



## **PRESS KIT**

### **MISSION**

The mission of Mount Tamalpais College (MTC) is to provide an intellectually rigorous, inclusive Associate of Arts degree program and College Preparatory Program, free of charge, to people at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center; to expand access to quality higher education for incarcerated people; and to foster the values of equity, civic engagement, independence of thought, and freedom of expression.

### **ABOUT THE COLLEGE**

Mount Tamalpais College provides a liberal arts associate of arts degree, as well as college preparatory courses in math and writing, to approximately 300 people incarcerated at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center. All classes take place onsite, in regular classrooms.

A total of twenty courses in the humanities, social sciences, math, and science are required for the associates degree. See [this list](#) of degree requirements.

[Instructors](#) at the college all work as volunteers; most are faculty or graduate students at local Bay Area colleges and universities. All instructors for credit classes hold at least a master's degree in their field. The college also provides individualized tutoring, as well as student advising and support.

Mount Tamalpais College is funded entirely through donations from individuals and foundations. It receives no funding from the state or federal government.

### **HISTORY AND BACKGROUND**

The College Program at San Quentin was originally founded in 1996, as an extension site of Patten University; the Prison University Project was formed in 2003 to support that program. Nearly twenty years later, the Prison University Project embarked on the process of becoming an independent college. In January 2022, newly named Mount Tamalpais College achieved accreditation with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.



Today MTC is the nation's only independent liberal arts college whose main campus is located inside a prison, and is dedicated solely to serving incarcerated people. For further details, explore our [Mission & Values](#). See the full list of MTC [Staff and Board of Trustees](#).

## SELECTED PRESS

[Mount Tamalpais College turns 30 with night of reunion, reflection](#) - The SF Examiner

[Incarcerated Californians can't vote. A prison held an election anyway](#) - Juan Moreno Haines and Sam Levin, The Guardian

[California inmates study at 1st college based behind bars](#) - Olga R. Rodriguez, Associated Press

[Expanding access to quality higher education for the incarcerated: An interview with Mount Tamalpais College's Jody Lewen](#) - NationSwell

[San Quentin Could be the Future of Prisons in America](#) - Bill Keller, the New York Times

[Nation's First Standalone Prison Campus Celebrates Graduation](#) - Joe Garcia, the Prison Journalism Project

[A New Transfer Pathway From Prison to the CSU](#) - Sara Weissman, Inside Higher Ed

## VIDEO

[More Than A Degree: The Impact of Higher Education at San Quentin](#) (MTC, 2026)

[2025 Valedictorian Robert Barnes Speaks at Commencement](#) (MTC, 2025)

[President of college based at San Quentin receives prestigious national award](#) (KTVU, 2024)

[Inside America's first accredited college behind bars](#) (Stand Together, 2023)

[Prison College Earns Accreditation](#) (Associated Press, 2022)

[The Other Side of the Wall](#) (MTC, 2022)

[With This Knowledge](#) (MTC, 2020)

## PHOTOGRAPHY & INTERVIEWS

To request high-res, press-ready photos, or to arrange an interview with an MTC staff member, please contact Communications Manager, Sam Waterstone at [swaterstone@mttamcollege.edu](mailto:swaterstone@mttamcollege.edu).