

Hello President Persons, Senators, and guests,

I am here today to ask for your support in bringing awareness and action to our campus and at the state level to include the Rising Scholar student population in title 5 as one of the subgroups noted for priority 1 registration.

First, I'd like to tell you a little about our Rising Scholars programs here at SRJC. You may have heard IGNITE and Second Chance in passing, these programs serve our currently and formally incarcerated students. Through the hard work and passion of a handful of faculty, staff, and administrator we have been able to grow these programs steadily over the past seven years.

Our IGNITE program has offered courses in college skills, counseling, hospitality, and culinary courses to currently incarcerated students at the Sonoma County jails. We will be offering human services, math and english in the coming semesters. In an average semester, we enroll approximately 120 students at the jail.

In 2021, we began a partnership with the Sonoma County Juvenile Hall, to enroll high school graduates in our online classes. In Fall 2022 we had 12 juvenile hall students and this spring we have 14 enrolled, with a number of high school seniors ready to enroll later this semester. These students are working on a range of educational goals in career education to transfer.

Through our partnerships with the sheriff's department, juvenile hall, and probation, we have effectively begun to build the pipeline from incarceration to education. When a formally incarcerated student enrolls at SRJC they are welcomed by the Second Chance program on campus. Second Chance has grown from a student club of 9 students to a full student service program, providing dedicated academic counseling, weekly recovery support, peer mentoring, bookstore grants, and a judgment-free environment for people to change their lives through education. As of today, we have 98 students in the Second Chance program.

The students in IGNITE and Second Chance make up our Rising Scholars. Our programs were recognized by the chancellor's office for the exemplary work we are doing with our most marginalized and underserved populations through the award of a three-year grant to support the continued growth of these programs. However, these students are not recognized within title 5 as facing additional challenges granting them the highest priority in registration. With your help and advocacy, I think we can make an impactful difference in these students' educational journey.

I am asking for your support in passing a resolution to include Rising Scholars in priority 1 registration.

Thank you.