



Resilience Education Programming: Preliminary, Descriptive Evaluation Summary

EVALUATION UNIT BRIEF

JANUARY 2019

Introduction

Initial programming began in spring of 2011 as a partnership between the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business Administration and VADOC to provide entrepreneurship training at the Dillwyn Correctional Center. Over time, Resilience Education Programming expanded its initial initiative into a suite of Entrepreneurial Re-entry Programs that also address financial capability, personal finance, and foundations in business curriculum, as well as entrepreneurship. The four programs are:

1. Achieving Success in Personal Finance
2. Entrepreneurial Re-entry
3. Financial Literacy & Capability
4. Resilience Capstone- Foundations in Business

Programming is now established in two VADOC facilities (Dillwyn and Fluvanna), which allows both male and female offenders to be served.

Because it generally takes time for programs to begin to run with fidelity, as well as allowing time for the release of program graduates and the subsequent data maturation requirements necessary for recidivism calculations (which is a three-year follow up period after release), this brief is intended to be a preliminary study used for working knowledge. Based on the literature, Entrepreneurial Re-entry Programs typically focus on the development of critical business knowledge and skills necessary for successful self-employment in offenders prior to release, resulting in increased employment opportunities and options for these individuals once released into the community.

Resilience Programming Description

Course Descriptions

The Resilience Re-entry Programs focus on providing offenders with the personal and professional skills that promote financial stability and self-employment. Courses are delivered via a Socratic, case-driven teaching method that emphasizes a discussion-based classroom environment. Typically, volunteer instructors for these courses offered at the VADOC facilities are second year MBA students from the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration. Classes meet two times per week for 1.5 to 2.5 hours, over a 7 to 18 week period. Course times and program lengths are dependent on the specific curriculum area:

1. Achieving Success in Personal Finance = two times for 1.5 hours each week, over 7 weeks
2. Entrepreneurial Re-entry = two times for 2.5 hours each week, over 18 weeks
3. Financial Literacy & Capability = two times for 2.5 hours each week, over 10 weeks
4. Resilience Capstone- Foundations in Business = two times for 2.5 hours each week, for 10 weeks

Application Screening Process

In addition to completion of the written Entrepreneurial Re-entry Program application, potential students must meet the following criteria: have a high school diploma or GED[®], be at least two years without an infraction or charge, and complete a math TABE test. Entrepreneurship applicants are also required to have completed (or be in the process of completing) a Vocational Certificate course.

The programs prioritize students who have 36 months or less until their release to the community, and exclude sex offenders. However, there have been exceptions based on staff recommendations and there are even some participants with life sentences.

As part of a recent VADOC Correctional Education study focusing on FY2013 State Responsible Releases, the Evaluation Unit examined the three-year recidivism rates for students who had completed Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses (formerly referenced as Vocational Certificate courses). This information has been further divided to show the recidivism rates for students who were CTE completers and also had a high school diploma or GED[®] in Table 1.

Table 1. Recidivism Rates Three Years after Release for Career and Technical Education Completers with a High School Diploma or GED[®], by Gender.

CTE Completers	Female (N)	Female Recidivism Rate	Male (N)	Male Recidivism Rate
With High School Diploma or GED [®]	62	6.5%	380	14.7%

A truly comparable group to the Darden Program participants would be a further subset of the individuals shown above in Table 1, since they would need to be further limited to only those individuals without infractions for the 2 years prior to starting the program.

Program Graduation Requirements

Thorough preparation, regular attendance, and classroom participation are expected from all program participants. Students must meet all of the following program requirements in order to graduate and receive a program certificate:

1. No more than 2 unexcused absences
2. No infractions or charges while in the course
3. Maintain a respectful and quiet atmosphere while engaged in class
4. Completion of all interim course assignments
5. Completion of required course presentation
6. Completion and passing of the course's final exam
7. Entrepreneurship students must also score a 72 (or higher) on the final math TABE test

Preliminary Descriptive Outcomes

Resilience Program Graduates

As of the May 2018 course completion information, 298 Resilience Program graduates have been identified who have completed at least one of the four potential curriculum areas. Over one-third (n = 116; 39%) of the graduates had completed all requirements in two or more courses. For graduates who had only completed one course (n = 181), almost half (46%) were from the Entrepreneurial Re-entry Program. Only three graduates had completed all four of the curriculum areas. Course detail level information was not available for one Resilience Program graduate. The Darden course sequences completed by the program graduates are listed in detail within the table (Table 2).

Table 2. Darden Program Courses Sequences Completed per Graduate as of May 2018.

Darden Course Sequence	Female	Male	Total
One Course:			
Achieving Success in Personal Finance	4	0	4
Entrepreneurial Re-entry	42	41	83
Financial Literacy & Capability	40	31	71
Resilience Capstone	10	13	23
Two Courses:			
Entrepreneurial Re-entry + Financial Literacy & Capability	29	8	37
Entrepreneurial Re-entry + Resilience Capstone	9	4	13
Financial Literacy & Capability + Resilience Capstone	6	25	31
Three Courses:			
Entrepreneurial Re-entry + Financial Literacy & Capability + Resilience Capstone	16	16	32
Four Courses:			
Achieving Success in Personal Finance + Entrepreneurial Re-entry + Financial Literacy & Capability + Resilience Capstone	3	0	3
Unknown:			
No Course Details Provided	0	1	1
Total	159	139	298

Program offender characteristics were examined for the 297 graduates where VACORIS information could be matched and verified (Table 2). Although the program originated at a male facility, over half (54%) of the Darden Program graduates were female. Approximately half of the program graduates were black (49%), while the other half were white (49%).

