Prison Professors Concept Paper

- A Michael Santos project, Version 1: April 28, 2025
    - IRS approval letter (EIN)
    - Attorney Letter
    - Articles of Incorporation
    - By Laws / Mission Statement
    - Corporate Statement of Information
    - Conflict of Interest Policy
    - Donor Info Letter
    - Annual Report or IRS Form 990

Guiding People Toward Success

- Get free, accessible lessons to empower your pursuit of excellence. Work toward the highest level of liberty, at the soonest possible time. This website is non-revenue generating, providing free insight to help more people work toward earning freedom through merit.

Problem

- **America's Mass Incarceration Crisis**
    - The United States leads the world in incarceration, imprisoning more people than any other nation. With nearly 2 million people in correctional settings, the impact of mass incarceration ripples through families, communities, and society as a whole. Every person in prison, jail, or in any confinement setting has brothers, sisters, parents, and loved ones who endure the process with them. This punitive approach disproportionately affects disadvantaged communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty, limited opportunity, and social marginalization.

- **Human and Economic Costs**
    - Incarceration carries profound human and economic costs. Families lose income earners, children grow up without essential parental guidance, and communities suffer from weakened social structures. Economically, the financial burden of maintaining the vast correctional system puts strain on taxpayers, diverting essential resources away from education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

- **Gaps in Prison Education and Reentry Support**
    - Despite clear evidence that education significantly reduces recidivism, comprehensive educational programs are severely limited or inaccessible within many prison systems. Without effective guidance and meaningful opportunities,

individuals leaving incarceration face immense challenges reintegrating into society, leading to high rates of recidivism.

- **Need for Empowerment and Preparation**
    - To address this crisis, people entering or impacted by the criminal justice system require structured support and education tailored to their unique challenges. Empowering individuals through education, self-directed preparation, and proactive skill-building creates pathways for successful reintegration and productive citizenship, ultimately fostering safer, more resilient communities.

Overview

1. Mission & Vision

- Prison Professors is committed to providing free, accessible, and empowering educational resources. We design all lessons specifically for individuals navigating the criminal justice system.

- Our mission is to equip justice-impacted individuals at every stage—from pre-charge to post-release—with:
    - The knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to pursue excellence,
    - Plans to work toward the highest levels of liberty at the soonest possible time,
    - Emerge with income prospects that will allow them to live as law-abiding, contributing citizens.

- Our vision is to provide self-directed learning resources to empower anyone going through any phase of the criminal justice system. All lessons emphasize education, personal growth, resilience, and strategic preparation. By empowering individuals through structured self-directed learning, we aim to reduce recidivism by preparing more people for the job market. This strategy will foster successful reintegration into society, and contributes to systemic reform that supports fairness, dignity, and opportunity for all justice-impacted individuals.

2. Educational Content and Approach

- Prison Professors provides structured, self-directed educational materials carefully designed to support individuals throughout every stage of the criminal justice journey—from pre-charge investigations to life after release.

- We intentionally structure lessons to be “stand-alone,” crafted to address specific needs at critical moments, providing actionable insights, tools, and resources. We publish

online, encouraging family members to print and send our lessons to people serving sentences. We also publish softcover books available through our Amazon store, with all revenues going to support the mission of Prison Professors.

- We place significant emphasis on personal development, preparing people for income-generating opportunities. They learn proven techniques in self-advocacy that advance prospects for the earliest transition to home confinement and liberty. We want our students to develop resilience, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial thinking.

- Recognizing the vital importance of clear communication and robust critical thinking skills, our lessons consistently focus on empowering individuals to measure their progress and make informed decisions. We also show them how to document their progress, providing real-time examples.

- Our educational content goes beyond traditional institutional programs. We address essential practical topics that will prepare people to add value to the job market. These include strategies for building a compelling personal narrative, mastering negotiation and emotional intelligence, understanding fundamentals of the digital economy, including blockchain and artificial intelligence, and leveraging digital platforms to establish credibility and open income opportunities post-incarceration.

3. Completely Free and Accessible

- Prison Professors provides all educational resources and self-directed learning materials free of charge.

- We are a non-revenue generating website.

- Our commitment to free education for all ensures that no one has financial barriers or hidden costs to participate and prepare for a better outcome. The strategy enables equal access to self-directed learning, regardless of economic background or personal circumstances.

- We are committed to removing obstacles to entry, making our content readily available to anyone who wants to learn. By eliminating financial and accessibility barriers, we empower every individual to pursue personal growth and prepare effectively for successful reintegration into society.

