

# Yale University

## President's Public Service Fellowship

### Proposal for Fellowship Placement Summer 2023

---

#### Organization information

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

#### PPSF Fellow's direct supervisor

*The supervisor must be available to supervise Fellow on a daily basis.*

<i>Name</i>	Zelda Roland
<i>Title</i>	Founding Director, Yale Prison Education Initiative at Dwight Hall
<i>Cell phone number</i>	3104182878
<i>E-mail address</i>	<a href="mailto:s.zelda.roland@yale.edu">s.zelda.roland@yale.edu</a>

**Placement dates (8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 30, 2023 through Friday, August 11, 2023)**

May 30, 2023-August 11, 2023

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

Yes, placement dates are flexible.

**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 summer project and teams. A fellow who selects projects that require facilitating in-person programming should 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 will adjust daily hours accordingly. Approximately 2 hours/week minimum spent in YPEI staff/team meetings, and one hour per week in one-on-one mentorship meetings with supervisor.

**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. This year, 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 (500 characters or less).**

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 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 sixth year of offering Yale courses and programming to incarcerated students in Connecticut. To date, YPEI has fulfilled its mission by serving incarcerated students inside state 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 2023 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 from Yale and the New Haven community, either remotely using videoconferencing. 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 2023) to highlight YPEI program activity and student and faculty accomplishments.
- With the Director, 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.

### **List 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 (e.g. a car or weekend working hours). If a car is required, include information regarding parking arrangements and mileage reimbursement.**

Must have a valid driver's license (we can provide vehicles which are accessible from downtown New Haven) and must be able to comfortably drive ~50-60 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 have done with your organization in the past and present. If you have not worked with Yale Fellows, describe any work that 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 participated in state-wide convenings and working groups on this issue, learning from stakeholders and those directly impacted, conducting research, and driving planning conversations about ballot access. Eventually, the Fellow partnered in this work with legal clinics to ensure voter registration and absentee ballot delivery for incarcerated eligible voters in Connecticut, who are also continuing to work on expanding voting rights for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people in our state. 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. They provided course support for all of our

instructors both by helping to acquire materials for all courses, as well as by providing supplementary learning materials for courses when requested by students, and set up different operations of our new Microsoft Teams system to track materials requests and purchases and when they were sent to students inside. 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.

In 2022, we also had the opportunity to work with a UNH President's Public Service Fellow. About the experience, they 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>

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 addition to summer fellows listed above, we have engaged over 100 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.

In 2019-2020, undergraduate student editors of the Yale Daily News worked with our students on writing op-eds published in the YDN, and another collective of undergraduates from Yale's Ethnicity Race & Migration Program conceived of, organized, and facilitated a semester-long seminar series bringing together ER&M faculty to work with our students in prison.

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.