



Cornell Prison Education Program

Commencement Ceremony

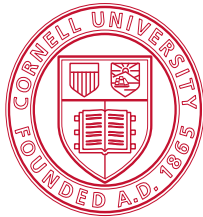
Tuesday

The fifth of June

Two thousand twelve

At one o'clock

Auburn, New York



Cornell University

Program History

The Cornell Prison Education Program (CPEP) was established to provide college courses to inmates at prisons in upstate New York and to engage Cornell faculty and students with the vital issue of the country's burgeoning incarcerated population.

*The program was created in response to an act of Congress and subsequent state legislation in the mid-1990s, which caused the collapse of taxpayer-funded college programs in most state prisons despite ample evidence that education reduces recidivism by 20% to 60%. A few faculty members, led by Professor Emeritus of English Pete Wetherbee, volunteered to teach a handful of classes at **Auburn Correctional Facility**. In 1999, **Cornell University** began offering these college classes for credit, charging students neither tuition nor fees.*

*In 2009, Professor of Government Mary Katzenstein secured a two-year seed grant from **The Sunshine Lady Foundation** and additional support from Cornell's Office of the Provost to greatly expand CPEP. The program now leads to an associate's degree, through a consortium linking Cornell University, **Cayuga Community College**, **Auburn Correctional Facility**, and **Cayuga Correctional Facility**. Classes are taught by volunteer faculty and by graduate students who receive a small stipend. The classes are supported by an exceptional group of 40 – 60 undergraduate tutors and teaching assistants each term.*

*Each semester 15 to 17 classes are now offered, with most taught at Auburn Correctional Facility and one reserved to support the professional development of New York State's Department of Corrections staff members. The liberal arts curriculum ranges from the natural sciences to the humanities and social sciences. Past offerings have included popular classes in Genetics, Biology, Constitutional Law, International Human Rights, the Anthropology of Japan, Representation in Hip-Hop & Political Thought, Shakespeare, Economics, Medical Anthropology, Theatre, Statistics, and Entrepreneurship. The program has designed both math and college preparatory classes to prepare students not yet admitted to the program. CPEP students regularly contribute their writing to *Writer's Bloc*, a literary journal edited by campus students and former CPEP volunteers who have organized a student association dedicated to promoting incarcerated people's self-expression through the arts.*

The program also runs a monthly speaker series in the evenings at Auburn that has begun to foster a sense of vibrant academic community within the prison. The series, featuring prominent Cornell faculty and administrators, has included President David Skorton, former Deputy Provost David Harris, ethnomusicologist Steven Pond, visiting scholar and activist Marcus Rediker, historian Jefferson Cowie, and Professor of Human Ecology Steve Hamilton, among others.

In the 2011-2012 academic year, CPEP worked with 120 students at Auburn and Cayuga Correctional Facilities and nearly 140 eligible men at Auburn sat for the program's entrance exam. Of the men who enjoyed courses this past year, 65 were full-time students eligible to enroll in three courses concurrently for each semester until completing all requirements for the associate's degree. A dozen corrections staff successfully completed courses in social psychology and entrepreneurship this past year.

CPEP now strives to build on this solid foundation by developing a bachelor degree program to help our graduates further realize their academic goals. As our students remind us, anything is possible.

Greeting to the Class of 2012

It is my pleasure to commend each of you, the first graduates of the Cornell Prison Education Program (CPEP), on earning an associate's degree in liberal arts and sciences from Cayuga Community College. I had the privilege of meeting many of you when I gave a guest lecture for CPEP in September 2009. I was impressed then, as so many of your Cornell professors and student teachers have been, by your intellectual engagement, enthusiasm for learning and commitment to achieving your academic goals. Congratulations on reaching this significant milestone in your educational development and for putting in place a strong foundation for future intellectual growth.

David J. Skorton, President

Cornell University

Today, we celebrate a momentous juncture in your pursuit for a better life through this formal commencement ceremony. As the word implies, this is the beginning, where a new phase of your life starts. Because earning a degree is a significant milestone in a student's life, commencement is marked by the dignified and historic pageantry you see today. We express our thanks and appreciation to The Sunshine Lady Foundation for helping to make this day possible. We congratulate you on your accomplishment and extend our sincerest wishes for a bright future and rewarding life of learning.