- For those who cannot access our lessons online, we publish softcover books on Amazon, which are available for purchase. Amazon fulfills those orders, and 100 percent of the revenues we receive supports the mission of our nonprofit.

4. Fully Online & Self-Directed Learning

- Prison Professors delivers content designed exclusively for asynchronous, self-directed learning. Participants have the flexibility to engage at their own pace, accommodating diverse schedules, institutional restrictions, and learning styles.

- Our fully online platform ensures scalability, allowing us to reach and positively impact a broad audience across different regions and institutions simultaneously.

- Materials are thoughtfully produced in various digital formats, including instructional videos, interactive workbooks, engaging daily journals, and practical lessons. This versatile approach supports continuous, meaningful progress and ensures comprehensive accessibility.

5. Structured Curriculum and Certification

- Prison Professors offers structured, self-directed daily lessons specifically designed to meet participants exactly where they are in their journey through the criminal justice system.

- Each lesson stands alone, providing targeted guidance to help individuals make informed decisions, effectively collaborate with legal counsel, and understand the opportunity costs associated with every choice.

- Our curriculum prioritizes developing marketable skills, such as critical-thinking, and communications. They empower a person to self-advocate and prepare him for success upon release. We want students to build competencies that the marketplace will recognize, positioning them to earn a sustainable living after incarceration.

- We want the marketplace to certify them, and we encourage participants to memorialize their journey toward personal excellence through the creation of profiles on our platform, Prison Professors Talent. These profiles transparently showcase individual progress, recalibration, and the tangible value participants offer potential employers and communities. By inviting public assessment of completed work, we foster credibility, accountability, and genuine opportunities for participants to demonstrate readiness and competence.

6. Authentic Content & Community Integration

- Prison Professors is deeply committed to authenticity, offering educational content developed by individuals who have personally and successfully navigated the challenges of the criminal justice system.

- Our materials reflect genuine experiences and practical wisdom, resonating deeply with participants and inspiring them toward actionable growth. We make three promises throughout the site:
    - We will always be truthful.
    - We will never ask anyone to do anything we didn't do.
    - We will never ask anyone to pay for educational content that Prison Professors makes freely available through the website.
    - We are a non-revenue generating site.

- We actively promote community integration by fostering a supportive environment through Prison Professors Talent and related initiatives. We encourage participants to engage in mentoring, peer support, and active collaboration, creating networks that strengthen resilience, accountability, and empowerment. This vibrant community exchange ensures sustained motivation and collective success throughout the journey toward excellence and reintegration.

7. Advocacy and Awareness

- Prison Professors actively champions advocacy and public awareness, striving to educate policymakers and the public on the significant benefits of reforming incarceration practices. Through evidence-based insights and comprehensive educational outreach, we emphasize the importance of transitioning from punitive measures to rehabilitative and empowering strategies.

- We prominently feature real-life success stories, clearly demonstrating how self-directed learning and personal development positively impact individuals, families, and communities. Our ongoing documentation of data-driven outcomes highlights measurable reductions in recidivism, successful reintegration, and enhanced community safety. (See the encouraging findings from our evaluation report.)

- In addition, in the second half of 2025, we will invest more in developing a robust social media awareness campaign. We must bring more awareness and broaden public engagement, highlighting opportunities for collaboration to improve outcomes for all individuals navigating the criminal justice system.

- The social-media campaign will underscore our core belief that society will benefit through policy changes that encourage people to work toward earning freedom through merit. We want to see reforms that incentivize a pursuit of excellence, as measured by more people emerging from prison to become financially successful, leading their lives with meaning, relevance, and dignity intact.

8. Gamification and Engagement

- Prison Professors develops innovative methods to encourage participation, sustain engagement, and celebrate progress. Through our platform, Prison Professors Talent, participants earn points by consistently memorializing their journey toward preparation and success.

- Our long-term goal is to enhance this system, enabling participants to translate their earned points directly into tangible opportunities for employment upon release, or further support, bridging their diligent efforts during incarceration to real-world rewards.

- Additionally, we've introduced interactive features to enhance motivation and community engagement.
    - Participants can actively collect testimonials on their personal profiles, fostering genuine community support and credibility.
    - The service allows each person to generate personal newsletters, regularly updating supporters on their progress and preparation efforts.
    - These carefully structured motivational techniques balance gamified incentives with the authenticity and seriousness inherent in the journey, ultimately nurturing resilience, accountability, and continuous self-directed learning.

9. Impact Measurement & Transparency

- At Prison Professors, we prioritize the consistent measurement and evaluation of our program's effectiveness through rigorous analysis of participant feedback and performance data.

