

ROMARILYN RALSTON

drromarilyn@gmail.com

Facebook: Romarilyn Ralston, Twitter: @RomarilynR

Education

- 2016 **Master of Liberal Arts** – Washington University in St. Louis
Master Thesis: The Darkside: The Debilitating Consequences of Colorism for Dark Girls
- 2014 **Bachelor of Arts, with honors, Gender and Feminist Studies** – Pitzer College
Honors thesis: “Good Start for African American Children: The Importance of Early Childhood Education”

Fellowships

- 2017–18 **Policy Fellow**, Women’s Policy Institute, Women’s Foundation of California, Sacramento, CA. (Competitive statewide fellowship)
- 2017 **Leading with Conviction Fellow**, Just Leadership USA, New York, NY
- 2015–16 **Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs**, Focus St. Louis, St. Louis, MO. (Competitive national fellowship in public affairs, local, state, and national policy)
- 2014 **Napier Initiative Fellow**, “Good Start” Pilgrim Place in Claremont, CA

Honors and Awards

- 2021-23 **Galaxy Gives Fellow**, Awarded 150K grant to write memoir and proposal for the Institute for Transformative Justice and Freedom.
- 2020 **Social Justice Champion Award**, 2020 Women of Distinction, Awarded by California State Senator Ling Ling Chang
- 2020 **Distinguished Alumni Award**, Pitzer College
- 2020 **Policy Brief Award**, University of California, Los Angeles, Center for the Study of Women, recognizing outstanding applied feminist scholarship by graduate students and system-impacted community members.
- 2019 **Certificate of Achievement, Policy & Advocacy Training** – Congressional Black Congress Institute, Los Angeles, CA
- 2018 **California State Senate Certificate of Recognition**, Senator Connie Leyva, in recognition of public education and advocacy on Senate Bill 960.

- 2018 **Civil Rights Advocacy Award**, National Coalition of 100 Black Women Inc., Orange County Chapter
- 2018 **California State Assembly Certificate of Recognition**, Assemblymember Mark Stone, in recognition of public education and advocacy on Assembly Bill 2533.
- 2018 **California State Senate Certificate of Recognition**, Senator Holly Mitchell, in recognition of completion of the Women's Policy Institute Fellowship.
- 2018 **California State Senate Certificate of Recognition**, Senator Josh Newman, in recognition of contributions developing Project Rebound at CSU Fullerton.
- 2017 **Pete & Carol Beckendam Legacy Award**, Crossroads, Inc., Claremont, CA
- 2015 **Missouri House of Representatives Resolution**, awarded by Rep. Sharon Pace (District 74).
- 2014 **Academic Excellence Award**, Office of Black Student Affairs, Claremont University Consortium
- 2014 **John Payton Leadership Award (nominee)**, Office of Black Student Affairs, Claremont University Consortium.
- 2014 **PNME Ecumenical Mission Scholarship Grant Recipient** for undergraduate honors thesis: "Good Start".
- 2013–14 **Bernard Osher Educational Scholarship Award**, Pitzer College
- 2012–13 **Bernard Osher Educational Scholarship Award**, Pitzer College
- 2012 **Internship Fund Award**, Pitzer College, for reentry/reintegration project at Crossroads Inc. "Camp Onward"

Professional Positions

- 2022– **Coordinating Committee**, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, Oakland, CA 94608.

We want the abolition of a prison system whose purpose is punishment, control and the warehousing of human beings, the majority of whom are people of color and poor. We work for a society where education rather than incarceration is the priority, where investment goes to jobs not jails, where sexual violence is not tolerated, where human rights are a reality for all people.

Responsibilities include: executive management, leadership, vision, and strategic planning of the organization. Duties also include: media support, fundraising, policy and advocacy, and Fire on the Outside, Founder.

