

RISING SCHOLARS NETWORK CALL TO ACTION

June 5, 2020

CALL TO ACTION IN SUPPORT OF OUR BLACK STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY, STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES

We are part of the California Community College Rising Scholars network, a network of community colleges serving incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students. Our colleges serve more than 10,000 students incarcerated in prisons and jails, and more than 50 of our colleges have support programs, student clubs, and networks for formerly incarcerated students. While the recent events in our nation, including the murder of George Floyd and subsequent public uprisings, may only now be striking outrage in some, many of our Black students, colleagues, friends, and families have been terrorized by systemic racism their entire lives. It is time that we explicitly commit to racial justice and articulate a plan for change.

As racially diverse professionals, some of us have directly experienced systemic racism, while others have benefitted from privilege that shields us from racism. Together, we affirm that racism is embedded in our nation, including in our criminal justice and educational systems. We affirm that racism is not new and that in order to achieve meaningful change we all must join the struggle. We honor the efforts of the advocates and organizers whose work has gotten us this far, and we mourn for those whose lives were violently stolen.

We know that the criminal justice system is rooted in and perpetuates racism, and our students have carried this burden for too long. We commit to fighting for anti-racist and liberation-based pedagogies and practices in our work with carceral impacted students. We call upon our fellow faculty, staff, and administrators in the Rising Scholars network to move beyond words and take action. This includes:

- Implementing racial diversity in hiring, including hiring faculty, staff, students and administrators with lived criminal justice experience
- Expanding outreach and support for Black incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students even as we enter a recession
- Pushing ourselves to provide the highest quality culturally responsive classroom experience and maximum student supports for our incarcerated students
- Being vocal in our support for formerly incarcerated students and elevating the needs of Black students on campus as we engage with the campus community
- Seeking out and responding to the voices of our Black incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students and hearing their feedback not as criticism but as opportunity for change
- Consistently and repeatedly taking advantage of opportunities for action

Now is the time. Destiny is urging us to unite, to listen to our Black colleagues and students, to prioritize their voices in our conversations, and to demonstrate to our white colleagues and students how they can leverage their privilege and power to dismantle the pervasive systems of racism for the sake of uplifting our diverse community, for the sake of Humanity itself. We are faculty members, staff and administrators from across the state and today we stand united as a network committed to supporting and uplifting our Black students and colleagues.

Will you join us?

Edwin Hodges
EOPS Program Coordinator
Allan Hancock College

Kalinda Jones
Faculty
Folsom Lake College

June 5, 2020

RISING SCHOLARS NETWORK CALL TO ACTION

1. Abdishakur Omar, MA
Black Alliance Co-Chair, Counselor/Assistant Professor, Southwestern College
2. Adela Naranjo-Bernabe, MA, PPS, LPCC
DREAM Resource Program Coordinator, Cabrillo College
3. Albert Alvano
Co-Coordinator, Project RISE, Adjunct Counselor, Santiago Canyon College
4. Alec Griffin
Cerro Coso Community College
5. Alma Orozco
Financial Aid Specialist, Imperial Valley College
6. Ana Gonzalez
Hartnell College
7. Anacany Torres
Counselor and Co-Coordinator, Project RISE, Santiago Canyon College
8. Angelica Perez
Program Manager, Inmate Scholars Program, Bakersfield College
9. Annahita Mahdavi, Ph.D
Justice Scholars Program Faculty Coordinator, Associate Professor, Long Beach City College
10. Anne-Marie Beck
Faculty Advisor, FITE Club, Adjunct Career Counselor, Instructor, Cypress College
11. Anthony Francoso, Ph.D
CORE Program Coordinator, Sociology and Ethnic Studies, Pasadena City College
12. Audrey Schell
Retired Faculty, Santa Rosa Junior College
13. Bernadette M Johnson
Counselor, Pelican Bay Scholars Program, College of the Redwoods
14. Bronwyn Moreno
Director of Student Affairs, Equity Programs, Hartnell College
15. Bryan R. Hirayama
Lead Faculty of the Inmate Scholars Program, Bakersfield College
16. Camilla Anderson
Inmate Scholars Program, Bakersfield College
17. Carla Grady
Faculty, Santa Rosa Junior College
18. Carlon Manuel
Reentry Pathway Program Coordinator, Los Angeles Trade Tech College
19. Cathy Burgett
Adjunct Chef/Instructor, Santa Rosa Junior College
20. Cathy Hart
Dean, Palmdale Center and Extended Learning, Antelope Valley College
21. Cecilia G. Rocha
Student Equity Manager, Rio Hondo College
22. Cheech Raygoza
President of B.I.G.E. Club, Outreach/Mentor for Beyond Barriers, Allan Hancock College

