

Yale University

President's Public Service Fellowship

Proposal for Fellowship Placement Summer 2024

Organization information

<i>Name of organization</i>	Yale Prison Education Initiative at Dwight Hall
<i>Full street address</i>	67 High Street New Haven CT 06510 Mailing: PO Box 209008 New Haven CT 06520-9008
<i>Website or link to social media page</i>	www.yaleprisoneducationinitiative.org

PPSF Fellow's direct supervisor

<i>Name</i>	Zelda Roland
<i>Title</i>	Director
<i>Cell phone number</i>	3104182878
<i>E-mail address</i>	s.zelda.roland@yale.edu

What is the best way for prospective student applicants to contact you with questions about your proposal?

- Send an e-mail with questions

Or

- Send an e-mail to set up a 15-minute phone call to discuss

or

- Contact the person below with questions about this proposal:

s.zelda.roland@yale.edu

Placement dates (8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 28, 2024 through Friday, August 9, 2024)

Flexible — 8-11 weeks between 5/28 and 8/9 2024.

Are placement dates flexible? Are there any dates on which your Fellow must work?

Yes, they are flexible. No specific work dates although fellow will be asked to attend a training session at date TBD at correctional facility.

Proposed work schedule (*work week should equal (and not exceed) 37.5 hours per week*)

Full-time no more than 37.5 hours/week; flexible hours depending on fellow's scheduling preferences, summer project and teams. A fellow who selects projects that require facilitating in-person programming might expect to sometimes have early morning or evening hours in a correctional facility (classes/programming often runs from 8:30-11am, 1-2:30pm, 12-4pm, or 5:30-9pm on weekdays,) and fellow would adjust daily hours accordingly so as not to exceed 37.5 weekly hours. Approximately 2 hours/week minimum spent in YPEI staff/team meetings, and one hour per week in one-on-one mentorship meetings with supervisor.

If a hybrid schedule is offered at your site, please describe:

Some staff meetings take place on Zoom but the work is largely in person and on-site.

Organization description (*mission statement, population served. 1,000 characters or less*)

The Yale Prison Education Initiative at Dwight Hall offers access to credited college courses, degrees, and other academic and extracurricular programming to incarcerated students in Connecticut. College in prison stands at the forefront of national conversations around access to higher education and criminal justice reform, and college in prison programs have proven their transformative and rehabilitative value both to underserved students of great potential in prison — who excel given the chance, who display extremely low rates of recidivism, and who go on to become leaders in their communities — and to instructors, for whom teaching in prison is an eye-opening reminder of the power of higher education. In 2021, YPEI partnered with the University of New Haven to offer degrees to incarcerated students, and our program now combines teaching and

resources from both Yale and UNH. In 2022, our program also expanded to reach students in a women's federal prison.

Write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting.

The fellow will select from projects assisting and coordinating on-the-ground YPEI programming, including assisting and liaising with course instructors, guest lecturers, and volunteers; providing administrative and operations assistance including materials management; assisting with fundraising, communications, and grantwriting; and working with community partners and formerly incarcerated students on student re-entry in New Haven and local initiatives based around criminal justice reform.

Write a more complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow.

This summer, YPEI at Dwight Hall enters its seventh year of offering Yale courses and programming to incarcerated students in Connecticut. To date, YPEI has fulfilled its mission by serving incarcerated students inside Connecticut correctional facilities with both credited and uncredited academic programming that culminate in a college degree, and by working with formerly incarcerated students in the New Haven area. In Summer 2024 we will admit new cohorts at the two prisons where we work through our partnership with University of New Haven, offer a full slate of college programming at each site, and continue to support formerly incarcerated alumni and YPEI's College-to-Career Fellows on campus.

Our President's Public Service Fellow will have a range of core summer projects to choose from, depending on their interest matched with our needs, as well as a slate of regular duties and responsibilities to form a base for that work, which will also orient the fellow to our specific program as well as help them acquire a solid understanding of broader national field of higher education in prison.

Regular duties and potential summer projects include:

- Coordinating with course instructors and incarcerated students on materials, assignments and assignment submission to support core programming. This involves determining materials and supplies needed by both students and faculty, procuring them, and facilitating their delivery to incarcerated students.
- Keeping YPEI's public-facing and staff calendars updated.

