



PRESS RELEASE

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**LIFE UNIVERSITY'S CHILLON PROJECT, A DEGREE-GRANTING PROGRAM
IN GEORGIA'S PRISON SYSTEM, TO BEGIN CLASSES JULY 12**
—Next year's application process to expand to all Georgia state women's prisons

Marietta, Georgia, July 7, 2016 – Life University's innovative degree-granting and scholarship program in Georgia's prison system, The Chillon Project, will officially begin on Tuesday, July 12.

"We have a very strong incoming class of 15 who we believe will not only flourish academically, but also go on to be leaders in promoting positive social change inside and outside the walls of Lee Arrendale State Prison," says Dr. Brendan Ozawa-de Silva, program director of The Chillon Project and associate professor of psychology at Life University. Lee Arrendale, a women's correctional facility located in Alto, Georgia, was selected as the initial facility to launch the program, which will offer Associate of Art degrees to incarcerated students, as well as scholarship opportunities to correctional officers.

The 15 incarcerated students were selected from a pool of over 60 applications, which were narrowed to 40 by an admissions committee of Life University faculty. Two faculty members then interviewed the 40 applicants before selecting 15 finalists for final review by Dr. Jana Holwick, Dean of the College of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies at Life University. "The committee was looking not only at potential for academic success and accomplishment," says Dr. Ozawa-de Silva, "but also leadership ability, dedication to service and ability to serve as representatives of the program within the prison and beyond."

Applications for those who did not get selected will be kept on file to be used for next year's application process, which will admit a second class of 15 students. Next year, The Chillon Project will also accept applicants from all of the Georgia state prisons for women, significantly expanding the scope of the project.

With the support of the Georgia Department of Corrections and the Lee Arrendale prison administration and staff, The Chillon Project has an on-site office where students will have computer and library access Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week. Classes will be offered in the evenings, with some daytime activities like guest lectures, workshops and tutoring. Besides for-credit courses students will earn toward their degrees, non-credit courses, such as the "First Year Experience" course in the first quarter, will prepare students for college-level English and Math courses as needed.



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“Even though we are just now launching the actual degree program, we have already seen a transformative impact in the incarcerated community at Lee Arrendale as a result of Life University’s initiative,” says Dr. Ozawa-de Silva, speaking of a palpable excitement during the interview process. “One prospective student said that they often feel that they are separate and in their own world, cut off from the world of free people, but that by offering this program we had opened a window into their world... She said that this gave them a sense of hope, and that the value of that hope could not be underestimated.”

Dr. Ozawa-de Silva hopes The Chillon Project will do more than merely provide educational content; he aims for the program to recognize and honor the intrinsic human dignity of people in carceral settings, helping them overcome their circumstances to reach their true potential. “We feel great gratitude to those who have enabled us to develop and implement this program — foremost the Georgia Department of Corrections, the prison facility warden and staff, the Laughing Gull Foundation, and our private donors who sponsor incarcerated students,” says Dr. Ozawa-de Silva. “Of course, all of this would not have been possible without the incredible vision, commitment and dedication of our President at Life University, Dr. Riekeman, who has made everything possible for us to develop this program.”

About The Chillon Project

The Chillon Project is an undertaking of Life University’s Center for Compassion, Integrity and Secular Ethics together with the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) to introduce degree programs in Georgia’s correctional facilities. It is one of a handful of such programs in the entire Southeast. An innovative feature of The Chillon Project is the inclusion of scholarships for correctional officers employed by the GDC, as well as their family members, to also have increased access to higher education at Life University.

The Chillon Project offers an Associate of Arts degree in Positive Human Development and Social Change, with the plan to expand this after three years to also offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Positive Human Development and Social Change. The Bachelor’s will be debuted for Life University students on the University’s Marietta campus as well.

The curriculum, based on the concept of secular ethics, is a rigorous interdisciplinary degree focused on providing the skills and knowledge necessary for creating positive and sustainable social change. It includes coursework in



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positive psychology, business and social entrepreneurship, peace studies and other disciplines. It also includes lab components for the cultivation of inner values, emotional and social intelligence, and contemplative practice.

Learn more about The Chillon Project at LIFE.edu/CCISE.

About Life University

Founded in Marietta, Georgia in 1974, Life University is a health sciences institution most known for its chiropractic program, the largest single campus chiropractic program in the world. Life University is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, master's and Doctor of Chiropractic degrees, and also has programmatic accreditation through the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) and the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). The mission of Life University is to empower students with the education, skills and values necessary for career success and life fulfillment, based on a vitalistic philosophy.

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