

COURSE SYLLABUS

Building Character:

Using Your Prison Professors Profile to Launch a Reference Campaign Before Sentencing

Course Description

This course teaches people facing sentencing in federal court how to launch a **character reference campaign** and strengthen it with a **Prison Professors profile**. By combining authentic letters of support with documented evidence of personal growth, participants present the Court with a complete, credible picture of their accountability, rehabilitation, and future goals.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, participants will:

1. Understand why character and personal growth matter at sentencing.
2. Learn how to plan and launch a character reference campaign.
3. Identify and guide supporters to write effective, authentic letters.
4. Organize and deliver letters as part of a professional sentencing package.
5. Build a Prison Professors profile to document rehabilitation.
6. Complete a capstone portfolio for use at sentencing.
7. Continue updating their profile throughout custody and reentry.

Course Modules

Module 1: The Role of Character in Sentencing

- » Overview of 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) factors.
- » Why judges must consider history and characteristics.
- » How character references influence sentencing outcomes.

Module 2: Planning Your Campaign

- » Building a timeline.
- » Identifying potential letter writers.
- » Creating an outreach plan.

Module 3: Guiding Your Supporters

- » How to give supporters clear instructions.
- » What judges value in letters.
- » Strong vs. weak letter examples.

Module 4: Organizing the Letters

- » Tracking outreach and submissions.
- » Coordinating with counsel.
- » Building a professional, diverse letter packet.

Module 5: Delivering Your Message

- » Integrating letters into the sentencing memorandum.
- » Summarizing key themes.
- » Presenting a credible, consistent package.

Module 6: Beyond Letters — Building Your Profile

- » Why a Prison Professors profile strengthens your campaign.
- » Components: biography, journals, book reports, release plan, testimonials.
- » Profiles and the point system.

Module 7: Learning Activities & Capstone Project

- » Reflection journals.
- » Drafting a biography and release plan.



- » Writing book reports.
- » Collecting letters and assembling a Character Reference Campaign Portfolio.

Module 8: Continuing the Journey

- » Sentencing as a milestone, not an endpoint.
- » Using your profile to document growth during custody.
- » How your body of work can support clemency, early release, and reentry opportunities.

Assignments & Activities

- » Weekly reflections tied to profile updates.
- » Draft outreach messages to supporters.
- » Book reports and journal uploads.
- » Profile-building tasks: biography, journals, release plan.
- » Capstone: Character Reference Campaign Portfolio.

Course Length & Delivery

- » 8 Modules (recommended one per week, but flexible for self-directed pacing).
- » Estimated total time: 15–18 hours of active work.
- » Format: Self-directed with worksheets, prompts, and profile-building assignments.