Daniel P. Larson, President

Cayuga Community College

I am personally uplifted and heartened by the success of all the Auburn CPEP students, especially the graduating students. Your determination to make time for your studies and to work together to assist each other in a challenging environment provides an uplifting example of the power of education to free the mind. Every professor I have ever spoken with who has had the opportunity to teach in a prison has told me the same thing: incarcerated students are more rewarding to teach than any other students, by far!

I have been the recipient of a disproportionate share of good luck in my life and many of you have been disproportionately unlucky. For me to be able to share my good fortune with you is endlessly gratifying. I thank you for accepting the gift I am able to give with such energy, such dedication and such intention. Your success is confirmation of my belief that education is the key to unlocking the potential for good in everyone.

Doris Buffett

The Sunshine Lady Foundation

Commencement Ceremony

Prelude and Processional

Announcer: James Schechter, PhD, Executive Director, Cornell Prison Education Program

Academic Procession

Presentation of Academic Assembly

Robert Turgeon, Faculty Director, Cornell Prison Education Program

Daniel Larson, President, Cayuga Community College

Kent Fuchs, Provost, Cornell University

Ronald Seeber, Senior Vice Provost, Cornell University

Anne Herron, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Cayuga Community College

Welcome Address: Daniel Larson, President, Cayuga Community College

Commencement Address: Kent Fuchs, Provost, Cornell University

Student Address: Jacob Russell, Class of 2012

Conferring of Degrees

Guest Speakers

Doris Buffett, The Sunshine Lady Foundation

Brian Fischer, Commissioner, New York State Department of Corrections

Harold Graham, Superintendent, Auburn Correctional Facility

Recessional members of the graduating class and audience are requested to remain standing in place until the president, provost and faculty have left the room.

Members of the Class of 2012

Liberal Arts and Sciences: Humanities & Social Sciences, A.A.

Saifuddin Abdus-Samad

Kenneth J. Brown

Ricardo O. Callender

Michael S. Hale

Michael A. Johnson

Richard D. Johnson

Gary A. LaRocca

Etheraige Pierce

Michael Rhynes

Danny A. Rincon

Jacob R. Russell

Christopher M. Shapard

Derek E. Slade

Eric P. Whitfield

Cyril N. Winebrenner

Academic Dress

The origins of academic dress date back to the 12th and 13th centuries, when universities were taking form. The ordinary dress of the scholar, whether student or teacher, was the dress of a cleric. Most medieval scholars had taken at least minor orders, made certain vows, and perhaps been tonsured. Long gowns provided warmth in unheated buildings, while hoods covered the tonsured head until superseded by the skull cap.

A statute of the University of Coimbra in 1321 required that all “Doctors, Licentiates, and Bachelors” wear gowns. In England, in the second half of the 14th century, certain colleges forbade “excess in apparel” and prescribed the wearing of a long gown. In the days of Henry VIII of England, Oxford and Cambridge first made it a matter of university control by prescribing a definite academic dress. The assignment of colors to signify faculties was a later development that was standardized only in the U.S. in the late 19th century.

The following is adapted from a program of the State University of New York:

“From the three items of academic attire – cap, gown, and hood – it is possible to distinguish the institution from which the wearer was graduated, the field of learning which the wearer earned his or her degree, and the level of degree the wearer holds – bachelor, master or doctor. The attire indicating the associate’s degree is the same as that of the bachelor’s.

“The black mortarboard cap is standard at most college and universities throughout the United States. Its distinguishing feature is the color of the tassel, which is black for holders of bachelor’s and master’s degrees and which may be gold for doctor’s degrees and for the governing officers of educational institutions.

“The gown, too, is normally black, although the chief officers of many universities wear colored gowns, and several institutions have authorized optional doctoral gowns that contain the institution’s color. The level of degree held is indicated by the gown’s cut. The bachelor’s gown is relatively simple and can be recognized by its long, pointed sleeves. The master’s gown is somewhat fuller, and its sleeves, which reach nearly to the wearer’s knees, are squared at the ends. The gown for the doctor’s degree is more elaborate. It is cut rather full, and velvet panels extend down the front and around the neck of the gown. The sleeves are bell shaped and are decorated with three horizontal velvet bars.