- Drafting regular newsletters for YPEI subscribers and for incarcerated students.
- Maintaining and updating YPEI website including writing and publishing blog posts, sharing relevant news articles, and drafting press releases.
- Gathering testimony and feedback from incarcerated students and from campus faculty/volunteers in coordination with research partners.
- Managing and updating YPEI's "Job Board" that serves formerly incarcerated job-seekers and people interested in jobs in the field of higher education in prison.
- Maintaining YPEI's Transcription Network, currently comprised of over fifty Yale undergraduates and graduate students who volunteer their time to type YPEI students' handwritten essays into Microsoft Word documents. This involves loading student essays onto our internal server to make them available to volunteer transcribers, assigning them to transcribers, and then coordinating to ensure proper digital delivery to instructor/students as needed.
- Coordinating with the YPEI Research Request Network, which supports incarcerated students in accessing library resources and miscellaneous content requests for course-related research projects or independent studies (in coordination with the Yale University and University of New Haven Libraries).
- Working one-on-one with students to tutor or assist in individual courses, which may require procuring extra tutors for specific classes, locating subject-specific tutorials or guides depending on student needs that arise and in concert with on-campus academic resources.
- Helping organize supplementary workshops and resources/partnerships from Yale and the New Haven community. This task relies on the creativity and vision of the individual fellow, and their ability to connect and communicate with potential guest speakers and to coordinate and curate viable workshops or series for incarcerated students.
- Possibility of organizing a public-facing event (for either Summer or Fall 2024) to highlight YPEI program activity and student and faculty accomplishments.
- With YPEI staff, attending New Haven meetings, events, and roundtables related to prisons and re-entry, such as the New Haven Re-entry Round Table and the Women's Resettlement Working Group.
- Assisting in coordination with New Haven-based and statewide re-entry and other support organizations in building strategies to support the success of our increasing number of returning students. This may also involve researching reentry strategies and partnerships at other prison

education programs, and coordinating with local colleges to help students continue their educational attainment.

- Supporting YPEI's College-to-Career Fellows which places formerly incarcerated alumni of regional higher education in prison programs in fellowship sites at Yale and UNH and helps them understand and expand the resources of both campuses.
- Possibility of providing grantwriting and development assistance.
- Coordinate workshops on financial literacy and student financial aid for incarcerated students.
- Develop new programming to support incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women.
- Develop new programming to support individuals incarcerated in federal prisons.

List any specific skills/experience required for the project

The ideal candidate should be reliable and consistent, have excellent writing skills, be a good communicator (comfortable using the telephone), be comfortable with light technological assistance, be hard-working, problem-solving, and mature. The ideal candidate will be passionate about access to higher education in prison and criminal justice reform, and be comfortable working with a wide variety of stakeholders (although no past experience working in criminal justice is necessary).

Additional requirements

***Must have a valid driver's license (we can provide vehicles which are accessible from downtown New Haven, gas is covered) and MUST be able to comfortably and regularly drive ~60 minutes to a prison as well as be able to pass security clearance to enter the prison.

Briefly describe any work that Yale PPSF Fellows and/or Yale students have done with your organization.

We have hosted Yale PPSF Fellows since Summer 2020 and they were overwhelmingly positive experiences that have resulted in mutually supportive ongoing relationships between our program and PPSF Fellows, and that also resulted in some incredible project outcomes that have continued to benefit incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people in our state.

The 2020 Fellow took on an urgent advocacy project that focused on voting rights for currently incarcerated citizens who were eligible voters in the 2020

elections but who were not given a real mechanism for exercising this right. The Fellow also worked on grantwriting projects (and received grantwriting training, a skill that the Fellow has since reported back has been a helpful professional skill for their current work positions), and research support for incarcerated students engaged with YPEI programming. The Fellow conducted background research in preparation for our degree partnership, and conceived of and created our online YPEI Jobs Board which has now become a permanent and popular feature of YPEI's work, serving justice- impacted job-seekers in our region, as well as job-seekers who are interested in careers in higher education in prison.

The 2021 PPSF Fellow managed remote learning for classes and study halls through Microsoft Teams as we reinstated virtual programming after our pandemic hiatus, and developed best practices and protocols for fruitful learning experiences for our students. The Fellow also developed and supervised the Research Request Network and Library partnerships through the summer, fulfilling student research requests related to their coursework and managing a group of volunteers who were serving as research proxies for incarcerated students, and coordinating regular weekly meetings with Library partners to grow the collaboration sustainably and build our capacity to serve.

The 2022 PPSF took the lead on coordinating the Research Request Network and facilitating the partnership between the Yale and UNH Libraries to support incarcerated students. They also worked with our formerly incarcerated College-to-Career Fellows and ensured their access to resources and connections on campus; and provided logistical support to courses during Summer Session programming.

