

# Liberal Arts in Prison Program

College of Arts and Sciences

University of Vermont

Presentation to the Vermont Legislature  
February 26, 2019

Kathy Fox, Ph.D.  
Director, Liberal Arts in Prison Program



The University of Vermont

# Correctional Context

United States	5% of the world's population
	25% of the world's prison population
	350,000 penal population (1970)
	2,200,000 penal population (2014)
Vermont Department of Corrections annual budget	~\$155,000,000
Vermont spending per person in prison	~\$60,000
Vermont spending per K-12 student	~\$14,000
National Recidivism Rate	~60% (Corrections failure rate)
Vermont Recidivism Rate	~45% (Corrections failure rate)

Can we do better?

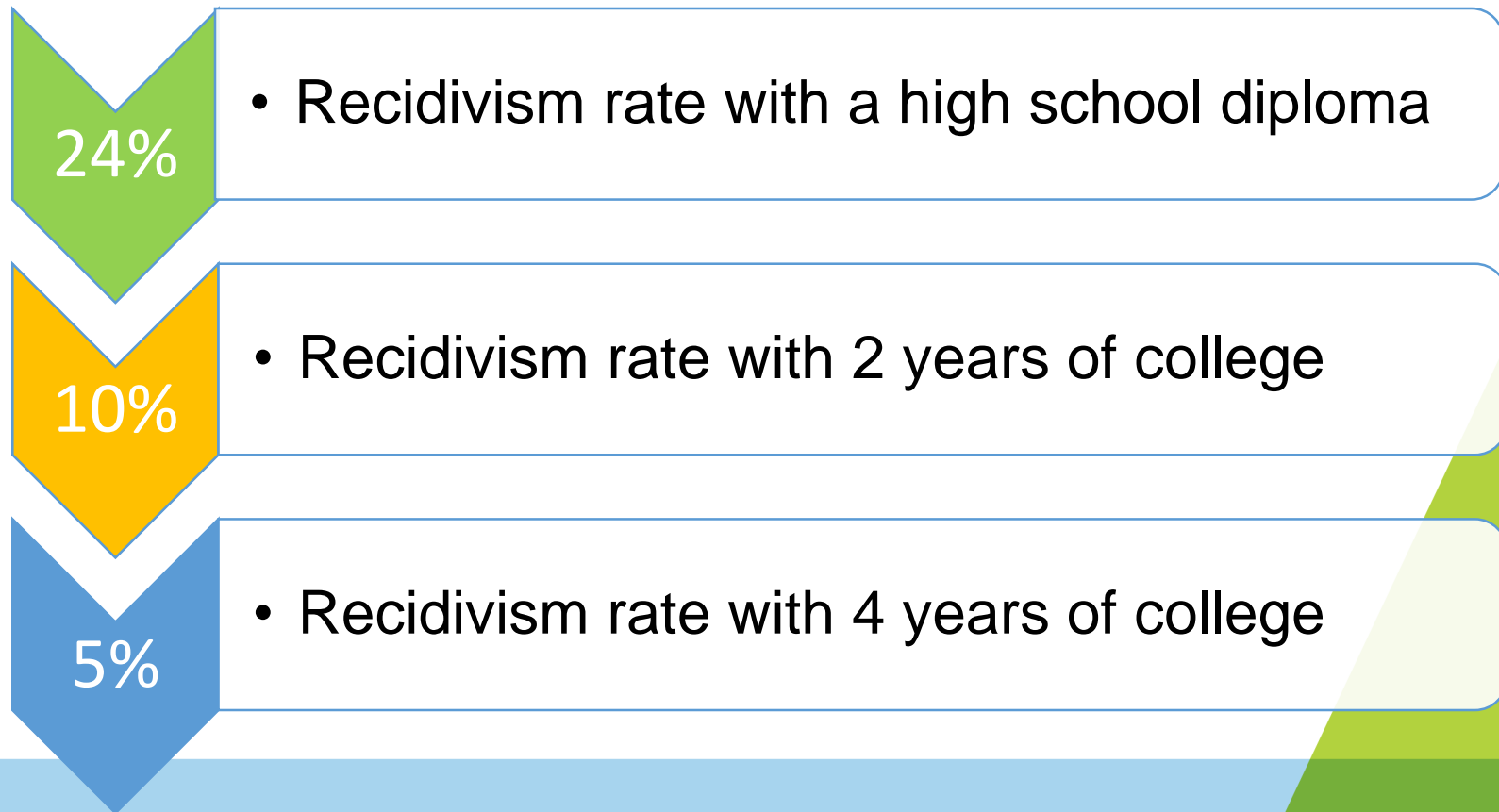
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# Impact of Higher Education on Recidivism

*National Recidivism Rate: 60%*

*Vermont Recidivism Rate: 45%*



# Cost Effectiveness of College in Prison

- ✓ \$1 spent = \$5 cost savings
- ✓ Direct cost of incarceration is greater than educational costs
- ✓ Break even point: reincarceration rate reduction between 1.9% - 2.6%
- ✓ Higher wages upon release
- ✓ Reduced correctional spending

✓ Sources: Rand Corporation meta-analysis (2015); Vera Institute *Investing in Futures*, January 2019



