



2. California’s Explosive Growth: 2014 - 2017

In 2014, California offered little to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated college students. Since then, California has transformed its public higher education landscape. Gaps still exist, of course, and much work remains. But the transformation and collaboration between the higher education and criminal justice systems over the past three years is nothing short of remarkable.

Three years ago, the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) provided career technical (CTE) classes and education through GED or high school diploma, but individuals seeking more lacked nearly any high-quality options. Only one of our 35 prisons offered a face-to-face college program, the Prison University Project at San Quentin prison. Unless students were fortunate enough to be transferred to San Quentin and admitted into the college program there, incarcerated students eager to further their education were almost entirely limited to low-quality, non-interactive correspondence courses with minimal educational support and guidance. The only other high-quality program, Chaffey College’s degree program at the California Institute for Women, was hampered by a state law that restricted the face-to-face component to tutoring and student support. Combined, both programs served only a few hundred students out of the more than 125,000 men and women who were incarcerated on any given day.

Formerly incarcerated students on the state’s public college and university campuses were similarly invisible three years ago. Just one of the 23 CSU campuses hosted a program for formerly incarcerated students, called Project Rebound. The UC program, Underground Scholars, was just beginning at the Berkeley campus. And, although formerly incarcerated students were enrolled on community college campuses, only a handful of the colleges had a student group or support program for formerly incarcerated students.



The Presidents’ Perspective

“There is no better place to be when you get out than the California community colleges.”

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A College Expands and Finds Success

“What we learned really quickly was, when you empower somebody and you provide them an opportunity to go to school, they will.”

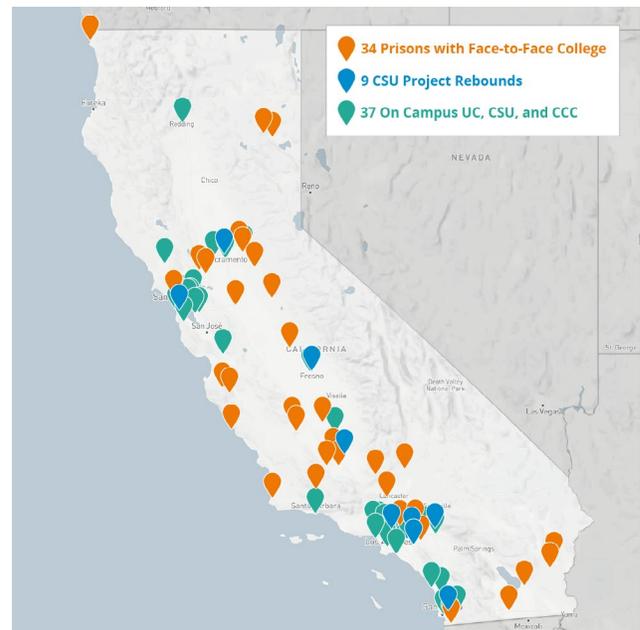
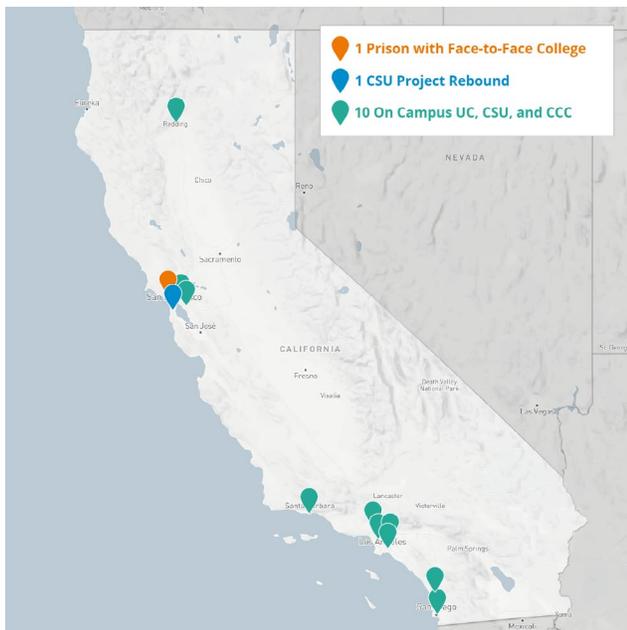
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More than any other state in the nation, California's public higher education system is now reaching men and women who have been adversely impacted by mass incarceration, whether they are in prison, in jail or on our college campuses. Higher education opportunities have exploded, largely spurred by a 2014 law (SB 1391) that allowed community colleges to teach face-to-face in prison, and allowed them to be compensated for

incarcerated students just as if those students were on campus. The resulting momentum saw not only growth in the number of colleges teaching inside correctional facilities, but an enormous increase in the number of on-campus student groups and student support programs for formerly incarcerated students. A statewide directory of the numerous in-custody and on-campus programs can be found at correctionstocollegeca.org.

2014 - 2017



California community colleges now teach face-to-face transferrable, degree-building college courses in 34 of the state's 35 prisons. Almost 4,500 students are enrolled in these face-to-face college classes every semester – more than in any other state, and almost as many as are enrolled in Yale's entire undergraduate class. Thousands more are still in correspondence courses, waiting for face-to-face.

The on-campus support program for formerly incarcerated CSU students, Project Rebound, has expanded from one to nine CSU campuses and more campuses seek to replicate the program. Enrollment continues to grow every semester.

In addition to the Rebound expansion, the Underground Scholars Initiative has expanded to UCLA with a sister program at UC Davis. A third of the state's 114 community colleges now have a student group or an on-campus program similar to Project Rebound or Underground Scholars, and more community colleges are in the process of building support systems for formerly incarcerated students.