In 2023, we worked with a PPSF Fellow who served as a TF for our Intro to College Writing seminar, supported our new cohort of admitted students with their coursework, supported our various volunteer networks, and facilitated a Creative Writing Workshop which has now evolved into a monthly "Works-in-Progress" Forum inside the prison, which the Fellow still facilitates having received funding for the new academic year to continue her engagement with YPEI.

In 2022 and 2023, we also had the opportunity to work with UNH President's Public Service Fellows. About the experience, the 2022 Fellow wrote: "At YPEI, I worked with a group of passionate students and faculty to provide a quality education in a unique environment....They were very knowledgeable and helped to ignite my passion for education....Beyond my work, the fellowship enabled me to make the Greater New Haven area feel more like home. Through the activities and time spent visiting new places, I was able to see and learn things

about New Haven that I would not have if I had not had this opportunity. The fellowship has introduced me to a community and an organization that I will continue to work with as I move forward in life." You can read more about their experience here: <https://www.newhaven.edu/news/blog/2022/presidents-public-service-fellowship.php> The 2023 UNH PPSF likewise reported that she was surprised by how much she learned and developed important skills, including resilience. You can read more about her experience at the following link: <https://www.newhaven.edu/news/blog/2023/faith-arcuri.php>

Other past work with Yale students:

In Summer 2017, we worked with three undergraduate fellows — funded by the Schell Center at Yale Law School, Yale Education Studies Program, and Dwight Hall Summer Fellowship — who were crucial to developing community relationships for YPEI. One fellow produced a researched report on higher education access in prison as seen through the international human rights law. All three collaborated on producing a volunteer training manual that is still used by volunteers in our program and at the Yale Undergraduate Prison Project.

In Summer 2018, we worked with two undergraduate fellows — one funded by the Liman Center at YLS and a second funded by Dwight Hall Summer Fellowship — who were crucial in executing our first summer of offering classes. Fellows fulfilled all responsibilities listed above, while helping to form the operational rhythm of our program.

In Summer 2019, we worked with four undergraduate fellows — funded by Dwight Hall Summer Fellowship and the Yale DSA — who helped us expand our programming and who delved into projects varying from reentry to program organization and streamlining, to orienting and recruiting new volunteers and guests, to providing direct tutoring assistance to YPEI students.

In Summer 2020, we worked with undergraduate fellows funded by the Dwight Hall Summer Fellowship, YANA-Dwight Hall Summer Fellowship, and the DSA, who worked largely on facilitating correspondence-based (snail mail) programming for incarcerated students amid the challenges of the pandemic and planning upcoming programming and partnerships. You can read more about YPEI's creative writing workshop here.

In Summer 2021, we worked with undergraduate fellows through the Education Studies Summer Fellowship, Public Humanities Fellowship, and the Berkeley and Richter summer fellowships, who provided direct support for incarcerated

students enrolled in Summer Session courses and also innovated their own programming to bolster the experience of incarcerated students.

In Summer 2022 and 2023, we worked with both undergraduate and graduate fellows supported by the Summer Experience Award, the Dwight Hall Summer Fellowship, and other departmental fellowships.

One Summer 2023 Fellow recently wrote: “I have never, ever worked on a better team before! Everyone is so generous with their time and knowledge, and willing to help and teach. The responsibility of being a member of the program is constantly rewarding, and I am so grateful for the trust that I am given to be involved in an opportunity in which confidence in the team is of the utmost importance. I loved the challenge of knowing that I could really make the summer what I wanted it to be within the limitations of a college in prison program – which are not that limiting once we're in the classroom. Being given this independence and discretion allowed me to build on my tutoring skills by adding lesson planning and writing into the picture, which was extremely rewarding. It was challenging to process my thoughts and feeling on incarceration. I mostly dealt with this internally, but when I had conversations with other volunteers they were always so helpful and insightful.”

In addition to summer fellows listed above, we have engaged hundreds of undergraduates in regular volunteering, including through the transcription network and research request network (described above). Graduate students have participated in YPEI as Graduate Professional Development Fellows and Graduate Professional Experience Fellows, and Undergraduates have also served as fellows under the auspices of the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, providing writing tutoring and Academic Strategies support for the program.

Undergraduate and graduate students alike have regularly noted that working with YPEI was a highlight of their entire Yale experience that provided them with mentorship opportunities, a supportive team environment, opportunities for personal and professional growth, and a way to leverage their Yale affiliation to serve our local community, to understand the impact of mass incarceration on citizens of New Haven, and to fight for the right of higher education access for incarcerated students in our state.