FALL UPDATES: Welcome to the New Cohort!

This August, we admitted a new cohort of 44 new students to the FEPPS program. After numerous information sessions and assessments, we kicked off the Fall quarter and the new school year with an all student meeting.

We began with an icebreaker bingo game and introduced our extracurricular programs -- study hall, a new monthly film series, our lecture series, and an Ethic Bowl team (which we believe is the first ever in a women’s prison!).

New students are settling in nicely to their classes and activities, and we all look forward to watching them grow into the future leaders of FEPPS!

FALL FUND DRIVE: Pathways Textbook Fundraiser

In 2018, FEPPS devoted significant energy to growing our Pathways re-entry program. FEPPS students who have released are finishing their AAs and BAs at colleges across Washington. In the next two years, we expect to have up to 40 students releasing. These students inspire and amaze us with their drive and accomplishments. But...

Being a college student is expensive.

Our Pathways students have consistently told us that purchasing textbooks is a major barrier to continuing their coursework. This holiday season, we hope you - our community of friends, family and supporters - can help relieve this cost.

Help keep FEPPS students on the path to success in college by donating to our textbook fund. Your donations will be used to help students purchase textbooks and other necessary supplies when they continue their education on the outside. Thank you!
MISSION
Freedom Education Project Puget Sound provides a rigorous accredited college program to incarcerated women, trans-identified and gender nonconforming people in Washington and creates pathways to educational opportunity after students are released from prison.

Our goal is to increase students’ economic and personal empowerment, contribute to family stability, and reduce recidivism through college education.

STAFF
Jennifer Bright, Interim Executive Director
Tanya Erzen, Ph.D., Faculty Director
Zoe Brown, Program Manager
Elizabeth Stensrud, Communications Coordinator & Registrar

BOARD
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Holly Johnson, Treasurer
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It’s my pleasure to introduce myself as the Interim Executive Director of FEPPS. I’ve long been a fan of FEPPS! I have tutored math, attended graduation ceremonies, facilitated a FEPPS board retreat, and supported the strategic planning process last year as a consultant. It was an honor to join the staff in September.

It’s a very exciting time for FEPPS. Tanya Erzen, our founding director, is now able to focus her astounding energy on the academic side of things, serving as Faculty and Academic Director. She has pulled together an Education Advisory Board of faculty who have taught for FEPPS. The EAB will foster collaboration and communication among faculty and staff from the various colleges and universities associated with FEPPS, and will help with planning, advising and other support for our academic programs and students.

Zoe Brown – a woman of many talents who has taken on a wide variety of responsibilities during this period of transition – is now our Academic Program Manager, with primary responsibility for managing the college education program at WCCW. And we’re delighted to welcome Elizabeth Stensrud, a longtime volunteer, as FEPPS Communications Coordinator and Registrar. (Every university and college, no matter how small, needs a registrar!)

We’ll be hiring a Pathways Program Manager soon, who will be responsible for supporting FEPPS students and graduates who are continuing their education after release, and for advising and student success support inside. We’re excited to be able to expand that program. Look for the job announcement, and please pass it along!

The board of directors has been expanding too. Board member Shajuanda Tate and staff member Zoe Brown recently co-facilitated a well-received anti-racism workshop at the National Conference on Higher Education in Prison, and Tanya also gave a presentation to a group of funders about a report that she co-authored on best practices and gaps in our field.

We expect to have more exciting news to report after the new year. As we approach the end of the year, I hope you’ll check out our fall textbook fund drive and our monthly donors’ book club. Thank you for all your support for FEPPS students!

- Jennifer Bright
Interim Executive Director

STAFF INTRODUCTIONS: Welcome, Elizabeth!

Hello all! My name is Elizabeth Stensrud and I am thrilled to join FEPPS as the new Communications Coordinator and Registrar. I began volunteering for FEPPS as a graphic designer in 2017. My goal is to find collaborative and creative ways to engage everyone in the FEPPS community.

Outside of work, I enjoy screenprinting, volunteering with Books to Prisoners, and training with my rock climbing team.

Be sure to check out the full videos of the student speeches and Gina Castillo’s keynote address at fepps.org or the FEPPS YouTube page!

“ ‘I look out at these women, beautiful women, graduating from this university of diversity and I see the future of our world. I see women who refuse to be a single story because they are women who are willing and able to claim the story of themselves. I see a group of extraordinary women who have learned to think instead of accept and who ache to be a beacon of change, because they feel the weight of responsibility to institute that change.’