# What is the Liberal Arts in Prison Program?

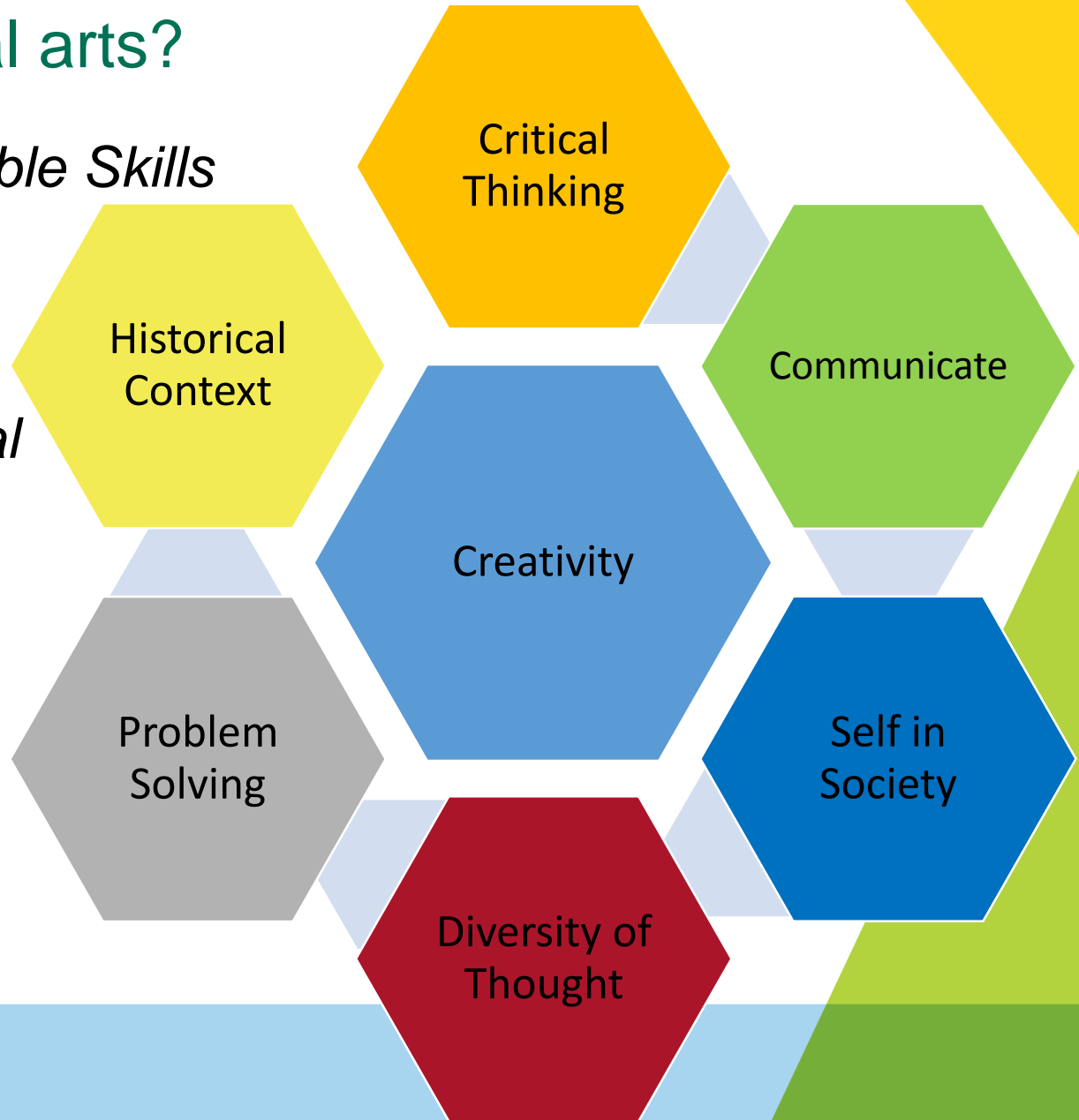
- Land-grant mission ~ service to the state
- Credit-bearing courses in Vermont correctional facilities
- Enhanced UVM student educational experience



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## Why the liberal arts?

- *Broadly Applicable Skills*
- *Timeless*
- *Transformational*



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# Liberal Arts in Prison Program - Accomplishments

- 4 credit-bearing courses:

Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility

*Classical Literature/Mythology*

*Written Expression*

*Probability with Statistics*

Northwest Regional Correctional Facility

*Introduction to Sociology*

- 29 LAPP students completed
- 5 UVM student teaching assistants/tutors

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## In the Words of LAPP Students

“This experience allowed me to engage in something that had purpose beyond these walls. I was able to engage and learn. I was able to feel like a real human being again and that meant everything.”



“This program changed my life!”

“It made me realize I *can* be a college student, even though I’ve made mistakes. It gave me hope!”



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# Challenges

- Funding
- Cohort/immersive experience
- Student Technology
- Expansion and scale
- Bridge from LAPP to college on the outside

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## Looking Forward

- Funding for a pilot program at Chittenden
- An educational campus within DOC
- Technological capacity to scale
- State-level investment

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# Questions and Discussion



- For more information, contact [Kathy.Fox@uvm.edu](mailto:Kathy.Fox@uvm.edu)