- 2022– **Executive Director**, Project Rebound, California State University, Fullerton.
- The Director maintains program structure and staffing to effectively accomplish Project Rebound’s mission, strategic goals, and initiatives. Responsibilities include: strategic vision and leadership of the organization, executive management, and advocacy and fundraising.
- The Director has primary responsibility for developing, implementing, and coordinating CSUF Project Rebound’s growing portfolio of inter-divisional programs, services, and initiatives specific to eliminating equity gaps and cultivating cultures of care and belonging for a formerly incarcerated, culturally diverse, first-generation, and historically underserved student population, including student support, enrichment, and academic programs, outreach and recruitment, admissions, basic needs provisions, off-campus housing, mentorship and tutoring, community garden and food justice initiatives, and juvenile justice engagement, mentorship, and bridge programming.
- 2021– **Chair**, Policy and Advocacy Committee, California State University Project Rebound Consortium. The Chair is responsible for coordinating and leading student-centered advocacy projects and trainings for the statewide Project Rebound Consortium
- 2018– **Program Director**, Project Rebound, California State University, Fullerton
- The Project Rebound Director acts as a liaison and will develop and maintain strong relationships and partnerships with faculty, staff, and administrators in various departments on campus (e.g., Admissions, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, Academic and Student Affairs), local community colleges, and key stakeholders and partners in the external community (e.g., reentry organizations, probation, parole, corrections) that promote the success of Project Rebound. The Director will conduct workshops for prospective students in correctional facilities and community organizations and will assist students in understanding the process of applying to and succeeding in university education. For more information about Project Rebound at CSUF: <http://www.fullerton.edu/rebound/>. For more information about the CSU Project Rebound Consortium: <http://www.calstate.edu/rebound>.
- 2018– **Co-Chair**, Policy and Advocacy Committee, California State University Project Rebound Consortium. Develop advocacy opportunities for students to engage with the political process through civic engagement and leadership.

2016–18 **Program Coordinator**, Project Rebound, California State University,
Fullerton

The mission of the CSU Project Rebound Consortium is to support the higher education and successful reintegration of the formerly incarcerated. Project Rebound constructs a life-affirming alternative to the revolving door policies of mass incarceration by making higher education more accessible and supportive of formerly incarcerated students so that they can acquire the knowledge and skills of a university education, enhance their capacity for civic engagement and community leadership, secure meaningful and gratifying employment, empower themselves and their families, and ultimately make stronger, safer communities.

2018– **Organizer and Policy Advocate** – California Coalition for Women Prisoners

CCWP monitors and challenges the abusive conditions inside California women's prisons. We fight for the release of women and trans prisoners. We support women and trans people in their process of reentering the community. Served as lead policy campaign advocate. Provided civic engagement and advocacy training for CCWP membership and DRP LWOP Coalition.

2015–16 **Program Assistant** – Center for Women in Transition Reentry

Assisted with developing and implementing programming, including gender-responsive, restorative justice, and trauma-informed programs and provide direct client services and supervision, including life skills, house management, student internship supervision, and social media administration. Extended duties: Research and community engagement liaison.

2012–14 **Research Assistant** – Claudia Rankine, Henry G. Lee Professor, English Department, Pomona College

2013 **Intern** – Community Engagement Center, Pitzer College, Claremont, California 91711.

Policy & Advocacy

I served as a policy advisor for the following legislative bills enacted into California law:

SB 416 – Incarcerated Student's Bill of Rights (Ben Hueso – San Diego/Imperial County) This bill seeks to provide protections for some of California's most vulnerable college student populations. SB 416 would amend the Penal Code to protect incarcerated students' access to face-to-face college instruction provided by quality, regionally accredited, non-profit higher education providers, and it amends Title 15 to recognize full-time enrollment in college as a full-time assignment.

AB 2542 – The Racial Justice Act 2020 (Ash Kalra, D – San Jose) This bill prohibits racial discrimination and explicit or implicit bias in sentencing, jury composition, law enforcement conduct, and DA behavior.

SB 118 – Budget Trailer Bill 2020. Ban the Box to Higher Education AN ACT related to post-secondary education; to provide relative to the consideration of criminal history in the process of application and admission to post-secondary education institutions; to prohibit inquiries relative to criminal histories on an initial application form; to provide relative to certain multi-institution applications; and to provide for related matters.