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23. Chelsea Esquibias
Regional Coordinator, Rising Scholars, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
24. Christian Beaver
Berkeley Underground Scholars Ambassador, Imperial Valley College
25. Connor Keese
Outreach Specialist, Mission College
26. Damany Fisher, PhD
Director of Corrections Education and Reentry Services, Solano Community College
27. Dana E. Heins-Gelder
Professor of Anthropology, Bakersfield College
28. Dr. Allison Tom-Miura
Dean, Adult and Continuing Education, West Los Angeles College
29. Dr. Jeremy Hart
Professor, Counseling, Mt. San Antonio College
30. Dr. Jill Zimmerman
Dean of Student Life and Services, Antelope Valley College
31. Dr. Matthew Green
Success Through Education Program for Students and CMC Prison, Cuesta College
32. Dr. Stacy Thompson
Vice President, Academic Services, Chabot College
33. Dr. Ticey Hosley
Associate Professor, Cuyamaca College
34. Dr. Vanessa Ochoa
Associate Dean, Student Services, Education Justice Scholars Program, East Los Angeles College
35. Elizabeth Darley
36. Elizandro Umaña
Education Justice Scholars Program, East Los Angeles College
37. Genevieve Siwabessy, Ed.D
Dean of Student Services, Cuesta College
38. Graciela Milke
Correspondence Education Counselor/Coordinator, Palo Verde College
39. Gregory Barraza, PhD
Coordinator, Inmate Education, Centennial Education Center, Santa Ana College
40. Heather Tipton Cash
Taft College
41. Jamal Cooks, Ph.D
Dean, Language Arts, Interim Dean-Library, Academic Pathways, and Student Success, Chabot College
42. Jasmine Ruys, Ed.D
Associate Vice President, Enrollment Services, College of the Canyons
43. Jasmine Williams
Los Rios Community College District
44. Javier Rodriguez
Regional Coordinator, Rising Scholars, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
45. Jeff DeFranco
Superintendent/President, Lake Tahoe Community College

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46. Jennifer McBride
Faculty Coordinator, Prison Education Program VSP/CCWF, Merced College
47. Jennifer Miles
Instructor, Pelican Bay Scholars Program, College of the Redwoods
48. Jessica Cobb, JD, Ph.D
Director, Prison Education Program, Norco College
49. Jessica Dobson
Assistant Professor, English, Norco College
50. Jesús Miranda
Associate Dean of Student Equity and Engagement, Cuyamaca College
51. Jill Bradshaw, Ph.D
Assistant Professor, Folsom Lake College
52. Jill Yee
Dean, City College of San Francisco
53. Joanna M. Saporito, LCSW, BDC
Re-Entry Pathways Program, Glendale Community College
54. Joe Louis Hernandez
Interim Project Manager, Rising Scholars Network Rise Scholars, Rio Hondo College
55. John Rieder
Faculty Advisor, Rising Scholars, Department Chair, English and Education, Southwestern College
56. José Briceño
Associate Professor of Sociology, Palomar College
57. Julianna Barnes, Ed.D
President, Cuyamaca College
58. Karissa Morehouse
Dean of Inmate Education, Merced College
59. Kate Feign
Corrections to College Coordinator, Mendocino College
60. Katie Bliss
Founder, Project Change, College of San Mateo
61. Kellie Nadler
Regional Coordinator, Rising Scholars, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
62. Kim Beaton
Assistant Dean of Instruction, Feather River College
63. Kristen M. Frye
Dean of Student Services, Columbia College
64. Kristina Whalen
Vice President of Academic Affairs, Las Positas College
65. Krystal Watkins
Program Coordinator, ISEP Re-Entry, Cerro Coso Community College
66. Laura Electa Hayes
Advocate for Equity and Justice, Community Overcoming Recidivism through Education, Pasadena City College
67. Laura Pecenco, Ph.D
Faculty Advisor, Urban Scholars Union, Associate Professor, Sociology, San Diego Miramar College
68. Laurie Munger
Inmate Scholars Program, Bakersfield College

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69. Leslie LeBlanc
Program Manager, Rising Scholars, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
70. Linda M. Croyle
Faculty Liaison, Career Skills Institute, Santa Barbara City College
71. Lindsay Kong
Program Manager, EOPS/CARE, CalWORKS, and Foster Youth Services, Diablo Valley College
72. Lisa Nelson
Prison Education Community, Norco College
73. Lisa Vartanian, PhD, MFT
Director, Addiction Studies Program, East Los Angeles College
74. Lorena Chavez
Director, School of Continuing Education, Santa Ana College
75. Lori Fasbinder, Ed.D
Dean of Instruction and Student Services, Santiago Canyon College
76. Lou Hughes, Ph.D
Internal Evaluator, Addiction Studies Department, East Los Angeles College
77. Lourdes Sanchez
Resource Specialist, Regional and Distance Education, San Joaquin Delta College
78. Loy Nashua
Executive Dean of Student Affairs, Rio Hondo College
79. Mariko Peshon McGarry, PhD
Director, Prison and Reentry Education Program, Los Rios Community College District
80. Marissa Anderson
Staff Services Analyst, Rising Scholars, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
81. Mark Gritton
Faculty Coordinator, Inmate Education Program, West Hills College Coalinga
82. Melissa Patterson Courtnege
Associate Faculty History, Del Norte and Pelican Bay Scholars Program, College of the Redwoods
83. Michael Muhme
Assistant Professor, Communication, Inmate Scholars Program, Bakersfield College
84. Michaela Mares-Tamayo
Director of Student Equity, Pasadena City College
85. Michelle V. Martinez, MA, MFT
Turning Point Coordinator, Chaffey College
86. Misti Hardy
STEP-UP Student Success Facilitator, Shasta College
87. Murrell Green
Dean of Student Services, Merced College
88. Nadine Henley, LCSW
San Diego City College
89. Nate Dillon
Performing Arts Chair, Antelope Valley College
90. Nicholas Turney, MA
A.S.W.C.C. Faculty Advisor, Communication Studies Faculty, Woodland Community College and Solano Community College

