



Goucher Prison Education Partnership

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS 2012-2022



GOUCHER | college
Baltimore, Maryland

The Goucher Prison Education Partnership

Launched by Goucher College faculty and volunteers, the Goucher Prison Education Partnership (GPEP) offered its first credit college courses in 2012 to 15 students at the Maryland Correctional Institution – Jessup (MCIJ). In 2016, GPEP was part of the inaugural cohort of 67 colleges nationwide invited to participate in a pilot program to reinstate Pell Grant funding to students in prison. Today, GPEP offers around 30 courses to an average of 130 students annually at MCIJ and the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW). Since 2012, more than 300 students have enrolled in over 200 credit courses through GPEP. Classes are taught by faculty from Goucher and other local colleges and universities who hold GPEP students to the rigorous academic standards for which Goucher is known. Students are provided with everything they need to succeed, including college preparatory courses, academic advising, tutoring, and all books and materials.

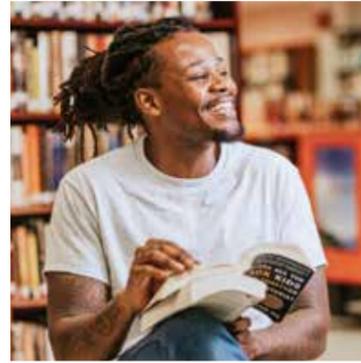
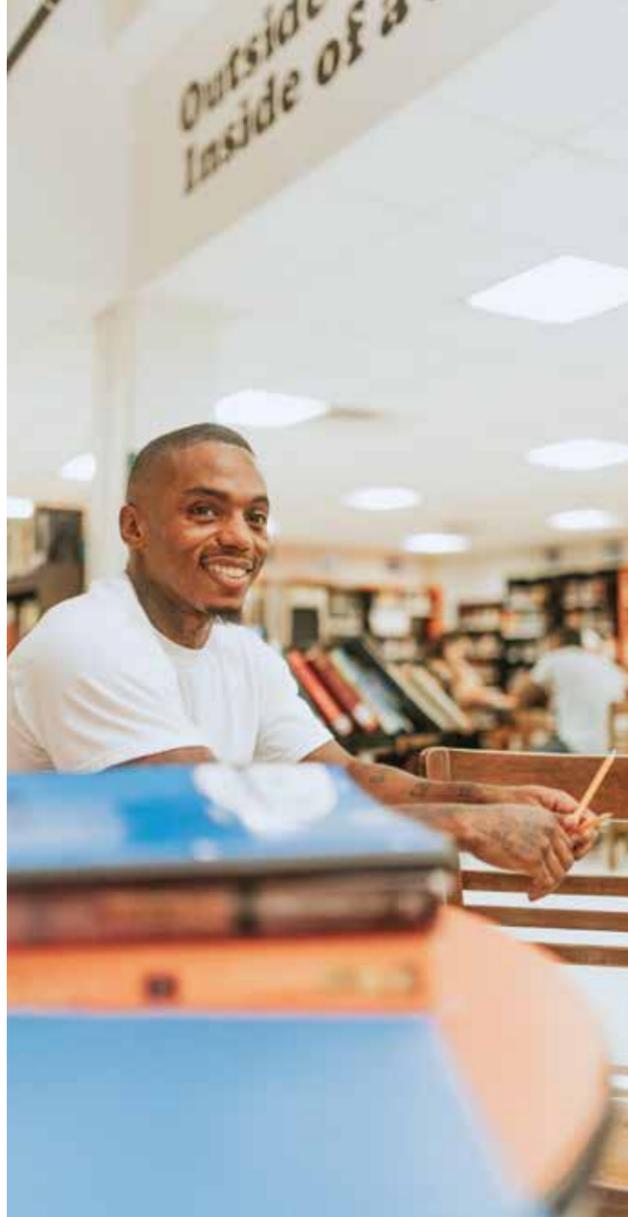
Goucher College believes in the power of a liberal arts education. An excellent college education offers access to ideas and scholarship, social movements, art, and academic context for lived experiences. It empowers students to think independently and thoughtfully

critique ideas presented to them. In pursuing a Goucher College education, students make deep investments in themselves that empower them to fully engage professionally, personally, politically, and socially.

GPEP students who graduate while in prison earn a Goucher College bachelor's degree in American studies. Those who return home before completing their degree can finish on Goucher's main campus or apply their college credits at any accredited college or university in the country. Over 40% of GPEP students who completed their degree with Goucher graduated with honors. Others do not complete their degree right away but instead use their college credits and knowledge to access enhanced employment opportunities to support themselves, their families, and their communities.

The entire Goucher academic community is enhanced and strengthened by the inclusion of these talented, dedicated students at the two prisons. Our work together stimulates awareness and meaningful dialogue in and beyond the Goucher community about justice, incarceration, and educational access.





Who Are GPEP Students?

The students are the most hardworking members of the partnership. Representative of the larger prison population, GPEP students mostly come from communities strongly affected by structural racism, where residents are over-represented in the justice system and systematically excluded from quality and higher education and economic opportunity. Seventy-seven percent of GPEP students are people of color, and 67% are first-generation college students.

GPEP students are deeply committed to their education. Most work full-time jobs in the prison for \$5 or less per day while taking two-to-four college and/or college preparatory courses each semester. In addition to class time and independent study, students commit to five hours of weekly college engagement comprised of office hours with advisors and professors, tutoring, opportunities for collaboration with peers, and college events.

