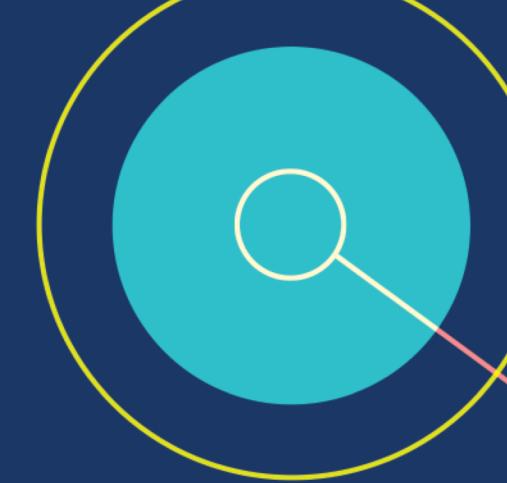# RETURNING CITIZENS REENTRY PROGRAM

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Sponsor: Greg Fairchild, Resilience Education and UVA Darden School of Business

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Motivation: Education during incarceration is not widespread and its delivery against purported benefits is not well understood or carefully examined.

Research Questions:
• What are the summative impacts of education during incarceration?
• In addition to potential lowered recidivism, what are other beneficial outcomes of education during incarceration?
• Who are the other key players in this area, and how do they operate and evaluate their own programs?

RESILIENCE EDUCATION

Partnership between Darden School of Business and two correctional facilities in Virginia: Dillwyn (men's) and Fluvanna (women's) [1]

Provides four entrepreneurial educational programs, taught by Darden MBA students:
• Entrepreneurship
• Foundations in Business
• Financial Capability
• Achieving Success in Personal Finance

Objectives:
• Reduce recidivism
• Promote financial stability
• Deliver high-quality educational programming for underserved populations
• Expand perspectives of MBA volunteers

LITERATURE REVIEW

Benefits of prison educational programs: [2-5]
• Educational programs generally lower recidivism
• Educational programs have a positive effect on post-release earnings and employment
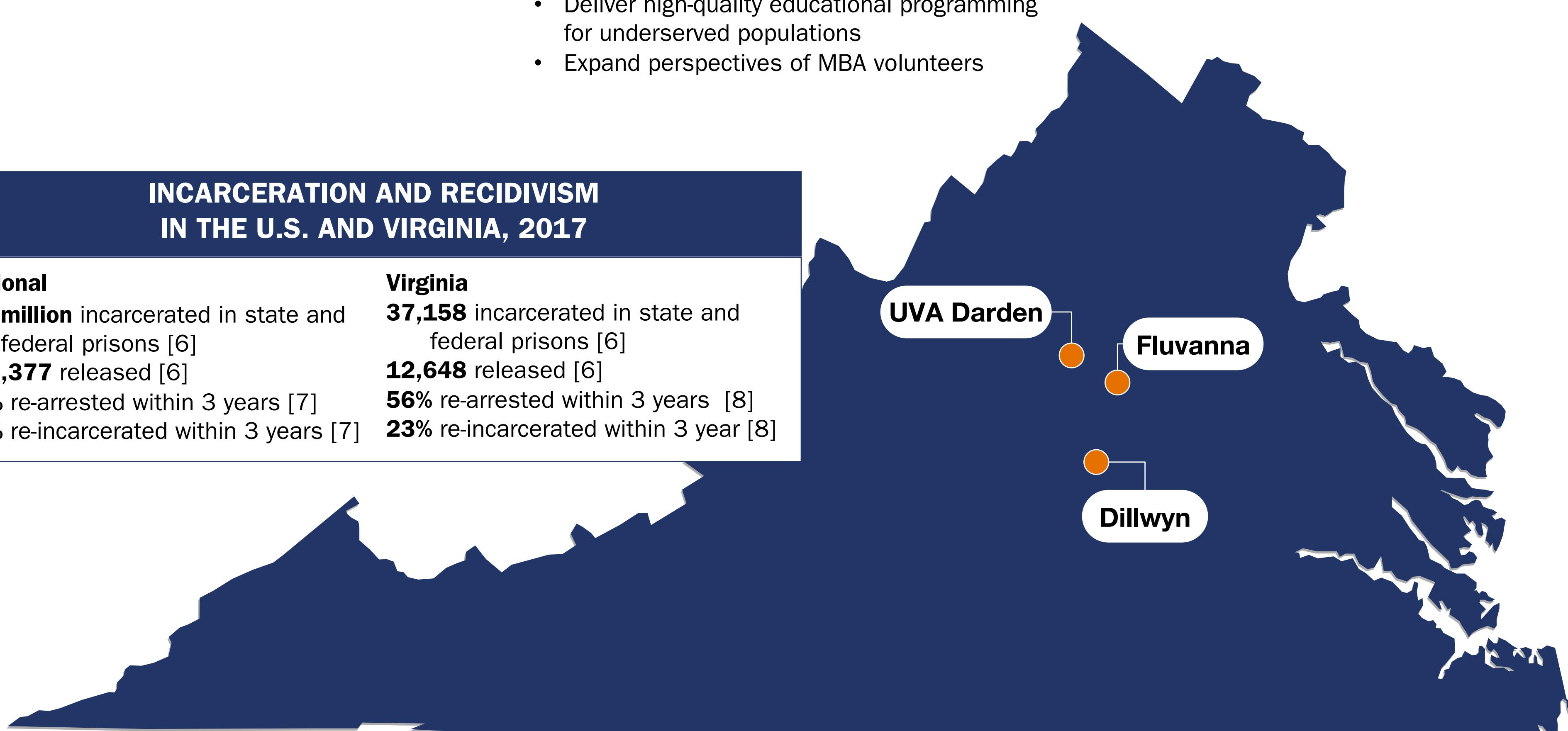• College-level classes lower odds of inmates engaging in misconduct while in prison

