

# UCLA Prison Education Program

## Why?

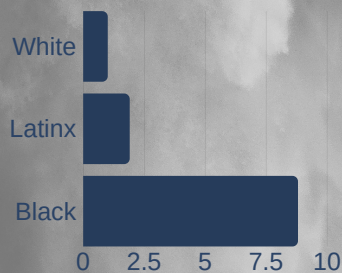
There are currently **2,162,400** incarcerated persons in the United States.

In California alone, there are **202,700** incarcerated persons.

Bureau of Justice Statistics (2018)<sup>1</sup>

### California racial disparity in incarceration populations.

Number of Black and Latinx to White incarcerated persons in California. <sup>2</sup>  
From the Sentencing Project (2017).



### Did you know...

In 2015, 139 women wrote letters requesting UCLA courses at *The California Institution for Women*. Then, ten women participated in a think tank proposing a UCLA pilot course and expressing desire for access to higher education.

Following the pilot course, these women wrote a 2016 Proposal for UCLA Bachelor and Master's Degree Programs, which highlighted the demand for and benefits of higher education classes that foster critical thinking and the development of leadership skills through critical pedagogy.<sup>3</sup>

**THE MISSION** of the UCLA Prison Education Program is to make postsecondary education accessible to women and young people who are currently incarcerated, and to bring UCLA faculty and students to learn alongside them, thereby challenging bias, discrimination, and injustice in a shared and collaborative learning experience.

## What?

In 2015, the "Degrees of Freedom" report made six recommendations for programs seeking to provide education for incarcerated populations:<sup>4</sup>

1. Build high-quality academic programming both inside and outside custody.	2. Enable success by prioritizing academic and non-academic support services.	3. Recruit and invest in qualified and committed staff.	4. Foster sustainability through funding, evaluation, quality control, and institutional support.	5. Build local and statewide networks.	6. Shape the policy landscape to support high-quality pathways.
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## How?

"With some high school courses only 55% of the population returns. With a vocational training only 30% return. With an Associate's degree only 13.7% return. With a Bachelor's degree only 5.6% return. And when a Master's degree is obtained the recidivism rate is 0%. Why is it that we aren't spending more money on educating people that have been incarcerated to ensure upon their release they will not return?" - Wendy Staggs<sup>5</sup>

Since its founding in 2016, the **UCLA Prison Education Program** has offered **14 Courses**, spearheaded **9 initiatives**, and served students at *The California Institute for Women*, *Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall*, *Camp Joseph Scott*, and the *Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program*.

## Results

In course evaluations, conducted in partnership with the **UCLA Center for the Advancement of Teaching**, we found for incarcerated students taking UCLA Prison Education Program courses:

**42%** mention growing in confidence and the courage to share with others.

**58%** say they will take with them the practice of free-writing and creative writing to share their views and stories.

**62%** indicated that they have grown in self-confidence, specifically related to communication and public speaking.

To find out more, please visit: <https://prisoneduprogram.ucla.edu/>

1. U.S. Department of Justice/Statistics (2018) <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&id=6226>

2. The Sentencing Project (2018) <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>

3. Proposal for UCLA Bachelor and Master's Degree Programs at the California Institution for Women (2016) UCLA School of Law and CIW Think Tank.

4. Degrees of Freedom Report - Expanding College Opportunities for Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Californians (2015) [https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/DegreesofFreedom2015\\_FullReport.pdf](https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/DegreesofFreedom2015_FullReport.pdf)

5. Formerly incarcerated student and UCLA fellow, Wendy Staggs, referencing the following sources: <https://signaldc.com/prison-education/> and <https://www.nlg.org/guild-notes/article/beyond-bars-education-key-to-lower-recidivism/>

Note: Data compiled by the UCLA Prison Education Program Evaluation Committee (Spring 2019)