



Arizona Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

“All students, incarcerated and civilian, deserve the chance to learn from one another’s experiences and to teach each other how to be more accepting.”

Lyssi, outside student



Arizona State University

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Moving beyond the walls that separate us

Learning by doing

Through a partnership with the Arizona Department of Corrections, the Arizona State University Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program is unlike any other class offered at ASU. Ten ASU “outside” students and twelve incarcerated “inside” students meet once per week for three hours in an Arizona prison.



Pictured is the spring 2016 inaugural Inside-Out class of Arizona with co-facilitators Kevin Wright and Travis Meyers.

“I sincerely hope more schools will consider offering Inside-Out to change lives and renew hope in so many men who desire to live better lives. When this class is over, the impact it has on me will live forever. Thanks to all involved for this great opportunity that society will benefit from.”

–Johnny, inside student

We can do more.

Challenge:

Criminal justice reform has been a consistent topic of national discussion. In particular, mass incarceration has produced unintended consequences for the formerly incarcerated, their families and their communities.

In Arizona, half of the 42,000 people currently incarcerated had already served time in an Arizona prison. Nearly all—more than 95%—will one day return to our communities. These individuals are also parents to an estimated 58,000 children in Arizona. Incarcerating this many men and women is an extremely costly endeavor—the operating budget of the State Department of Corrections is over 1 billion dollars. Our current approach to crime and punishment is no longer socially or fiscally responsible.

Solution:

Changing the criminal justice system will require fresh ideas from untapped resources. The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program at Arizona State University brings together college students and incarcerated individuals to learn about issues of crime and justice over a full semester. The culmination of this community-based learning is an actionable project designed to improve our correctional system.

The first class in 2016 designed three projects: a reentry packet of resources to prepare formerly incarcerated individuals to successfully reintegrate back into society, a family reunification program to assist families who have been impacted by incarceration, and a victim intervention class that educates incarcerated individuals on the effects of crime on victims.

Inside-Out was founded by Lori Pompa at Temple University with the first class taking place in the Philadelphia Prison System in 1997. The program has since grown to include over 600 trained instructors from around the world reaching over 30,000 students.

Similarly, our goal is to expand the program in Arizona. In spring 2017, we added a second class and brought on another instructor. We want to add even more.

Each class, we make an impact on 22 people — with a ripple effect on those around them.

Your support ensures that this innovative learning experience will continue to change lives.

asufoundation.org/ASUinside-out

Transformative learning for ASU students

Both ASU and incarcerated students have the same syllabus and academic requirements, and students learn about crime and justice together through collaboration and dialogue.

Curriculum includes the exploration of why people commit crime, the purpose of prisons, analysis of the criminal justice system, punishment and rehabilitation, victims and victimization, and the myths and realities of prison life.

“Inside-Out has done nothing less than change my life. We have learned to work together and collaborate as a group in such a short time, something I have never seen in any other class at ASU. Inside-Out has served not only to help direct my future studies as a graduate student, but has helped me find direction for what I would like my future career to be.”

—Wesley, outside student

“This class turned out to be so much more than just a three credit course. It’s given me an inspiration to be the change, the solution. In my three years of college I’ve never seen a class of 22 people so passionate about how we can make our justice system better.”

—Lilian, outside student

and the people inside

While ASU students—future correctional leaders—gain valuable insight that shapes their thinking, and inspires innovative approaches to criminal justice, that is only half of the equation.

A 2013 study found that incarcerated individuals who participated in the Inside-Out program showed increases in levels of self-efficacy upon program completion. The 91 incarcerated individuals that took part in the program had improved scores on ten statements such as “I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities” or “When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions” as compared to their scores on these statements prior to enrolling in the program.¹

“The Inside-Out Prison Exchange class has been more rewarding than I ever could’ve imagined. One class at a time we are able to apply our experiences to help restore, enrich, and rebuild our society together. And this is a huge step to a better future.”

—Justin, inside student

“The non-judgmental acceptance and invaluable insight I received from the outside students was crucial to my growth as a man and as someone who will transition out of prison one day. The encouragement I received from hearing inside students’ testimonies and seeing their growth was inspiring to me. I can do anything I put my mind to. I don’t have to fail in school just because I did as a youth. I can make a real difference in this world.

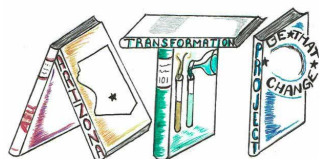
—Varrone, inside student

¹ Allred, S.L., Harrison, L.D., & O’Connell, D.J. (2013). Self-efficacy: An important aspect of prison-based learning. *The Prison Journal*, 93, 211-233.



“This class has shown me that it doesn’t matter where you’re from or what you’ve been through, with determination any goal is achievable. This class has taught me that I am NOT why I’m in prison...I am better than that; I am who I can be... and I can be much more.”

–Khan, inside student



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