

Saint Louis University Prison Program

Talking Points

Q: What is the Saint Louis University Prison Program?

A: The SLU Prison Program provides access to quality higher educational opportunities for incarcerated people and prison staff in Missouri and Illinois. These opportunities include both credit-bearing college courses and not-for-credit educational experiences.

Q: What is the history of the SLU Prison Program?

A: In 2008, the Prison Program offered a Certificate in Theological Studies at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre, MO. In 2011, at the urging of the Missouri Department of Corrections, the Program began offering a fully accredited Associate of Arts degree to prison employees and incarcerated people and the Prison Arts & Education Program, which provides humanities-based workshops and a speaker series for the entire prison community. In 2015, the first cohort of students graduated from the Associate of Arts Degree Program. In 2016, the Program has expanded programming to include the College Preparatory Program at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre, MO and at a second facility, the Federal Correctional Institution in Greenville, IL.

Q: What programming is offered by the Prison Program?

A: The **Associate of Arts Degree Program** offers SLU classes to prison employees and incarcerated people, taught on-site by SLU faculty, staff and graduate students. The 61 credits

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Q: When do classes meet and how many years are students in the program?

A: Two cohorts of 20 students each take courses that operate on a nine-week term and are convened once per week, for four hours at a time. Students take a total of five classes per year. To complete the total 61 credit hours required for the degree, each cohort remains in the program for approximately four years.

Q: Do staff and incarcerated students take courses in the same classroom?

A: No. Staff students and incarcerated students use the same curriculum, and both classes are taught on-site at the prison, but by different faculty in separate classrooms.

Q: Does any other prison in the country offer a degree program for staff?

A: No. The SLU Prison Program is the only program in the country offering an on-site college degree program for prison staff.

Q: Who teaches classes in the Associate of Arts Degree Program?

A: All courses are taught by SLU faculty, adjunct faculty, or advanced graduate students.

Q: What degree do students earn in the program?

A: Students graduate with an Associate of Arts degree from Saint Louis University. The diploma that Prison Program students receive is the same diploma awarded to students on the St. Louis and/or Madrid campus of Saint Louis University.

Q: Can Prison Program students enroll in a B.A. program on the St. Louis campus?

A: Currently, a transition plan does not exist for students in the Associate of Arts program. A goal of the Prison Program is to be able to support our staff students and incarcerated students upon release to enter B.A. programs at SLU.

Q: What is the Prison Arts & Education Program?

A: The Prison Arts & Education Program provides access to arts and humanities experiences to incarcerated people, prison staff, and community members at the facilities at which we operate. Components of the program include a speaker series; drawing, writing, and communication workshops; a video project; an annual theatrical and visual arts show; and a colloquium at which various members of the Program engage in dialogue about the prison in a transformed state.

Q: What is the College Preparatory Program?

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programs to both incarcerated individuals and prison staff. We were the first and are now one of only two college-in-prison programs in the state of Missouri. We are one of a few college-in-prison programs in the country working in both State and Federal facilities and that is working in two different states.

Q: Where does the Prison Program currently operate?

A: The Prison Program offers programming in two facilities: 1. the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre, MO—a state institution housing approximately 2,500 men, and approximately 600 staff, in a maximum security institution; and 2. the Federal Correctional Institution in Greenville, IL, which consists of two populations – approximately 1,000 adult men in a medium security prison and 350 adult women in a minimum-security camp.

Our administrative team, executive team, and advisory boards operate at Saint Louis University's main campus in St. Louis, MO

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combining support from our community network, corporations, foundations, government sources, non-profit organizations, and individuals including faculty and staff of the Program, we are able to not only sustain ourselves but also continuously grow our programming.

Q: How can I donate to the SLU Prison Program?

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Arts & Education Program as a Workshop leader or speaker, please contact the Prison Program Community Outreach Coordinator (Julie O'Heir at 314-977-3206 or uheirja@slu.edu).

One of the best ways you can contribute to our success is through financial partnership. To make a donation to the Prison Program, contact the Community Outreach Coordinator or visit our website at prisonprogram.slu.edu.