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91. Nicole Griffin
Incarcerated Student Education Program Manager, Cerro Coso Community College
92. Noah Stepro
Antelope Valley College
93. Noel Gomez
Coordinator, Transitions Program, Santa Barbara Community College
94. Octavio Leal
Coordinator/Counselor, Cuyamaca Scholar Program
95. Omar Torres, Ed.D
Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs, College of the Canyons
96. Oscar Duran
Student Success Coach, RISE Scholars/Student Equity, Rio Hondo College
97. Pedro Avila
Vice President, Student Services, Assistant Superintendent, Santa Rosa Junior College
98. Peter Fulks
Academy Director, Law Enforcement Academy, Incarcerated Student Education Program, Cerro Coso Community College
99. Phylicia Deam
RamFORWARD, Victor Valley College
100. Rafael Valdovinos Jr.
Peer Mentor, Beyond Barriers Re-entry, Allan Hancock College
101. Randy Brown, Ph.D
Interim Dean, Student Foundations, Gavilan College
102. Rebecca Romo
Associate Professor, Sociology, Homeboy and Homegirl Scholars, Santa Monica College
103. Rebecca Silbert
Senior Director, Rising Scholars, Foundation for California Community Colleges
104. Rhonda Findling
Second Chance Counselor and Coordinator, Santa Rosa Junior College
105. Rhuenette L. Alums, Ph.D
Adjunct Professor, Corrections Education Program, Solano Community College
106. Rick Rantz
Dean, Academic Affairs, Allan Hancock College
107. Ricky Gonzalez
Student Services Coordinator, Formerly Incarcerated Re-entry Students Thriving, El Camino College
108. Ricky Gutierrez-Maldonado, Ph.D
Manager, Phoenix Project, San Joaquin Delta College
109. Robert Bowman
STEP-UP Director, Shasta College
110. Robert Holcomb, Ph.D
Dean of Language Arts and Academic Foundations
111. Roger Chung
Faculty Lead, Restoring Our Communities, Department of Ethnic Studies, Laney College
112. Ronald Moss
Executive Director, Street Scholars, Merritt College

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113. Rory Johnson
Director, Pelican Bay Scholars and Del Norte Education Center, College of the Redwoods
114. Rosalba Hernandez, MS, MFT
Project RISE Counselor, Santiago Canyon College
115. Roxanna Haynes
Interim Dean of Instruction CTE Programs and Incarcerated Education, Lassen Community College District
116. Sara Wallace
Assistant Professor of English, Bakersfield College
117. Sarah Shepard
Curriculum Chair, Inmate Education Coordinator, West Hills College Coalinga
118. Shaina Campbell Phillips
Director, Student Life and Basic Needs, Rio Hondo College
119. Shanan Danley
120. Shane C. Reynolds
Director, Incarcerated Students Program, Lake Tahoe Community College
121. Sharese McGee
Coordinator, CMC, Summer Bridge and Cooperative Work Experience, Cuesta College
122. Shirley Villalon Lewis
Dean, Solano Community College
123. Stephanie M. Paramore, MA
Dean, Instruction and Student Services, Santa Ana College School of Continuing Education
124. Steven Petelo, MSCJ, Ed.D
Interim Retention Specialist, Project Change, Adjunct Professor, College of San Mateo
125. Susan Schwarz
Coordinator, Pathways to Success Academy, Grossmont College
126. Suzanne Sebring
Acting Associate Dean, Workforce, Community, and Continuing Education, Palomar College
127. Tammy Robinson, Ed.D
Vice President, Instruction, Cañada College
128. Teresa Ward
Ascending Scholars Coordinator, Butte College
129. Tiffeny Flies
Transition Specialist, Motherlode Educational Opportunity Center, Columbia College
130. Tira Lawhorn, MS
Transition Specialist, Motherlode Educational Opportunity Center, Columbia College
131. Tory Eagles
Pelican Bay Scholars Coordinator, College of the Redwoods
132. Vincent Garrett
Student Services Specialist, Restoring Our Communities (ROC) Program, Laney College
133. Vivie Sinou
Dean, Distance Education, San Joaquin Delta College
134. Yohany Corona-Batalona, MA
Justice Scholars Counselor and Coordinator, Grossmont College