



SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Campus Within Walls

Providing incarcerated individuals with the opportunity to build an educational foundation, develop their skills, and grow their knowledge.

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Our Organization

In cooperation with the Virginia Department of Corrections, the Southside Virginia Community College's (SVCC's) Campus Within Walls program has offered postsecondary education opportunities to incarcerated students since 1985. During its most active time, SVCC held classes in 10 correctional centers across the Southside Virginia service area. Presently, Campus Within Walls is active in five institutions.

SVCC believes that all individuals should have educational opportunities. The goal of the Campus Within Walls program is to educate college-ready inmates, providing them with the opportunity to attain an associate degree and/or certificate while incarcerated. The result of this education is a significant increase in successful reentry into society and acquisition of meaningful employment upon release.

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Thank you to our communications partner:



Opportunity

Campus Within Walls educates both community and prison partners on the transformative potential and importance of higher education. Providing educational opportunities to incarcerated students reduces recidivism and increases students' investment in their communities. By having these programs crime is decreased.

Community Context

Through a partnership with Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC), Campus Within Walls provides a college education at five state prisons in Central Virginia and has serviced 6,000 students since its inception in 1985. Hundreds of SVCC instructors have helped incarcerated students learn and grow over the last 38 years. A full-time staff of professional instructors hold master's or doctoral degrees in their fields, and part-time faculty include local lawyers, bankers, accountants, nurses, computer programmers and electricians.



Nationwide, almost 7 out of every 10 incarcerated people are rearrested within three years of their release from prison.

95%

95% of people in prison will eventually be released.



A 50-state study found that recidivism rates for incarcerated people who participated in prison postsecondary education programs are on average 46 percent lower than those who did not take college classes.



Every \$1 invested in prison education programs saves taxpayers between \$4 and \$5 in three-year reincarceration costs on average.

Strategy

In partnership with the VDOC, Campus Within Walls provides diverse, goal-oriented instruction to incarcerated students, ranging from developmental studies to associate degree curricula in academic, technical/vocational, and workforce development. The program's flexible, student-focused approach utilizes a face-to-face learning model and emphasizes individual attention in the classroom. Virginia Public Media has partnered with us on datacasting for one institution. This is an advancement since the start in 1985 which was just paper and pencil. Campus Within Walls also offers career and placement opportunities upon release, strengthened by contact with SVCC alumni employed in area business and industry.

Outcomes

- Produces college graduates with general studies and/or business management degrees.
- Increases students' community involvement.
- Reduces recidivism.



Lessons Learned

Everyone deserves a second chance.

Providing opportunities to incarcerated students through higher education prepares them for future success. Which allows them to obtain jobs with a livable wage.

Students in carceral settings have some of the highest GPAs.

Campus Within Walls students commit themselves to the program. When given the opportunity, they often become lifelong learners and are inducted into Phi Theta Kappa honorary fraternity.

Education reduces recidivism.

Campus Within Walls encourages student agency, equipping students with tools to acclimate to be active participants in society post-incarceration. Providing a college education and workforce skills after completion of the program.

Next Steps

- Establishing clear communication between SVCC Campus Within Walls and the community will be a critical piece in shaping a positive dialogue around corrections education and attaining the resources needed to be successful.
- Involving more community stakeholders and organizations in the program will be key to sustainability and expansion.
- Improving communication with prospective students will create pathways for increased enrollment and sustainability. Campus Within Walls' goal is a 10% increase for admissions and retention 2024.