- In response to challenges with data collection from prison administrators, we use our Prison Professors Talent system to gather data to show how many people are working through our programs. We publish that data on our “impact” pages.

- The Impact page shows participant experiences, engagement levels, and tangible outcomes. We publish every day, and show the progress we’re making.

- We collaborate with other nonprofits, such as the Edovo Foundation, to share our content with more than 1 million incarcerated learners. Ongoing research with social scientists from UCLA allows us to collect data and measure progress from those in our community.

- Transparency remains a cornerstone of our organizational ethos. We commit to openly sharing detailed impact reports and program outcomes with all stakeholders. Anyone with access to the internet can assess our work—including prison administrators, participants, their families, community partners, and the broader public. Our dedication to transparent reporting ensures accountability, strengthens community trust, and clearly demonstrates our ongoing commitment to measurable, positive change within the

criminal justice system.

10. Partnership and Collaboration Opportunities

- Prison Professors actively seeks meaningful partnerships and collaborative opportunities to amplify our impact and improve outcomes for justice-impacted individuals. We warmly welcome collaborations with diverse stakeholders, including nonprofits committed to criminal justice reform, academic institutions interested in research and practical interventions, legal professionals providing essential expertise, employers who may open job opportunities, businesses that may want to support our work with financial donations, advocates and influencers who may want to join our commitment to systemic improvement.

- Potential avenues for collaboration include joint development of educational resources, research initiatives to measure impact and refine strategies, co-hosted workshops and seminars, and integrated advocacy campaigns. By working collectively, we can combine strengths, share resources, and foster innovative solutions, creating pathways toward a more equitable, effective, and humane criminal justice system.

FAQ

- **What is the primary model of Prison Professors?**
  Prison Professors delivers structured, self-directed educational resources designed to empower justice-impacted individuals at every stage of the criminal justice system. Our approach emphasizes self-directed learning with practical skill-building, personal development, and resilience, preparing individuals for successful reintegration into society.

- **What is the mission of Prison Professors?**
  Our mission is to equip people impacted by the criminal justice system with free, accessible, and empowering educational resources that support their pursuit of excellence and the highest possible level of liberty at the soonest possible time.

- **How is Prison Professors funded?**
  Prison Professors is a nonprofit initiative. We're generously funded through contributions from our founders, supporters, and community partners. Our commitment is to keep all essential resources completely free to participants, ensuring maximum accessibility.

- **How does Prison Professors ensure sustainability?**
  We are a non-revenue-generating website, and we maintain sustainability through ongoing support from donors, collaboration with strategic partners, and leveraging technology to scale our impact efficiently. Our transparent reporting and demonstrated

outcomes help secure continued trust and support from stakeholders.

- **What is the long-term vision of Prison Professors?**
  Our long-term vision is to transform societal perceptions of incarceration, advocate for meaningful systemic reform, and continually expand our impact by empowering justice-impacted individuals to reintegrate successfully, thereby strengthening communities and creating a safer, more equitable society.

Why Do This?

1. After serving 26 years in federal prison, and building businesses that helped me become financially successful, I (Michael Santos) reflected on the impact I wanted to make in the next chapter of my life. I recognized that my unique journey equipped me with insights and lessons that could significantly benefit others navigating similar circumstances.

2. Upon release, I experienced both successes and challenges firsthand, enabling me to understand the real-world difficulties faced by justice-impacted individuals seeking to reintegrate into society. Becoming financially successful allowed me to fully share the lessons taught to me by inspiring mentors, amplifying their wisdom and guidance. Since I didn't need to earn an income from the project, I could inspire others to join my commitment, so that we could provide content without charge to anyone who wanted to learn.

3. Recognizing that education and skill-building fundamentally change outcomes, I chose to dedicate my resources and efforts to providing practical, accessible, and free educational content for those impacted by the criminal justice system. My goal is to help individuals build valuable skills, empowering them to achieve freedom through merit and personal development. We want to build advocacy campaigns to help others see why it makes sense to incentivize excellence, and show people how to prepare in ways that will lead to multiple income streams upon release.

4. My journey uniquely positions me to influence meaningful systemic change. People believe in me because of my authenticity—they see that I went through 26 years and prepared for success. They believe they can do the same. By addressing root causes and providing actionable strategies, I strive to help break intergenerational cycles of poverty, incarceration, and recidivism, ultimately creating safer, more equitable communities.

5. Developing Prison Professors allows me to emulate the visionary leaders and mentors who impacted my life. It embodies my personal commitment to "be the change I wish to see in the world," offering genuine opportunities for transformation, hope, and lasting positive change.