SB 136 – RISE Act 2019 (Scott Wiener, D – San Francisco) – This narrows the application of the 1-yr sentence enhancement. Before this campaign, a prosecutor would add an extra year to your sentence for every time you got the harsher sentence of prison, instead of probation; overwhelmingly impacting Black and Brown people.

AB 45 (2019) – Eliminating Copays in Prisons and Jails (Mark Stone, D – Monterey Bay) People in prisons & jails no longer must pay a copay before they can see a doctor. They can also access durable medical equipment, like diabetic shoes, glasses, and dentures. AB 2533 (2018) by Assemblymember Mark Stone (D-Scotts Valley) – Inmates: indigence. This bill would require that an inmate in a state prison who has maintained an inmate trust account with \$25 or less for 30 consecutive days be deemed indigent. The bill would require that an inmate who is indigent receive basic supplies necessary for maintaining personal hygiene and be provided with sufficient resources to communicate with and access the courts, as specified.

SB 960 (2018) by Senator Connie Leyva (D-Chino) – Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation: suicide prevention: reports. This bill would require the department to submit a report, as specified, to the Legislature on or before October 1 of each year, to include, among other things, descriptions of progress toward meeting the department's goals related to the completion of suicide risk evaluations, progress toward completion of 72 hour treatment plans, and progress in identifying and implementing initiatives that are designed to reduce risk factors associated with suicide.

SB 1393 (2018) by Senator Holly Mitchell & Ricardo Lara (D-Los Angeles) - This bill would delete the restriction prohibiting a judge from striking a prior serious felony conviction in connection with imposition of the 5-year enhancement described above and would make conforming changes. The bill would make additional technical non-substantive changes.

Public Presentations

46. Public Memoir Reading, Pitzer College, PZ 36.1: Women, Crime, and Punishment with Dr. Susan Castagnetto, June 27, 2022.
45. Lecturer, Pitzer College Inside Out Class at California Rehabilitation Center, June 7, 2022. Nigel Boyle, Supervising Professor. Topic: Prison Abolition.
44. Public Memoir Reading, Columbia University, Abolition Feminism

WMSTW4555_001_2022-1 with Dr. Sarah Haley, Professor, April 26, 2022.

43. Panelist, Harvard, The Kegely Institute of Ethics, ICDP/Santa Fe College-hosted panel discussion on *Public Safety & Policing in America*, April 21, 2022.
42. Panelist, The Peety Green Program, Educational Access for Incarcerated Women: Challenges and Opportunities, April 7, 2022.
41. Beyond the Bars Conference, Intersectional Approaches to Abolition: In Conversation with Assemblymember Isaac Bryan, Claudia Peña, Durrell Washington, and (Moderated by Robin Kello, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, January 15, 2022.
40. Host, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, 25th Anniversary of the Fire Inside, November 12, 2021.
39. Speaker, Oxford University's Rothemere American Institute, Historical Perspectives on Gendered State Violence in the United States, October 27, 2021.
38. Moderator, Cornell law School, The Sentencing Project and The National Black Women's Justice Institute, 2nd Alice Convening of the Coalition to End Extreme Sentences for Women, September 24, 2021.
37. Panelist, Ed Trust, The Second Racial Equity, Professional Institute, Flash Talk: Accountability and Access for Incarcerated Students, September 22, 2021
36. Co-Moderator, Six-Foot Apart Productions, The Meaning of Life: Stories of Incarceration, Reconciliation, and Redemption, September 2, 2021.
35. Co-Facilitator, Pitzer College, PZ 36.1:Philosophy, Women, Crime, and Punishment with Dr. Susan Cagstagnetto, May 26-June 30, 2021.
34. Panelist, Michelson 20MM Foundation, Pell Grant Restoration and the Future of Higher Education in Prison, March 23, 2021
33. Panelist, San Francisco Unity Group's Conference on Mass Incarceration, San Francisco, CA, February 27, 2021.
32. Panelist, Center for the Study of Women, University of California Los Angeles "Gender, Race, and Age Behind Bars: Impacts of Long-term Sentencing", Los Angeles, CA, February 3, 2021
31. Panelist, Tennessee Higher Education Initiative, Nashville, TN, January 29, 2021
30. Panelist, Amplifying Our legislative Voice, Sacramento State University, Sacramento, CA, December 10, 2020
29. Panelist, 10th Anniversary Justice Conference at Columbia University, Ending Death by Incarceration, New York, New York, March 5-8, 2020
28. Keynote speaker, Y2L Second Annual Girls Conference, Bakersfield, CA February 8, 2020
27. Panelist, University of Mississippi Oxford, *Making & Unmaking of Mass Incarceration, Ending Women's Incarceration*, December 4-6, 2019
26. Panelist, Yale University Law School, *Lifting As We Climb: Life for women and families After Incarceration*, New haven, CT September 9-10, 2019.

