"As one of the founders of FEPPS I witness its success of building a learning community in one of the most difficult context possible—prison. As a sociologist and filmmaker I work at the nexus of art and social justice. My courses are enlivened when FEPPS students draw on their learning from other courses to rupture the silos of academic disciplines and interrogate connections, contradictions and new pathways for learning and imagination.

FEPPS is meaningful because it gives me an opportunity to collaboratively create a better world. As a FEPPS instructor I am increasingly putting into practice what James Baldwin says is the paradox of education ‘... as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which [they] are being educated.’ The ability to name the problem and see its historical and institutional presence while understanding the intersections of compassion, forgiveness and accountability can be a site of healing. This location of healing provides hope. My courses with FEPPS students keep my rigor alive and remind me that to imagine beyond the self-evident is not the goal, but the promise of sociology.”

Gilda Sheppard is a professor of sociology, cultural and media studies at The Evergreen State College and taught Women and Gender Studies at WCCW this fall. Dr. Sheppard is an award winning filmmaker who has screened her documentary films throughout USA and internationally.

I will never forget that one individual who inspired me to change my life path. I witnessed how she conducted herself as a FEPPS student, intelligently spoke, and advocated for and encouraged others to become leaders. This individual unknowingly sparked a fire within me and, with a sliver of courage and faith, I stepped out and sought an AA degree through FEPPS.

Higher education is the key to opening the door to change in my life. It helped me discover who I am, my passions, and capabilities. Before FEPPS, I was lost, unsure, without purpose and intentionally stayed in the background. I am no longer that person. I now have purpose, a voice and leadership qualities I never would have discovered without college.

My path to self discovery through education has given me confidence and self-worth. There is power in writing, outlining and citing an essay even before receiving that A+. Realizing that I’m capable of articulating words and understanding subjects such as immigration, racism, absent history and communication has shown me that if I push myself hard enough, I can achieve anything.

I hope that someday I am the person that inspires another to take a risk and enroll in school. Unknowingly or intentionally influencing others with knowledge is one of the many beautiful things about receiving an education. It plants seeds in others that will eventually, thanks to FEPPS, get watered. I will forever be grateful for that little seed planted in me because without it I wouldn’t be where I am today. Blossoming.

Tiana is a first year student in FEPPS’ accredited college program at WCCW. She is a member of FEPPS’ Education Advisory Council and a passionate advocate for education access for all.
At FEPPS we’ve been thinking a lot about what civic engagement looks like in the classroom and outside of it. I’m galvanized by the sustained and thoughtful engagement that is happening in many spaces of our program—locally and nationally. This year, the theme of the FEPPS lecture series is Local Engagement, Collective Impact, which aims to connect the work we do in classes to the social and ethical issues that most impact the lives of FEPPS students. Our community partners from the ACLU, Equity in Education Coalition, and state legislature led challenging discussions with hundreds of women and staff at the prison.

We are also inspired by our students, teachers, and study hall volunteers. Every week this fall, twenty-one undergraduates at the University of Puget Sound participated in study halls with FEPPS students. The FEPPS Student Advisory Council has doubled in size with newer students taking up the mantle of leadership in our program. FEPPS graduates are advising new students on how to choose courses, acting as peer advisors, and tutoring each other. They are breaking down barriers between the university and the prison and forging new communities. Education for women in prison fosters engaged citizens inside and outside prison.

Thank you for your support and belief in the transformative power of education for women in prison.

In gratitude,

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT - English

“Twice a week, I have the pleasure of working with a classroom of students who consistently achieve beyond their own expectations as well as my own. Being a writing professor with FEPPS has meant working with students in an environment with much less technology and much more authenticity. I feel fortunate every week that members of our classroom community share their talent and experiences though writing and discussion, and I believe we have all gained a sense of agency with the work we’ve completed this quarter. As anyone who knows the program could tell you, it’s the students that make the work meaningful, and I’m thankful that they keep making me want to be a better teacher.”

Blaine Hunt is completing his EdD in Adult Education through Teachers College and celebrated his 10th anniversary as faculty in Developmental Studies at Tacoma Community College in 2017. Not only was this Blaine’s first quarter teaching English 85 in our College Preparatory program, he also completed his first marathon last month!
FACULTY HIGHLIGHT - Geography

“For me, the best teaching and learning experiences are ones where both the instructors and the students learn from and are transformed by each other. What I hope for going into each teaching term is that together we generate energy and enthusiasm, intellectual creativity, and deep thinking as co-learners that carries beyond the classroom into our daily lives and future academic pursuits. The dedication, intellectual curiosity, and brilliance with which the students engage with course material is inspiring, and working through familiar texts in this context has made me see these works in a whole new light. Teaching for FEPPS also makes me want to be a better teacher; I worry more over my responsibility to the students and their education, and I turn this worry into thinking more carefully about teaching and learning. In addition to being transformative for the students, FEPPS is also transformative for the teachers. I have been transformed by it -- by each student I have been lucky enough to work with and learn from, by the program staff and the way they conceive so thoughtfully of prison education, and by the intellectual and emotional work of striving to be a better educator that teaching in this context inspires.”

Kathryn (Katie) Gillespie is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in Animal Studies at Wesleyan University, teaching classes in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and in the Science in Society Program. She earned her PhD in Geography from University of Washington (UW) in 2014. Professor Gillespie taught her first class, Sociology of Social Problems, at WCCW last term.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT - Biology

“Science classes often have reputations for being difficult, full of technical information and jargon, and maybe even . . . boring. Many students in the Survey of Biology class that I taught in the Fall of 2017 had not had much, if any, science at the college level. Teaching in FEPPS gave me an opportunity to spark interest in Biology with a group of students who were experiencing a science course for the first time. It gave me an opportunity to hopefully empower students to put aside fears about the material and to show them that this information is approachable by anyone and relevant to everyday life. It inspired me to see that many of the students had an innate interest in the topics we talked about and that they were truly excited to have conversations about how scientists approach problems in the modern world. This eagerness to learn was exhilarating and left me feeling like I wish I had more time in class...”

Bryan Thines is an Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of Puget Sound. Professor Thines and his students are interested in using functional genomic and molecular genetic approaches to identify novel roles for UPS genes that are turned on by environmental stresses.

Thanks to you, we have met our 20 Strong goal!!

TOGETHER, WE ARE STRONG IN 2018!

This fall, we introduced our 20 Strong Annual Campaign. We are proud to announce that thanks to over 80 generous donors, we have surpassed our $20,000 goal!

All gifts made in honor of this campaign will help women in prison change their lives, and the lives of their children, through education.

Our students are more motivated than ever moving into the new year.

THANK YOU

Together, we are 20 Strong in 2018.
Please join us for our 2nd Annual Gala!
April 19th, 2018
Pacific Tower’s Panoramic Room
1200 12th Ave S. 8th floor, Seattle WA

Tickets are on sale now
and can be purchased on our website
www.fepps.org