Next Steps

- Prison Professors is committed to continuously enhancing and expanding our educational offerings through an iterative and strategic approach. Our immediate next steps include refining our self-directed learning modules based on participant feedback and performance data, as well as broadening the scope and depth of available resources.

- In our initial phases, we will continue to expand the website with daily lesson content, developing robust participant profiles on Prison Professors Talent, and enhancing our digital presence through targeted social media awareness campaigns.

- Future phases will explore deeper gamification elements, collaborative partnerships with academic institutions and nonprofits, and implementation of scalable impact assessment frameworks.

- As we advance, we remain committed to transparency and accountability, regularly updating stakeholders on our progress, key learnings, and measurable outcomes. This iterative approach ensures continuous improvement, allowing us to remain responsive to the evolving needs of justice-impacted individuals and consistently broaden our community impact.

Condensed Version of our Concept Paper

- Link to the full Concept Paper for Prison Professors Charitable

Mission: At our nonprofit, Prison Professors, we provide free, accessible, educational resources. We aim to prepare people in prison for the job market. We publish daily lessons to assist people at every stage—pre-charge to post-release. Our lessons offer proven strategies in self-advocacy, showing members of our community how to prepare for the highest level of liberty, at the soonest possible time. The self-directed lessons aim to teach participants how to develop skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed upon release.

Problem: The United States leads the world in incarceration rates, with more than 2 million people in various stages of confinement. Current gaps in prison funding contribute to high, intergenerational cycles of recidivism.

Our Solution: We offer structured, self-directed educational content to prepare people for the job market. Our courses address the specific challenges of justice-impacted individuals, emphasizing personal development, communication, resilience, critical thinking, and financial literacy. We include courses to help students develop a basic understanding of the digital economy–specifically, blockchain and AI. We visit prisons across the USA to provide train-the-trainer programs. We offer our resources free of charge in digital formats, making them accessible online to teachers. The courses are also available in print through Amazon, with 100% of all proceeds going to fund our nonprofit's mission.

Educational Approach:

- Stand-alone, self-paced lessons tailored to critical stages of the journey.
- Lessons available in print, video, and audio format.
- Available to teachers in jails and prisons to pass along to incarcerated learners.
- Practical skills for job market readiness, communications, critical thinking, and self-advocacy.
- Transparent documentation of individual progress through Prison Professors Talent.

Unique Features:

- Content developed by those with personal experience in all stages of the criminal justice system.
- Community integration through peer mentoring, support networks, and testimonials.
- Gamification strategies and reward systems to incentivize continuous engagement.

Advocacy and Awareness: We collaborate with social scientists to gather evidence on our effectiveness. By highlighting real-life success stories and measurable outcomes, we advocate for policy changes that will open more mechanisms for people to earn higher levels of liberty through merit.

Impact Measurement: We track participant engagement, feedback, and outcomes, openly publishing results on the impact page of the Prison Professors Talent website. Collaborations with organizations such as the Edovo Foundation and UCLA further strengthen our impact evaluation efforts.

Partnerships: We actively seek collaborations with other nonprofits, academic institutions, legal experts, employers, businesses, and advocates to enhance resources, expand impact, and foster systemic reform. We develop partnerships and collaborative relationships to help people prepare for success upon release.

Founder's Motivation: Founder Michael Santos, having served 26 years in federal prison, is an ambassador for the message of personal development and preparation for success. His financial independence drives his commitment to provide free resources that encourage others to prepare effectively for post-incarceration success, and the highest level of liberty at the soonest possible time.

Funding:

- The founder provides personal resources of over $100k per year, and invites others to match his funding to sustain the program.
- Other generous funders who believe in the mission have been generous in providing funding, anonymously.

Next Steps:

- **Third Quarter, 2025**: Hire an admin to assist with data collection and presentation of results.
- **Third Quarter, 2025:** Develop an intern system to grow digital presence and enhance community engagement through targeted social media.
- **Daily**: Publish new content daily to serve people at every stage of the criminal justice process, based on participant feedback.
- **Daily**: Collect data on the progress of program participants.
- **July, 2026**: Expand participation in our data-collection program through Prison Professors Talent, growing our data-collection from 1,000 participants to 10,000 participants within three years.
- **2026:** Deepen partnerships, gamification elements, and scalable impact assessments.
- **2027**: Advance advocacy efforts to expand policy and legislative change that allow more people to earn freedom through merit.

Accountability Link

- Weekly Journal of Activity (2025)