

INSPIRE

INITIATIVE TO BRING SCIENCE PROGRAMS TO THE INCARCERATED

About Us

The Center for Science and Mathematics Education (CSME) at the University of Utah launched INSPIRE (Initiative to Bring Science Programs to the Incarcerated) in March, 2013 to bring nature and science to individuals incarcerated in Utah. INSPIRE involves scientists, offenders, corrections staff, students and community partners as we raise awareness for the scientific enterprise, save tax dollars and natural resources, and help offenders rebuild their lives through education. Programs include science lecture series, science job training, conservation projects, and sustainability initiatives.

Correctional Facilities

INSPIRE has been working with Utah Department of Corrections (Draper Prison), Salt Lake County Metro Jail, and other community partners. In the long-term, INSPIRE may expand to Gunnison Prison and other correctional facilities in Utah.



Current Team Members

INSPIRE has a University of Utah Program Team to implement the program and a Research Advisory Team to provide direction for program planning and evaluation efforts.

INSPIRE Program Team:

- Nalini Nadkarni, CSME Director, University of Utah
- Emily Gaines-Crockett, Program Manager, University of Utah
- Stacy Eddings, Evaluator, University of Utah
- Antonia Fitzgerald, Program Assistant, University of Utah

INSPIRE Advisory Team:

- Craig Burr, Division Director of Programming, Utah Department of Corrections
- Julie Christenson, Research Consultant, Utah Department of Corrections
- Maggie Cummings, Clinical Assistant Professor, College of Education, University of Utah
- Leonard Dunn, Captain, Utah Department of Corrections
- Audrey Hickert, Research Assistant Professor, Utah Criminal Justice Center
- Alan James, Director, Correctional Industries Division, Utah Department of Corrections
- Taylor Snarr, Research Consultant, Utah Department of Corrections
- Steve Turley, Division Director of Institutional Operations, Utah Department of Corrections

Accomplishments & Current Projects

Evaluation

With the Research Advisory Team and an evaluator, INSPIRE has developed an evaluation strategy and assessment tools. Baseline evaluation is scheduled for late 2013. Evaluation components include:

- Baseline surveys for offenders and staff before INSPIRE launches
- Annual surveys for offenders and staff to monitor long-term trends
- Lecture pre/post tests for lecture attendees
- Pre/post assessments for scientist lecturers

Lectures

Over 20 faculty members from the University of Utah have been recruited to give lectures starting in Fall 2013. INSPIRE is planning a monthly science lecture series for participating correctional facilities.

Partnership Recruitment

INSPIRE has been discussing program possibilities with a variety of potential partners. After the start of the lecture series in fall 2013, conservation and sustainability partners will be identified.

INSPIRE is seeking partners from Corrections, Conservation, Sustainability, and Education organizations and agencies.

Are you interested in partnering with INSPIRE?

Please contact INSPIRE at (801) 585-3878 or gaines@math.utah.edu



Opportunities

- Utah Department of Corrections and the Salt Lake County Jail place a strong emphasis on education for offenders. This area of focus provides an opportunity to partner with INSPIRE through the science lecture series.
- Conservation projects are currently being considered in conjunction with state agencies for the Draper Prison and Salt Lake County Jail. Both facilities have greenhouses and open space that could be put to use for these type of projects, and the Salt Lake County Jail currently has a successful Horticulture program run in partnership with Utah State University Extension.
- Salt Lake County supports many sustainability efforts, and could provide support to INSPIRE led sustainable operations at the Salt Lake County Jail and Draper Prison.
- The Salt Lake County Jail and Draper Prison are in close proximity to the Jordan River and are well situated to involve inmates with restoration work surrounding the river corridor.
- Since launching INSPIRE, the program has been approached by a variety of scientists, researchers, and community groups interested in partnering on various projects.



Challenges

- The Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) is in a state of transition. UDC is under new leadership, and the Draper Prison may soon move to a new location. This high level of uncertainty has complicated possible UDC partnerships.
- INSPIRE must identify a sustainable funding and staffing source to make program implementation with Utah Department of Corrections and the Salt Lake County Metro Jail possible. It has modest funding from the National Science Foundation (DEB-1141833, DRL-1204448).