“In the United States, the hood is the most distinctive feature of academic attire. Used originally as a cowl, as a shoulder cape, and as a container in which to collect alms, the hood is now worn at the back, suspended from the shoulders. The length of the bachelor’s hood is three feet and its velvet border is two inches wide. The hood for the master’s degree is three and one-half feet long with a three inch border. The doctor’s hood is four feet long and its border is five inches wide. The hood’s inner lining bears the official color or colors of the institution conferring the degree, and the color of the border signifies the field of learning in which the degree was earned.

Colors indicating fields of learning are as follows: arts, letters, humanities—white; economics—copper; education—light blue; engineering—orange; fine arts—brown; law—purple; medicine—green; music—pink; philosophy—dark blue; science—golden yellow; theology—scarlet.”

Greetings from the Class of 2012

One great American poet had asked "What happens to a dream deferred...?" Pondering this question, I know that I could have easily been that deferred dream, but I am not. I have only begun my long trek in life. And though I have fallen, gotten lost wandering through a great maze of despair, I am still here. I have breath in my lungs. I have a new sense of direction. I have new determination. And now, I have something that no one can ever take away from me—I have education. I will not be that "raisin in the sun"—because I still dream. And if I can believe it, I can achieve it. All great possibilities have started with something as simple as a dream. Mom, this is just the beginning. To the proverbial "village" (you know who you are), thank you. Dream Big. Class of 2012,

E. Paris Whitfield

I began this journey with a desire to do something positive with my time in prison. Along the way, my exposure to knowledge, and the selfless people who took the time to come into this place and teach, brought about self-reflection. Learning has been a shining light in this sea of darkness. I began to regret the road that I took in life. I began to wish that I had done things differently. No matter what anyone else thinks, I'm glad to be doing it now, even in a place like this. To all those who have made this program possible, thank you very much.

Saifuddin Abdus-Samad

The Cornell Prison Education Program has been an intriguing and fascinating experience. I am profoundly grateful for the unique opportunity afforded to me by the CPEP faculty. I strongly urge those who are considering the program not to give it another thought and enroll. For those who are currently in the program, well, you have made a wise decision. This program has enriched me with knowledge in a place where despair is prevalent. It has broadened my horizons and propelled me to seek further education. Special thanks to Ms. Doris Buffet, Doc Wetherbee, Professor Katzenstein, Jim Schechter, Marge Wolff, and all my fabulous instructors and wonderful TAs for the memory of a lifetime. Best wishes,

Danny Rincon

To say "thank you" seems so inadequate. There are not enough words to express my gratitude to Cornell's instructors, donors, and teaching assistants. My appreciation extends to my fellow students, the correctional staff, and DOCS administration. It has taken me four years to reach the height of this hill. Looking forward, I see that beyond this one lies another and another. The only person who can climb them, who must climb them, is me. Thanks to all of you, I know I can.

Christopher Shepard

Redemption—my great Dream—is the product of honest reflection, earnest reformation and unabated labor. Dreams of productivity and contribution are my goals I hope to accomplish. Hopes and deep breaths are the fuels that propel me towards my Dreams, as I pursue my mission of Redemption. The people behind the Cornell Prison Education Program, through academic instruction and social activism, have instilled in me a template and the tools to turn my Hopes and Dreams of social Redemption into reality. I have a roadmap—a chance. Thank you. Thank you all.

Michael Johnson

I surmise the old adage "Life is what you make it" does in fact have a ring of truth to it. Even the longest journey begins with a single step, and TODAY marks this pivotal moment, which paves the road for the many miles ahead. I am forever grateful to the countless individuals who have played a key role in this noble achievement. Thank you! Congrats...to the class of 2012!

