything was made in Photoshop. The logo design process took about 3 weeks to nail down. I started by drawing rough sketches of about 7 concepts I had. The class held a vote and we were able to narrow the choices down to 4. I touched up some of the designs, and we held a vote once more, coming to a conclusion to use a Beehive. For fliers, I also kept in touch with our public event team and Dr. Erin Castro. I submitted drafts of the flier and after some class feedback, finalized two separate fliers, one for both events. The entire class helped in hanging up these fliers around campus for the event. Lastly, I used button templates and slogans pitched by the class to put in a Photoshop template. After printing, we were able to cut out the button shapes and used a button maker to create tangible swag for UPEP. We passed these buttons out at events.

UPEP mission statement & FAQ document – Hans Liu

My role in developing this project was to aid in our marketing and communications efforts. In this capacity, I helped write program descriptions, our mission statement, letters to administrators and professors, and other marketing projects to generate support and awareness for our program. As a student who has worked on a number of marketing projects before, I was so grateful for the way our professors were able to recognize each of our strengths and interests and create roles and responsibility within the program and capitalize on them. It felt incredible to be a part of a collaborative team of students, each with unique strengths and responsibilities, but all united by the same passion for postsecondary education and the friendships we had developed with each other through the close-knit course.

Logic model & Theory of change document – Erin Feeley

For this project, I articulated details related to the design, function, and future of UPEP. To do this, the roles and interactions of varies groups—UPEP students, University of Utah faculty and staff, and student and community volunteers and interns—had to be defined. Additionally, I outlined short, mid, and long-term goals for UPEP’s development. Finally, the resources that would be needed to meet each of these goals were identified.

Information fliers for all events – Erin Feeley

I developed handouts to distribute at each of the film screenings. The informational flier had two purposes. First, it provided people who attended any of the UPEP events with some key details about UPEP—such as the mission statement and contact information—that they could take home with them. Second, the flier provided community members with further information about mass incarceration and some recommendations for readings related to mass incarceration.

Event planning – Doug Nagie

I was in charge of event planning; we hosted Sean Pica, director of Hudson Link. Hudson Link is a college in prison program, started inside Sing Sing prison in New York. We hosted several events on campus and in the wider community, discussing the ideas behind college in prison programs and the great results they can have. With Sean, we hosted a student luncheon and short film screening in the Union building, which drew approximately 40 people and media coverage from the Utah Chronicle and K-UTE radio on-campus media. We hosted two documentary screenings, at the U and in Glendale, to raise awareness among students and the community, with a combined attendance of over 100. Finally, we hosted a smaller-scale discussion with the Utah BAR association, to engage with the legal community.

**Partnerships**

Our class worked to develop a number of strategic partnerships to help raise awareness about college-in-prison programming and support UPEP. We collaborated with the following units to organize and fund our events:

University Neighborhood Partners

The College of Education

The School for Social and Cultural Transformation

The Office of Equity and Diversity

The Union Programming Council

The Honors College

Members from the following non-profit and local communities attended our events:

American Civil Liberties Union of Utah

Neighborhood Works

Utah State Legislature

Prisoner Advocacy Network

Utah Division of Juvenile Justice

Our class would not have been able to have such rich experiences this year if not for the generosity of individuals who are committed to rectifying educational inequity in our prison systems. Financial contributions to support travel and lodging for our guest facilitators and field trips for our class included:

National Conference on Higher Education in Prison

Union Programming Council

The Honors College

Ruben Garcia

Nora Gannon

Parthiban Muniandy

Shameem Rhaka

Kristin Pena

Jason Taylor

Nassim Noroozi

Amy Swain

**Moving Forward**

So where are we at now? We are making progress!

In May 2017, Erin Feeley (UPEP Summer Intern) and Dr. Castro visited Draper and Timpanogos to meet with potential UPEP students and hear what questions, comments, and desires they had related to the development of a college-in-prison program. This visit gave us the opportunity to discuss UPEP’s development and design directly with prospective students. On the whole, the meeting was very encouraging and we learned a great deal.

Throughout the spring and summer semesters, Dr. Castro continued to meet with key stakeholders on campus. Dr. Kathryn Bond Stockton, Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity and Dean of the Schools for Social and Cultural Transformation attended all of these meetings as an advocate for UPEP. At present, leaders from across campus have expressed their support for UPEP, including deans, department chairs, program and unit directors, and administrators. Next steps involve applying for external funding to support tuition and administration of UPEP.

UPEP will begin offering college courses inside Draper prisons in Fall 2017. In preparation for Fall programming, Erin Feeley is taking on a number of tasks, including: finalizing documents developed during the Praxis Lab, collecting resources for a resource room inside each prison, drafting future internship and volunteer positions, and assisting in the continued growth of UPEP. During the summer, Erin Feeley also participated in the ongoing development of professional partnerships, sustainable funding mechanisms, and community education related to mass incarceration and higher education in prison. This internship position is supported by the University of Utah Honors College.

During the Praxis Lab we applied for a small grant from the Newcomer’s Association and received $500. Erin Feeley, UPEP summer intern, accepted this check during a small lunch ceremony on June 13th at Sea Salt, a restaurant in Salt Lake City.

Link to pictures: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/orqsrcqcti03gv0/AADwhCMVQsNNy20OBbp1fsDga?dl=0>

**How can you get involved?**

*Want to be part of UPEP?*

We are seeking committed University of Utah faculty, staff, and students – as well as community volunteers, to become involved with the project. All volunteers for the program will work directly or indirectly with incarcerated people and should not hold ill feelings or biases toward these populations. We are especially seeking to connect with individuals who have been impacted by incarceration and have a desire to work with UPEP. All applicants who are qualified to tutor in general academic areas (writing, reading, basic math, etc.) are encouraged to apply. Applications for paid and unpaid positions will be released in August, 2017.

*Want to donate money and/or supplies?*

We need school supplies for incarcerated students. We are collecting pens, pencils, loose-leaf paper, erasers, and sticky notes. Finally, we are seeking monetary donations of any size. If you would like more information about the specific use of donations, please contact utahpep@gmail.com.

*Want to donate books?*

Each semester UPEP will supply incarcerated students with necessary books. Please check out Amazon Wishlist for the list of books and numbers we need each semester. Please note that we encourage individuals to purchase books from local vendors and are using the wishlist as a way to reach a broad audience. If you plan to purchase a number of books, please contact us at utahpep@gmail.com and we will update the wishlist.

*Are you a community organization that would like to help support our work?*

As we grow, we would love to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with local organizations. These partnerships could take many different forms—from a collaboration that supports UPEP students in their artistic expression to a partnership with an organization that could provide transition services to UPEP students approaching their release date. If you are interested, please reach out to us.