

University of Utah Prison Education Project



Letter From the Co-Director

Greetings! Our 2018-2019 academic year is well underway, as are many exciting new and continuing developments. UPEP students, staff, interns, and volunteers continue to work in collaboration to nurture the growth of on-site programming and off-site projects.

Our computer labs are up and running! We are officially in a permanent classroom in each facility, and thanks to a grant by the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, each room is equipped with 20 laptops. Students use computers for assignments, listening to/watching approved media files, and for accessing various reading materials. While we do not have internet access, our wonderful volunteers have equipped the computers with numerous applications, programs, and media to support the educational needs and interests of UPEP students.

Our new website is under construction thanks to the amazing work of the University Marketing and Communications team and will be ready Spring 2019. Visitors to the website will be able to learn about our program, advocacy efforts, and current research, as well as access our newsletter and stay up to date with UPEP events. In addition, the new website will make it possible to contribute to UPEP via direct online donations. Stay tuned!

In February, UPEP co-directors and volunteers had the honor of attending the First Annual Retreat on Education in Prisons and Jails in Utah. This was the first time in the history of the state that educators, program directors and staff, principals and others associated with education in prisons and jails came together to discuss the challenges and possibilities of educational programming. It was a day filled with devoted and creative conversations about expanding and improving the state of education in Utah for incarcerated individuals.

With spring comes warmer temperatures, tulips, and UPEP admissions! Our third round of admissions is currently in progress and we are very excited to welcome a new cohort of students. Excitingly, the number of applicants continues to grow each year, a demonstration of the need to continue expanding higher education in Utah prisons and jails and the desire of incarcerated individuals to participate in rigorous educational opportunities.

Our UPEP team and collaborators continue pushing the conversation about the importance of higher education in prison. This spring we participated in the Week Against Prisons, held March 25-29 and organized by Students Against Mass Incarceration, and attended the Symposium on Transformative Education in Prison and Beyond, at the University of Wyoming. As always, we remain grateful for your support.

Cindy Fierros, PhD
Co-Director, UPEP
Lecturer, Gender Studies, University of Utah

The National Conference on Higher Education in Prison



UPEP was well represented at the National Conference on Higher Education in Prison held in Indiana this year. A team of 8 headed to the Midwest to join practitioners, formerly incarcerated individuals, and higher education leaders from across the country. Co-Director Dr. Erin Castro gave the opening Keynote address to the conference and Dr. Stan Andrisse, Director of From Prison Cells to PHD, gave the closing keynote lecture. Both lectures are available online:

<https://vimeo.com/304146303?ref=tw-share>

<https://vimeo.com/304056907>

Who is UPEP's New Program Coordinator? It's Sarah Manley!

Sarah Manley is UPEP's Program Coordinator. She has been involved with UPEP since the fall of 2017 when she began as a Teaching and Learning Assistant (TLA) and Coordinator in the women's Timpanogos facility. Most recently, Sarah served as a guest lecturer on the topic of "Disability and Education" for a Spring 2019 course entitled "Schools and Society."

As a Coordinator, Sarah works collaboratively with UPEP's admin team on a variety of projects, including recruiting tutors, hiring instructors, supervising interns, scheduling courses, facilitating orientations, and fostering community outreach. She is also primarily responsible for coordinating UPEP's Teaching and Learning volunteers to ensure that experienced tutors are available each week to support UPEP's incarcerated scholars in their educational initiatives.

Outside of UPEP, Sarah works for the Disability Law Center, a nonprofit committed to enforcing and strengthening laws that protect the opportunities, choices, and legal rights of people with disabilities in Utah. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts in Feminist Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her theoretical interests span feminist theory, disability studies, and film studies. She currently resides in Salt Lake City.



New Report on Higher Education in Prison

With support from the Lumina Foundation, the National Institute for Transformational Equity, and the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Drs. Erin L. Castro and Eboni M. Zamani-Gallaher have released a report examining the literature on access to and completion of higher education for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated college students. The report, entitled "Expanding Quality Higher Education for Currently and Formerly Incarcerated People: Committing to Equity and Protecting Against Exploitation", calls attention to five specific challenges in need of urgent attention from higher education leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders. It also offers specific recommendations that can begin to address these challenges.

For example, one challenge is that too few non-profit regionally accredited institutions provide credit-bearing and transferable postsecondary courses inside prisons. As of 2018, approximately 2.3 million incarcerated individuals have extremely limited access to quality higher education. The report recommends that "regionally accredited non-profit colleges and universities should provide transferrable, stackable, and intellectually stimulating coursework and pathways for incarcerated people." Click here for the free [full report](#).

Q&A with Grayson Hull, UPEP Volunteer



1. What do you study at the U?

I am majoring in Psychology and Health Anthropology with a minor in Integrative Human Biology. After graduation, I would like to attend medical school.

2. Why did you decide to become involved with UPEP?

My mother is an elementary school teacher and instilled in me the importance of education from a young age. This value, in addition to my experiences with previously incarcerated people, made me more inclined to take part in the project.

3. What do you do for UPEP?

During the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters, I helped out the Teaching and Learning Lab for the men's courses in Wasatch. Since Fall 2018, I have helped out with the Wasatch Student Advisory Group.