Richard D. Johnson

Your achievement moves society towards the possibility of healing itself. Today's recognition of your hard-won accomplishment holds profound significance for society (including its incarcerated citizens). Society stereotypes you as its worst, but witnessing your step towards 0% recidivism = 100% transformation (held within achieving a master's degree) gives society a renewed hope for healing itself. That hope mirrors your transformation. If you can change then all of us can change. Thank you for choosing to be a part of the solution and demonstrating the way forward to inspire society's evolution. 0% recidivism = 100% transformation.

Michael Shane Hale

In the words of Dr. King, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment or destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." The garment is education. Together we have woven a living, breathing tapestry of learning entitled Cornell University Prison Education Program, which has directly and indirectly rippled beyond all of our expectations. None of this would be possible without the almost invisible thread that holds our garment together. We, the men of CPEP, salute the unsung heroines and heroes who are and were our teachers along with the TAs, for advancing Socrates's position of creating the necessary tension in our minds so we could rise from the bondage or myths and half-truth to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal. Thank you.

Michael Rfymes

Some will ask, "Why speak today about B.A. when you're receiving an associate of arts degree?" Why not? This is the best group—the audience of our current educators, Cornell University administrators, and our supportive family, friends, and associates—to inform about our future desire to further our education. On that note, the Class of 2012 would like to thank you for your time and support and we ask you to continue that support for us in obtaining a Cornell University B.A. degree within the near future. Thank you once again.

Kenneth Brown

*Higher education for people in prison is a **social investment** that ultimately profits all of society. Education is the tool which allows people in prison to build better lives for themselves and become productive citizens who make positive contributions to society. It is about setting people up for **success** rather than failure upon their reentry into society. Providing people a way to accept responsibility for their own lives is the impetus that propels positive change in people's lives. That change might happen on an individual level; however, that change is not an individual effort. CPEP demonstrates how society's return is well-worth its investment.*

Jacob Russell

I started in Cornell-at-Auburn in the spring of 2002. The evolution of the college program was a profound experience because it helped me transcend narrow perspectives on life that had previously hindered my realizing personal goals. CPEP has been a beacon of inspiration in a prison system that hinges its revolving doors on dated programming curriculums and technologies. I deeply appreciate all the Cornell faculty, students, and supporters, who understood that broader minds create broader options. Special thanks to professors Pete "Doc" Wetherbee and Paul Sawyer for pioneering a way for incarcerated men at Auburn to better cultivate personal growth and development.

