

Violence class, introduced ourselves briefly, and listened as the discussion we'd interrupted continued.

My own attempt to paraphrase the assertion of an EJP student, interpreting a course reading on Jewish hostility in a Nazi concentration camp: We're complicit in a kind of violence when we are anything less than warm, gracious guides to those who are new to a place.

He was applying his interpretation to newcomers to the prison population, but I also found it a fitting articulation of how sincerely welcome the students and EJP instructors made us feel that night.

We were invited to be present in a way that seemed to poignantly resist the starkness of the institution in which we sat together.



Open house visitor chats with Linguistics instructor Hugh Bishop (red shirt) and EJP students Michael Harrell (back to camera) and Igor Kazakovs.

Vibrant Discussions

BY BERT STABLER

Going to the EJP Open House at Danville was a truly exciting, eye-opening experience. I had the opportunity to attend *Anthropology of Violence* and observed one of the most engaging discussions I've ever witnessed.

“ [It] was one of the most engaging discussions I've ever witnessed. ”
—Bert Stabler

Based on readings from Primo Levi, Hannah Arendt, and others, the members of this advanced class shared searching and subtle insights, spending roughly equal amounts of time speaking abstractly, historically, and in regard to their own experiences.

One quote I took with me was, “Is violence an action or an idea?”

It may be a rhetorical question, but, were I able to observe and interact with these extraordinary students at greater length, I would certainly find an answer.



EJP alumnus Earl Walker in Chicago, speaking to EJP students' family members and other guests on the value of prison education.

EJP Open Houses

BY REBECCA GINSBURG,
EJP DIRECTOR

Open houses are a highlight of the EJP calendar. Each semester we invite prospective instructors and others to Danville prison to meet students and see EJP in action. Responses to our October 2013 open house, shared in this newsletter, are typical. Visitors are deeply impressed by EJP students intellectual abilities and their commitment to learning. They also tell us that EJP seems like more *fun* than they expected it to be. Certainly, vibrant intellectual settings can be a joy to experience.

We also hold regular open houses in Chicago as part of our FACE (Family and Community Engagement) program. We invite the family members and friends of EJP students to meet one another, get to know their loved ones' instructors, collaborate, and learn. FACE events also provide a forum for EJP alumni to speak out on issues they care about.

You are warmly invited to attend one or both of our spring open houses. Please contact EJP at info@educationjustice.net for dates and information.

Open House a Mesmerizing Experience

BY STEPHANIE SACLARIDES

The open house at Danville Correctional Center sealed the deal for me. Immediately afterwards, I knew that EJP was something I needed to be part of.

I spent time with the students in two different classes--Linguistics and Business Administration--and I found myself part of a learning environment unlike anything I had experienced before. Prior to class, it was clear that the students had read their assigned

“ I knew EJP was something I needed to be a part of. ”

—Stephanie Saclarides

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EJP NEWSLETTER STAFF
Rebecca Ginsburg, Editor
Eileen Lagman, Designer

EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
805 W. PENNSYLVANIA URBANA, IL 61801
217.244.3344 | WWW.EDUCATIONJUSTICE.NET



Stephanie Saclarides (right) in a Linguistics class at Danville prison.



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ejp mission

The mission of the Education Justice project is to create a model college-in-prison program that demonstrates the positive impacts of higher education upon incarcerated people, their families, the neighborhoods from which they come, the host institution, and society as a whole.

Above: Visitors to the recent EJP open house at Danville prison sat in classes and mingled with students and course instructors during the break. Below: Scenes and reflections from the recent EJP Family and Community (FACE) open house in Chicago.

Glimpse of an American Prison

BY ZHAOHUI LIU

On September 20, 2013, my colleagues and I from the Visiting Asian Scholars Program were invited to visit Danville Prison. A prison is a place that evokes fear and anxiety for all of us from China.

At the open house, I was deeply impressed by the treatment of the students. First, the materials (textbooks and reading materials) EJP students used were the same as ones for UIUC students. Second, like undergraduates at UIUC, the methodology of lecture-discussion was employed.

In the class, students freely expressed their own opinions, arguing with their instructor and classmates, and the

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material several times and annotated their readings, taking great care to write questions and notes in the margins.

During class, the students stayed consistently engaged with their instructor and content. I was shocked that during their only break, most students opted to stay in the classroom and continue

instructor called them by first name or nick name, instead of their prison codes.

Third, the instructors had a strong sense of mission. They were all volunteers and they did not treat their students as “the others.” In a word, there was no discrimination in class at all.

On the way returning home, we all believed that this kind of education program must be conducive to social inclusion for those undergraduate student residents when they leave prison.

Editor’s Note: We are working with one of the visiting scholars to develop a pilot education program for a Chinese prison.

discussing the content matter with one another or their instructor.

As an educator, I was completely mesmerized by my experience at Danville, the culture of respect that permeated both classrooms, and the unwavering level of engagement I was fortunate enough to witness.

Welcome and Solace in a Prison

BY ELLEN DAHLKE

After driving through an intermittent rain to this unfamiliar place, I felt a sense of relief when my driving partner and I pulled up to the prison and stepped inside to join the rest of the visitors.

My feeling of solace deepened once we slid into our seats in the *Anthropology of*

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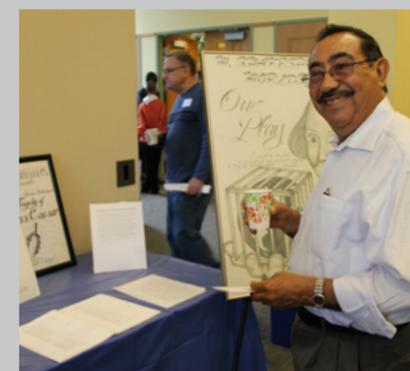
—Ellen Dahlke

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We felt welcome the minute we walked in the door. The EJP staff was very enthusiastic about what they wanted to share with all of us. The speakers were dynamic and very thought provoking. Jobie Taylor, the MC, is a great example of how EJP can transform these men. This was the best FACE open house yet!

—Judi Rand, parent of EJP student Chad Rand



FACE recognizes that EJP’s work at the prison has vital ripple effects that reach neighborhoods across the state. Meeting our students’ family members and seeing the pride on their faces is always a highlight of the semester for me, and an inspiration.

—William Sullivan, EJP instructor and UIUC faculty member



I want to extend gratitude and admiration to the entire FACE team. I gain so much by attending FACE events. You extend opportunities to those of us who have experienced incarceration. FACE is needed throughout the United States.

—Darrell Wright, activist, formerly incarcerated