There is justice in creating a college opportunity for individuals affected by the justice system and previously excluded from access to quality education. There is further justice in the fact that many former GPEP students go on to become leaders in the effort to repair systems that over-incarcerate and systemically exclude people of color and those with low income from higher education.

Students' hard work and academic accomplishments strengthen themselves, their families, and their communities. Today, former GPEP students are inside the prisons tutoring current GPEP students; in GPEP's office working part and full time to support and inspire those following them; on college campuses, including Goucher College, working toward their degrees; and in jobs strengthening the fabric of their workplaces and communities. We all benefit from students' academic, social, and professional accomplishments.





What's Next?

Entering its second decade, GPEP continues to be guided by its mission of providing an excellent college education to students incarcerated in Maryland. In the next five years, building on a solid foundation, GPEP will cut time to degree in half, expand academic opportunities for students, and strengthen support for students returning home.

Shorten Time to Degree

Students coming home after release are faced with numerous challenges in addition to continuing their education: finding and funding a place to live; securing employment and transportation; caring for children and other relatives, and more. Students in prison have a unique opportunity to focus on college. GPEP seeks to leverage this opportunity by significantly increasing the number of courses offered in the prisons—halving time to graduation and significantly increasing graduation rates. Students returning home with a bachelor's degree will be better equipped to find meaningful, sustainable employment and to pursue and achieve their diverse goals. To shorten time to degree, GPEP will add mini semesters in January, June, and July, allowing students to gain up to 12 additional credits each year. GPEP is working with DPSCS to have students be full time rather

than part time, allowing them to gain an additional 8 credits per year. To contextualize, this means students could earn up to 36 credits per year, versus the 16 credits they average now. This would reduce average time to graduation for GPEP students from 8-10 years to 4-5 years.

Expand Academic Opportunities for Students

GPEP will more closely integrate students into the academic experience of Goucher College's Towson campus. We are building out the administrative structures to enable GPEP students to: write for student publications; be recognized for dean's list; submit work for college-wide academic awards; serve as peer tutors; and more. Most exciting, GPEP students will work with academic advisors to research, write and defend senior theses, the academic culmination of the Goucher bachelor's degree. Working with DPSCS and Goucher's library, GPEP will also secure student access to a digital library. This will streamline student research and allow students to develop invaluable research skills for future educational and employment settings.

GPEP will supplement Goucher College's curriculum with a comprehensive series of non-credit workshops on the workplace technologies that GPEP students

cannot directly access while incarcerated. Students will gain proficiency in conventional email etiquette, Word, Excel, Power Point, google docs, and more. GPEP will also install a much-needed computer lab for GPEP students at MCIW. These efforts will help address the steep learning curve students have with essential career readiness skills, better preparing them for success upon returning home.

Beyond Goucher, GPEP seeks to support students in the increasing number of college in prison programs linked to expanded Pell Grant funding for students in prison. GPEP is strengthening its presence in national organizations to serve as a resource for colleges newly entering the college in prison arena. As part of this work, GPEP was accepted into the highly competitive Higher Education in Prison Cohort Program through the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison, a recognition of its leadership in the national college in prison community.

Support Former Students Returning Home

As GPEP's student population has increased, so too has its alumni population—a trend that will continue at an accelerated pace as we shorten the time to degree. GPEP will create a comprehensive system to better support and sustain former students in their transitions to employment and continued education. We will build lasting partnerships with organizations specializing in providing students coming home with housing, employment, and more. GPEP will serve as a first point of contact for alumni, connecting them to services provided by trusted partners. GPEP will continue to take the lead on assisting with post release college admissions.



Join us!

Creating systems for enhanced opportunities for students and alumni will necessitate significant expenditure. **GPEP will need to expand funding to support additional: staff to build and maintain programming; faculty**

to teach more courses; books and materials; and classrooms in which to house added classes.

GPEP's five-year plan is ambitious—and doable. With ten years of experience, GPEP has always met its goals, from establishing itself as a going concern, to building a

bachelor's degree program equal to that on the best college campuses, to continuing coursework in every semester of the pandemic. In its first decade, GPEP established its commitment to providing an excellent college education to students in prison. In its second decade, GPEP will continue that legacy by enhancing academic opportunities for students, reducing time to degree, and expanding alumni support. Together with supporters (like you!), GPEP stands poised to enter its second decade of providing a college education to students in prison with whom it shares an unwavering commitment to excellence.

Together, onward.



Goucher Prison Education Partnership

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS **2012-2022**

The mission of the Goucher Prison Education Partnership (GPEP) is to provide an excellent college education to students incarcerated in Maryland. As they earn that education, students develop as scholars and leaders. Students' hard work and academic accomplishments impact not only their own futures, but also their families and the communities to which students belong, both within and outside of the prison. We all benefit from students' academic, social, and professional accomplishments.

GPEP seeks to stimulate awareness and meaningful dialogue about justice, incarceration, and educational access. We welcome you to learn more about these issues and join us in the discussion.

Visit our website at www.goucher.edu/GPEP or scan the below QR code.



The Goucher Prison Education Partnership

To find out more, volunteer, teach, or donate, please visit www.goucher.edu/GPEP
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