4. What do you enjoy most about your involvement with UPEP?

Conversations with students that connect ideas between their current and previous coursework is my favorite part of UPEP. It has also been wonderful witnessing the progress people on the inside and outside have made developing this project. I wouldn't have been able to imagine our students having computers when I joined UPEP in Fall 2017, but they do now!

5. What are some of the biggest challenges in volunteering inside a prison?

The most difficult challenge is relaying information. Only being able to communicate with students once a week can hinder course objectives. This is compounded by the possibility of being turned away at the gate or ending class early due to a lockdown.

6. What advice do you have to offer future UPEP tutors and volunteers?

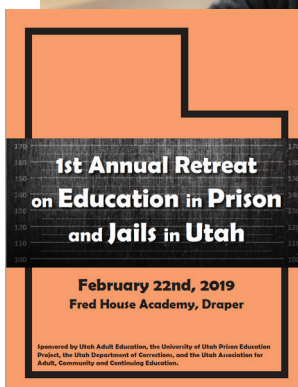
Try to facilitate access to information and resources as much as possible for the students. One of the main differences between a classroom inside versus outside the prison is access to information and resources. The ability to just ask Google a question during lecture or while studying isn't something our students can do yet. Until we can change that, do whatever you can to supplement this deficit.

UPEP T-shirts are here! Go online and make a donation, send us the screen shot, and we will send you a t-shirt. \$15 suggested donation (\$20.00 to cover shipping).



1st Annual Retreat on Education in Prisons and Jails in Utah

Together with the Utah Department of Education and the Utah Department of Corrections, UPEP co-sponsored the very first statewide retreat on education in prisons and jails in Utah. Held on February 22, 2019 in Draper, the convening brought together individuals from throughout the state to discuss current challenges faced in providing high quality programming, as well as plans for action moving forward. Event organizers hope that this will be the first of a longstanding tradition of retreats focused specifically on education for young people and adults in our state. A directory with all educational opportunities provided inside prisons and jails is now available on UPEP's website.



Student Voices: Ferosa

Martin Luther Speaks to Jane Kenyon

I had a dream, that one day I would eat the flawless peach.
I have only known the taste of the bitter pit,
it was the first food that the world offered me.

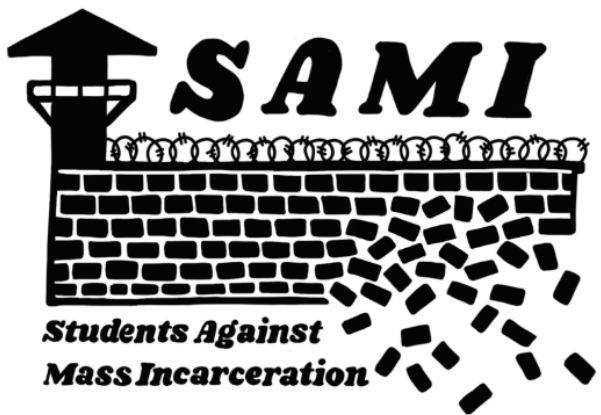
I have seen many hills, the climb painful, yet,
the hill was always my pulpit.
From you silver candle sticks, below the hill,
I inhaled the message you sent about privilege,
my nostrils, filled with hope.

I had a dream, that one day I would be seated at your table,
with those candle sticks,
a centerpiece.
Feasting on the broth of humanity.
We will eat from the same bowl.



UPEP volunteers and the Executive Director of the Laughing Gull Foundation attending the 2018 National Conference on Higher Education in Prison in Indianapolis.

First Week Against Prisons at the U of U: March 25-29, 2019



The U of U's first annual Week Against Prisons took place this Spring. *Week Against Prisons* was a week-long series of events coordinated by Students Against Mass Incarceration as well as other campus and community partners, including the Brown Berets, Students for a Democratic Society, Nopalera Art Collective, and the ACLU. The series aimed at engaging our campus community in critical discussion around the realities of mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex in the United States. Throughout the week, they generated conversations which helped us imagine what a world beyond mass incarceration might look like. This year's events included a workshop on the school to prison pipeline, a panel discussion on reducing barriers to higher education for justice-involved people, and a film screening of *13th*, a film by Ava Duvernay.

Fundraisers & Donations

A big thank you to all who donated books during our first book drive, co-hosted by SAMI during *Week Against Prisons*. A special shout-out to the Lassonde Studios, Marriot Honors Community, Union, Student Leadership and Involvement, Career Services, Housing & Residential Education, School of Business, Educational Leadership & Policy, and to everyone that participated. We collected over 120 books for our growing libraries in the Draper facilities! Thanks to MOD Pizza Sugarhouse and all the pizza eaters for supporting our fundraiser on March 31st!



UPEP would also like to thank the David Eccles School of Business for their support with our first annual spring fling fundraiser!

Want to donate to UPEP? Check out our [Amazon Wish List](#) or make a cash donation @ [Support UPEP](#)

Contact Us and Learn More!

If you would like to volunteer, head over to our website to "GET INVOLVED" or email us at u pep@utah.edu

u pep.utah.edu



facebook.com/utahpep/



[@Utah_PrisonEd](https://twitter.com/Utah_PrisonEd)

