NEW YEAR, NEW NAME
The Inmate Scholars Program has changed its name to the Rising Scholars Program or RSP. The state is using the name Rising Scholars for their prison education programs and so we have decided (with their permission) to use the name as well to be in alignment with the state-wide programs.

FACULTY RECRUITMENT
We are currently recruiting faculty members to teach in the RSP department. We need faculty in all areas and disciplines, but we particularly need professors in the following areas: Anthropology, Geology, Earth Science, Foreign Language, Philosophy, and Sociology. If you would like to join us, please contact Sabrina Aguilar, sabrina.aguilar@bakersfieldcollege.edu. If you would like to know more about what it is like to teach inside, you may contact Professor Sara Wallace, sara.wallace@bakersfieldcollege.edu. She also publishes a blog that discusses her work inside on Medium. The links are at the bottom of this newsletter. You may also contact any of the other professors who are currently teaching inside. We would be happy to answer your questions.

STATE-WIDE LOCKDOWNS CHANGES
CLASSES TO CORRESPONDENCE MODEL

Spring started out with a lock-down across the state. No one except for people who already work in the prison are allowed in. Unfortunately, that meant that all our classes had to move
to a correspondence model for the first few weeks of the semester. RSP is hopeful that our faculty will be allowed back to teach in-person in a couple of weeks.

**STAFF SPOTLIGHT**

Tina Cummings is a professor in RSP. She is in the Athletics Department, and she is a Professor of Kinesiology and Aquatics Director for Bakersfield College. She is from Ventura, where she still spends a lot of time. It is still home to her. She received her BA from UCSB and her master’s degree from Chico State. She started teaching as a grad student at Chico State and taught at Butte College before being hired at BC. She was eight months pregnant with her third child when Sandra Serrano hired her, and she started working at BC three weeks after giving birth. All three of her children have attended Bakersfield College. Her youngest is currently a BC athlete on the swim team. She likes to travel, and Costa Rica is her go to place these days. She meditates and does yoga almost every day. She also teaches yoga here at BC. Swimming is another self-care activity that she does often. She has been working at BC for twenty years and in the RSP for two years. She has wanted to be involved in the program for a long time and is always looking for ways to give back and bring Kinesiology to the broader population. She says:” This was the perfect opportunity, and I love it. I really enjoyed being able to go into the prison and teach face to face. It took a little getting used to, but the students are engaged and grateful. The students’ participation and level of interest makes the teaching so rewarding.”

She was surprised by their interest in knowing more about kinesiology. Throughout the semester, they kept asking if we were going to offer more classes in kinesiology. Many of them had no idea about the area of study. Many of them had no idea what kinesiology was at first, they just signed up because it was available and fit into their schedule. A few of the students thought it was a math class. Cummings said: I wish I would have gotten on board with this right when we started the program. I would love to see the kinesiology program and offering increase.”
SENTENCES THAT CREATE US- NEW BOOK

Our very own Jerry Mathes, English Adjunct Instructor, 2019-2020 PEN America Writing for Justice Fellow, and PEN America workshop facilitator, has a chapter in a new book about creating a writing life while in prison. The book is called *Sentences That Create Us – Crafting a Writer’s Life in Prison*. The book includes more than 50 justice-impacted people and their allies, and it offers many resources for incarcerated people to create a writing community inside the prison facility as well as advice on publishing their work on the outside. It is published by Haymarket books, and the RSP is going to order free copies to deliver to our students.

Want to learn more about what it is like to educate on the inside?

Sara Wallace, English Professor at Bakersfield College, has published seven blog entries for her blog titled: "Reflections from Inside: Teaching in the Rising Scholars Program" on Medium. Some of the blog entries are titled “Reflections from Outside” to indicate times when professors have not been allowed inside the facilities. She has been working as a full-time instructor at a total of five different prisons since the Fall 2019. This blog is her reflection about doing this important work. Her latest entry includes a list of things about the students that surprised her:

Reflections from Outside: New Semester Link