Derek Slade

Faculty and Instructors of the Cornell Prison Education Program

<i>Rodrigo Alariste-Diaz</i>	<i>Jason Garafola</i>	<i>Joseph Cannon Murtagh</i>
<i>Daniel Albert</i>	<i>Ashley Garry</i>	<i>Jimmy Noriega</i>
<i>Rachel Albert</i>	<i>Sharon Gerbode</i>	<i>Andrew Orr</i>
<i>Cristina Almodovar</i>	<i>Sabrina Germain</i>	<i>Ben Ost</i>
<i>Gwendoline Alphonso</i>	<i>Carolyn Goelzer</i>	<i>Tom Owens</i>
<i>June Andrews</i>	<i>Sandra Greene</i>	<i>Reeve Parker</i>
<i>Jason Beekman</i>	<i>Alexander Gutfraind</i>	<i>Jesse Poland</i>
<i>Patrick Blakemore</i>	<i>Elliot Hales</i>	<i>Kate Powers</i>
<i>David Blocher</i>	<i>Cyd Hamilton</i>	<i>Suzanne Price</i>
<i>Rachel Bradley</i>	<i>Kerry Harnett</i>	<i>Nathan Pumphlin</i>
<i>Ross Brann</i>	<i>Danielle Heard</i>	<i>Daniel Romero</i>
<i>Sarah Breslow</i>	<i>Elliot Heffner</i>	<i>Emily Rosenzweig</i>
<i>Noelle Kateri Bridgen</i>	<i>Vivian Hernandez</i>	<i>Pradine Saint-Fort</i>
<i>Eric Brooks</i>	<i>Katherine S. Higgins</i>	<i>Paul Sawyer</i>
<i>Peter Brummund</i>	<i>Heidi Hoescht</i>	<i>Cornelia Scheitz</i>
<i>Scott Burnett</i>	<i>Edward Hower</i>	<i>Katie Schwarz</i>
<i>Michael Campolongo</i>	<i>Alyson Hubbard</i>	<i>Michael Segal</i>
<i>Tiffany Campolongo</i>	<i>Sarah Iams</i>	<i>Karen Seifert</i>
<i>Kelly Cardin</i>	<i>Kristen Inglis</i>	<i>Michael Shaw</i>
<i>Tamara Carroll</i>	<i>Catalina Iricinschi</i>	<i>Chang Seok Shin</i>
<i>Kirsten Coe</i>	<i>Agnetha Jacob</i>	<i>Kyle Siler</i>
<i>Megan Coe</i>	<i>Nathaniel Nelson Jezzi</i>	<i>Michelle-Renee Smith</i>
<i>Sarah Collier</i>	<i>Norm Johnson</i>	<i>Darren Southworth</i>
<i>William Cordeiro</i>	<i>Gaurav Kampani</i>	<i>Deborah Streeter</i>
<i>Reggie Covington</i>	<i>Mary Katzenstein</i>	<i>Christine Suwendy</i>
<i>Johanna Crane</i>	<i>Benjamin Keep</i>	<i>Paul Swanson</i>
<i>Sarah Davidson</i>	<i>Natalie Kim</i>	<i>Catherine "Cate" Taylor</i>
<i>Antonio de Ridder-Vignone</i>	<i>Catherine Koehler</i>	<i>Keith Taylor</i>
<i>Stephanie DeGooyer</i>	<i>Dan Koltonski</i>	<i>Judith Ternes</i>
<i>David DeVries</i>	<i>Nancy Koschmann</i>	<i>Danielle Thomsen</i>
<i>Stuart Duncan</i>	<i>Michael Kovach</i>	<i>Robert Turgeon</i>
<i>Elaina Emerick</i>	<i>Kurt Lavetti</i>	<i>Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon</i>
<i>Berk Esen</i>	<i>Jennifer Lieberman</i>	<i>Alison Van Dyke</i>
<i>Adam Famoso</i>	<i>Kathryn Lindsey</i>	<i>Helena Maria Viramontes</i>
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<i>Anna Friedberg</i>	<i>Michael Mitchell</i>	<i>Jan Zeserson</i>
<i>Heather Furnas</i>	<i>Veronica Morales</i>	

Special Recognition

All CPEP Instructors

239 Cornell Student Teaching Assistants

Glen Altschuler, Cornell University

Peter Enns, Cornell University

Harold Graham, Auburn C.F.

Raymond Grinnell, Auburn C.F.

Ann Herron, Cayuga Community College

Mary Katzenstein, Cornell University

Anthony Lowe, Auburn C.F.

Donna Martin, Auburn C.F.

Lynn Odrzywolski, Auburn C.F.

Cathy Pace, Cornell University

Michael Pastore, Cayuga Community

Jeff Rosenthal, Cayuga Community College

David Roth, Auburn C.F.

Justin Thomas, Auburn C.F.

Ronald Seeber, Cornell University

Pete Wetherbee, Cornell University

Jason, Melissa, Roxanne & Willie, CPEP work study students

Cayuga Community College's Alma Mater

Sing we now our song of praise.

Blest and faithful be thy days.

Sing we now our loyalty;

And our love we pledge to thee.

Truth abiding, ever guiding,

Hearts rejoicing, praises voicing.

Dear Cayuga, ever be.

Alma Mater, hail to thee.

Cornell University's Alma Mater

*Far above Cayuga's waters,
With its waves of blue,
Stands our noble Alma Mater,
Glorious to view.*

*Lift the chorus, speed it onward,
Loud her praises tell;
Hail to thee, our Alma Mater!
Hail, all hail, Cornell!*

*Far above the busy humming
Of the bustling town,
Reared against the arch of heaven,
Looks she proudly down.*

*Lift the chorus, speed it onward,
Loud her praises tell;
Hail to thee, our Alma Mater!
Hail, all hail, Cornell!*

CPEP Board of Directors

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Peter Enns

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Mary Katzenstein

Nancy Koschmann

Fouad Makki

William Marshall

Barry Maxwell

Sally McConnell-Ginet

Emily Owens

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