Recidivism is an imperfect outcome measure
• Only accounts for reported crime
• Not measured consistently
• Considers returning offenders equally (even when inappropriate)

INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM IN THE U.S. AND VIRGINIA, 2017

National
1.5 million incarcerated in state and federal prisons [6]
622,377 released [6]
68% re-arrested within 3 years [7]
36% re-incarcerated within 3 years [7]

Virginia
37,158 incarcerated in state and federal prisons [6]
12,648 released [6]
56% re-arrested within 3 years [8]
23% re-incarcerated within 3 year [8]

UVA Darden
Fluvanna
Dillwyn

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Instruction and Course Design

Eliminate redundancy with other prison education courses (e.g., in the Career and Technical Education Program) that cover similar material

Address criminogenic factors and population
• Revise syllabi to include these components
• Tailor course offerings to the prison population and address criminogenic factors (rather than other MBA students)

Obtain accreditation so students receive college credits for participation

Revise instructor training process
• Create semester-long instructor training where Darden students learn the course material, how to teach to the prison population, and shadow current instructors in their courses

Students

Revise application
• Obtain consent from applicants to be surveyed in the future (even if they do not end up participating in Resilience Education courses)

Ease application restrictions to increase pool of applicants
• Remove GED/high school diploma requirement, limitations on infractions, allow for transfer of prisoners to course-site locations
• Create a match control: eased restrictions should lead to enough new applicants who are qualified but cannot otherwise be included in the course due to space restrictions

Evaluation/Fidelity Checks

Program evaluations should be tied directly to syllabi to ensure that objectives are being met

Create a pre- and post-test tied to syllabi
• Currently, only math skills are evaluated before and after course completion
• Add a measure of baseline comprehension of course materials to be covered. For instance, if Resilience Education seeks to instill confidence in its students for job interviews, then include a Situational Judgment Test to estimate their knowledge of appropriate business behaviors in different scenarios

Conduct instructor evaluation
• Since instructor turnover is so regular, all instructors should be evaluated to the same standards throughout the course

Administer post-release survey to collect data on employment status, utility of program for finding jobs, confidence in job placement process, and well-being.

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