Over two-thirds (68%) of the program graduates will be between 25 to 44 years of age at release. Almost half (45%) of the Darden program graduates had total sentence lengths of 4 to 9 years. The three individuals with life sentences were removed from age at release calculations, since no estimated release date can be provided. However, these individuals are included in the age at release and sentence lengths counts (within

Table 3) and are listed as “life/multiple life” . A majority of the program graduates (66%) had no prior state responsible term of incarceration.

Table 3. Darden Program Graduates: Offender Characteristics.

Offender Characteristics *	Number	Percent
Gender:		
Male	138	46%
Female	159	54%
Race:		
White	147	49%
Black	145	49%
Hispanic	3	1%
Other	2	1%
Age at Release:		
Under 25	8	3%
25 to 34	103	35%
35 to 44	99	33%
45 to 54	61	21%
55 to 64	17	6%
65 & Over	6	2%
Life/Multiple Life	3	1%
Total Sentence:		
Under 4 Years	36	12%
4-9 Years	135	45%
10-14 Years	56	19%
15 Years or More	67	23%
Life/Multiple Life	3	1%
Number of Prior State Responsible Incarcerations:		
None	197	66%
One	64	22%
Two	21	7%
Three & More	15	5%

*Darden course rosters track offenders based on name (first and last), so considerable “cleaning” and manual verification of data were necessary to match graduates to their corresponding data in Virginia Correction Information System (VACORIS). It should be noted that Darden program graduate status, however, does not mean that these individuals have also reached their release dates. For the calculation of “age at release” from VACORIS data, verified release dates were used for those Darden graduates who have been released. In the case of program graduates who are still within a VADOC facility, their estimated release dates from VACORIS were used instead.

The Most Serious Offense (MSO) for the current term of state responsible (SR) incarceration was identified for each offender and these results are shown in detail below (Table 4). In addition, MSOs have been grouped by pertinent crime type: Violent; Property/Public Order; and Drug. Sixty-three percent of the Darden program graduates had Violent MSOs, followed by Property/Public Order MSOs (24%), and Drug MSOs (12%). Most common MSOs for Darden graduates were robbery (20%), felony assault (18%), larceny/fraud (15%), followed by drug sales (10%). Inclusion of individuals in the Entrepreneurial Re-entry Program may need to be re-examined, based on offense types.

Table 4. Most Serious Offense (MSO) for current term of SR incarceration for Darden Program Graduates.

Most Serious Offense for Current Term of SR Incarceration	Number	Percent
Violent MSOs:		
Capital Murder	3	1%
First Degree Murder	19	6%
Second Degree Murder	15	5%
Manslaughter	13	4%
Abduction	10	3%
Rape/Sexual Assault	7	2%
Robbery	60	20%
Assault	54	18%
Weapons	7	2%
Total Violent	188	63%
Property/Public Order MSOs:		
Arson	1	<1%
Burglary/B&E	24	8%
Larceny/Fraud	44	15%
Conspiracy	2	1%
DUI	1	<1%
Total Property/Public Order	72	24%
Drugs MSOs:		
Drug Sales	31	10%
Drug Possession	6	2%
Total Drugs	37	12%
Total Darden Graduates	297	

Resilience Program Graduates- Released

As of November 30, 2018, verified release dates are available for 174 (59%) of the 297 program graduates and this information has been broken down by fiscal year (FY) in Table 5 below. Of these 174 individuals, 73% are still currently on supervision. The remaining Darden graduates without verified release dates fell under one of the following statuses: Graduate, Released to Interstate Compact (n = 16) or Graduate, Still in VADOC (n = 107).

Currently, three-year recidivism information is only available for 2 individuals released in FY2013 and 12 individuals released in FY2014 (highlighted in grey within Table 5). Of the 14 total individuals examined, one has received a new state responsible sentence since his current release in FY2014. The recidivist had multiple new offenses which include drug sales, drug possession, and fraud.

Table 5. Darden Program Graduates with Verified Release Dates, by Fiscal Year Released.

Fiscal Year Released	Female	Male	Total
2013	2	0	2
2014	6	6	12
2015	21	7	28
2016	18	15	33
2017	17	15	32
2018	28	19	47
2019*	9	11	20
Total	101	73	174

*As of 11/30/2018

A true outcome evaluation would include a matched control group. However, due to such a small sample size (14 graduates), this brief summary does not provide that information.

Outcome Study Plan

As the study continues, the VADOC will continue collect data on all offenders who have enrolled in Resilience Education Programming and collaborate with Resilience Education leadership to ensure data quality. Additional data maturation must occur before recidivism and employment data can be adequately examined. Future evaluation efforts may focus on the inclusion of a matched control group once adequate sample size thresholds are met.

The Resilience Education Program Completion Certificate is not currently attached to college credit, so students are not able to utilize the time spent in these courses towards the completion of a college program. Accreditation of the Resilience Education Program courses would allow for the earning of college credits that can then be transferred towards earning a degree will be of even greater benefit to the students.

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