

Changing Lives Through Literature

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Press Release

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***Changing Lives Through Literature* Announces a New Web Site**

NORTH DARTMOUTH, Mass. — The *Changing Lives Through Literature* (CLTL) program, based at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, announces the release of its new web site, which was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The new web site, located at <http://cltl.umassd.edu>, provides a comprehensive description of CLTL, its premise, history, philosophy, key issues, and testimonials. Program participants, including judges, probation officers, instructors, and the male and female students on probation, will find useful information and guidance on the site. In addition, the site offers help to those who wish to learn more about or even start a program. The site links the CLTL affiliates in eight US states and the United Kingdom.

Founded in 1991, CLTL operates on the premise that literature has the power to transform lives. Criminal offenders who may otherwise face jail time for repeated crimes receive probation with the condition that they attend literature courses on college campuses. Literature provides students with the opportunity to learn positive social behaviors. Professor Robert Waxler, a co-founder of CLTL, states that literature “encourages criminal offenders to empathize with others and to understand their inner selves, their motives and behavior.” CLTL gives criminal offenders an opportunity to reflect upon their actions and take the first step towards a change in lifestyle.

The CLTL web site is a product of a collaborative effort between the UMass Dartmouth Web Team and CLTL program providers, including district courts and instructors. Serving as a resource, as well as an electronic archive, on the World Wide Web, this site is a monument to years of productive work within the program. It gives users an opportunity to discover the program in depth, to discuss issues, to view sessions, and to learn how to model similar programs. The site also presents statistical studies and testimonials that highlight the program’s success.

According to Professor Waxler, the website is an attempt to demonstrate the power and the complexity of what the program has achieved over the last twelve years so that others around the world can use the web site to start CLTL programs. He states, “The website is truly a multi-media experience with texts, video, and photos. We believe it demonstrates how literature can change lives, how the humanities can make a difference for all of us.”

The site has been created to share the experience and educate the public about the mission of CLTL.