- Dallas Akers, Class of 2018 Valedictorian

FALL CLASSES AT WCCW
English Prep I
Math Prep I & II
Math 146: Statistics
SPAN& 121: Spanish I
HIST& 148: US History III
PHIL& 101: Intro to Philosophy
SOC& 201: Social Problems

GRADUATION: Congratulations, Class of 2018!
For years we have been offering teacher trainings four times a year. We’ve had former students and
teachers speak to new faculty about teaching in the prison and tried multiple formats. This year,
members of our Student Advisory Council have co-facilitated teacher trainings at the prison for
over 30 teachers. One of their messages was to hold all students inside to the same rigorous expec-
tations as those on the outside. A teacher who has taught for FEPPS multiple times, told us, “I’ve
heard this message from staff, but I finally really got it coming from students.”

FEPPS was built in collaboration with the Women’s Village at WCCW, and the early student founders
have continued to serve on our Student Advisory board for the past five years. As we have grown
and new students have joined FEPPS, their leadership and mentorship has become even more
central to the success of FEPPS. To promote community among everyone in our program, some of
our Advisory Council members facilitated an all-program workshop. Students met in small groups
where they could discuss issues they were having in class and give program feedback, and they
participated in a team academic scavenger hunt that included solving an algebraic equation and
writing a thesis statement.

On the outside, 14 of our AA graduates are now enrolled at UW Seattle and Tacoma, Seattle Central,
Lower Columbia College, and Evergreen, and they continue to be involved in the field by speaking
at local and national events and conferences. Four former students will now serve on the FEPPS
board. Every day we see how access to college transforms FEPPS students, but now we are seeing
them become key thought-leaders and change-makers in the field of higher education inside pris-
on and beyond.

- Tanya Erzen
  Faculty and Academic Director

We are honored to have some amazing speakers at our lecture series this year to speak on the
theme “Local Engagement, Collective Impact”. Speakers include:

SPRING 2018:
Nicole Grant, Executive Secretary Treasurer,
King County Labor Council
Chris Beasley, Phd, Assistant Professor at
UWT, Co-Founder of the Formerly Incarcer-
ated College Graduates Network
Danni Askini, Founder and Executive Di-
rector of the Gender Justice League
Tarra Simmons, Executive Director of Civil
Survival

FALL 2018:
Laura Bix and Josephine Day, Bill and
Melinda Gates Foundation’s Global Agricul-
ture Team
Mary Yu, Washington State Supreme Court
Justice
Mary Weir, Former FEPPS Program Coordi-
nator and Fulbright Scholar
Laurie Jinkins, Washington State House of
Representatives

My name is Maria J Ferrer-Lightner. I am originally from Barcelona,
Spain. As a native person from Catalonia I speak Catalan and Spanish. I
have periodically taught Spanish at WCCW with FEPPS since 2012.

Teaching has been an important part of my life. Before coming to
the States, I taught Adult Education in public schools in Barcelona. It
was then when I discovered the power of education. Teaching basic
literacy to adult men and women, I was able to experience with them
the personal transformation they went through. Teaching Spanish at
WCCW with FEPPS has brought back to me that interest and motiva-
tion. The excitement and eagerness that the women at WCCW show in
learning and challenging themselves strengthens my own enthusiasm
for teaching.

My two main objectives in teaching Spanish language, culture and
literature courses are to prepare students to learn the Spanish lan-
guage at the required level and to develop in the students an appreci-
ation for its culture and literature as an integral part of our society and
communities. It is through education that we all learn about our own
person, our identity, and the environment and community where we
live. We all have this right. The learning process is a process of discov-
ery and self-discovery. I believe in applying an active and communica-
tive pedagogical approach where students play the main role. In class
students are active learners and therefore their participation should
also be active and engaged.

On a different note, I love to go to the movies with friends on the
weekend and talk about the films. I also like to take long walks in cold
weather and, like many others, I like to travel the world.
MONTHLY DONORS: Join Our Book Club!

When you pledge to become a monthly donor to FEPPS, you become a member of our “Book Club”

Each month, you’ll get an exclusive email newsletter with book recommendations from FEPPS students, staff, volunteers and other donors.

It’s our way of thanking those who pledge recurring support to FEPPS and of connecting all the passionate readers and learners in our community.

COME READ WITH US!