



**HIGHER  
EDUCATION IN  
PRISON**

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY



# History

Our program was started by two women who were both directly impacted by a broken criminal justice system: one a former criminal defense attorney, the other a formerly incarcerated mother. In collaboration with a group of incarcerated people at CCCF advocating for educational opportunities, they imagined a comprehensive program designed to ignite a love of learning in a population that has been the most historically underserved segment of incarcerated people in Oregon.

The vision: a program that supported students inside carceral settings as well as on the PSU campus.



Program Co-Founders  
Ailene Farkac and Deborah Arthur



# Timeline

## 2018

- PSU Program founded as *Reverse the {school to prison} Pipeline* (now PSU's Higher Education in Prison Program)
- College Navigator first available for formerly incarcerated students on PSU campus
- First meeting with Rubicon GPS at CCCF
- Steering Committee formed

## 2019

- Initial class offered at CCCF: *Metamorphosis* (Freshman Inquiry) to 20 students. 15 credit, year-long interdisciplinary general education.

## 2020

- second year of Liberal Arts degree pathway at CCCF
- provided higher education to 45 women
- courses include include general education, business, writing, family studies, public health and natural sciences.
- offer 43 interdisciplinary credits; building a transcript.

## 2021

- Ten students currently seeking full admission to PSU; more to follow

6



Hope

We  
Are  
YOU

COURAGE!

NO LONGER  
&  
STATISTH!

Perspective



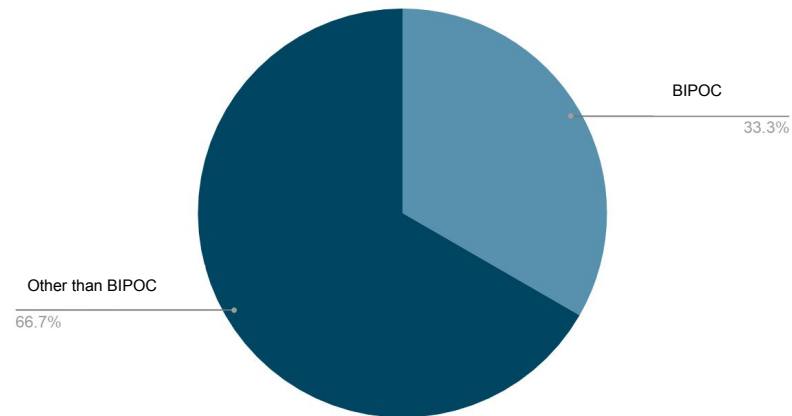
# Racial Justice

**In our original cohort, 15% of participants identified as BIPOC. In our second cohort, this percentage doubled.**

We are increasing and strengthening the participation and leadership of Black, Indigenous and People of Color in our program, and striving to dismantle whiteness, by approaching both teaching and learning with an anti-racist focus.

We were selected by the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison to participate in a Reading Project. Our leadership team, consisting of members inside and outside of the prison, will be reading Dr. Bettina Love's *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom* and using the text and additional resources provided to explore and strengthen the anti-racist focus of our work.

2021 Student Self-Identification





# A Key Part of PSU's Vision

- Support Portland State University's mission to educate a diverse community of lifelong learners
- Honor Portland State University's values of access, inclusion and equity as pillars of excellence
- Provide seamless and accessible pathway in which people, upon release, are welcomed to PSU, supported in admission, and supported in achieving a degree

It's about reducing recidivism, but more importantly, it's about the opportunity to expand one's mind and broaden one's life experience - Deborah Arthur

A group of people are sitting in a circle on the floor, with their hands stacked in the center. The image is partially obscured by a large green rectangular text box in the middle. The background shows various clothing items like jeans, a white hoodie, and a blue t-shirt. One person's hand is visible with a yellow square sticker featuring a black spiral design.

## Steering Committee:

**Rubicon GPS**, a group of women, trans-identified and gender non-conforming people at CCCF

**Deb Arthur**, J.D., Associate Professor, acting Program Manager

**Ailene Farkac**, MSW, formerly incarcerated at CCCF

**Deborah Rutt**, D.M.D., PSU Faculty

**CeCe Ridder** Ph.D., Public Engagement Division Manager at the City of Beaverton

**Cree Dueker**, Assistant Director of Admission, PSU

**Nicolle DuPont**, Associate Registrar, PSU

**Becky Sanchez**, Ed.D., Executive Director of Undergraduate Programs, PSU School of Business

**Morgan Godvin**, formerly incarcerated senior at PSU

**Mauri Matsuda** Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice

**Betsy Simpkins**, former Program coordinator, College Inside Program

**Leena Shrestha**, Academic and Career Advisor, PSU

**Jennifer Greenburg**, MBA, PSU Faculty

## Impact- In Students' Words

*Thank you for giving me the opportunity to take this class. Your patience, positivity and engagement has really helped me to open up and realize that not everyone views us as hindrances to society. We will be out, eventually, and we want to be successful. These classes are helping us get to that place!*

*Education in prison has expanded my worldview. What an ironic statement to make while being inside the concrete and barbed wire. Higher education has challenged me as an individual to invest in my future. The more positive change I can make in myself the more I can offer the community.*

*These courses have been more than just getting an education, it has reminded me that there is so much more beyond these walls. We lack stimulation in here as well as solid connections and communication with the outside world, and this has helped to re-establish those things. It helps me feel normal again and has strengthened not only my mind but my confidence.*



# Funding:

PSU's Higher Education in Prison Program recognizes our sponsors:



The  
**Sunshine Lady**  
Foundation, Inc.



**WILSONVILLE**  
OREGON



**PSU**  
**Foundation**  
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY



**GREEN GROUP**  
REAL ESTATE



## **Oregon Coalition of Higher Education in Prison**

**The Oregon Consortium of Higher Education in Prison is a statewide alliance of public and private postsecondary education providers, the Oregon Department of Corrections, the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and other stakeholders working together to meet the needs of incarcerated students and improve the quality of and equitable access to post-secondary educational programs statewide.**

## OCHEP is designed to :

- share information between member colleges and universities, the DOC and HECC;
- increase articulation for students among the member colleges and universities and correctional institutions;
- urge legislators to continue state and federal financial support;
- identify and/or develop additional funding sources;
- cultivate constituency relations, and;
- develop common procedures and practices

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