25. Visiting teacher, Prison Education Project-Scotland, *HMP Addiewell Prison* Edinburgh, Scotland, July 28-August 3, 2019
24. Panelist, "Ending Perpetual Punishment," American Friends Service Committee & The Sentencing Project, Detroit Michigan, July 11-14, 2019
23. Panelist, *Community Engagement Center 20th Anniversary Celebration*, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA 91711, April 30, 2019
22. Keynote speaker, "Thinking Gender 2019: Feminists Confronting the Carceral State annual conference, *Abolitionist Feminist Futures*, University of California Los Angeles, February 2019.
21. Panelist, "A Review of Sarah Haley's book, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and Jim Crow Modernity*," American Studies Association annual conference, Atlanta, Georgia, November 2018.
20. Panelist, "Presidential Panel," National Women's Studies Association annual conference, Atlanta, Georgia, November 2018.
19. Panelist, Prison Education Project-London, *HMP Brixton & HMP Whitmore Prisons*, London, England, June 18-26, 2018
18. Panelist, The Third Annual Conference on Reintegration of Formerly Incarcerated Populations: Convening Formerly Incarcerated Students and Alumni, Cal State University, Los Angeles, April 6-7, 2018.
17. Keynote speaker, Ventura Youth Correctional Facility, Women's History Month Celebration, *Honoring Formerly Incarcerated Women*, Camarillo, CA, March 27, 2018.
16. Keynote speaker, Napier Initiative Awards Banquet, *It's not About the Money*, March 24, 2018, Claremont, CA, March 24, 2018
15. Panelist, University of California, Berkeley, "Invisible No More Conference" *Policing, Reproduction, Sex & Sexuality panel*, March 22, 2018
14. Presenter, Cal State University, Fullerton 2017 Social Justice Summit, February 25, 2018
13. Panelist, "What Good are the Humanities in Prison?" USC Levan Institute for Humanities and Ethics, January 24, 2018.
12. Panelist, "With the Guidance of Our Foremothers the Combahee River Collective and Black Lives Matter Movement," National Women's Studies Association annual conference, Baltimore, MD, November 2017.
11. Panelist, Mass Incarceration and the Global Rise of Authoritarian Capitalism, Los Angeles, CA September 21, 2017.
10. Presenter, University of California San Diego, Student's Against Mass Incarceration "Gender and Mass Incarceration, May 30, 2017.
9. Panelist, Cal State University, Long Beach, CA California American Studies Association Conference, April 29, 2017.
8. Panelist, National Domestic Violence Conference, "Shifting the Lens" March 15, 2017.
7. Presenter, Cal State University, Fullerton 2017 Social Justice Summit, February 25, 2017.

6. Panelist, 2016 USC Lifer School, USC Gould School of Law, Los Angeles, October 2016.
5. Panelist, Mayor Garcetti's Access to Higher Education Challenge Event, USC Gould School of Law, Los Angeles, June 2016.
4. Keynote Speaker, "How People Like Me Get Degrees," Missouri Eastern Correctional Center, Pacifica, MO, June 2016.
3. Panelist, "Claremont Colleges Alumni: Prison Justice and the Liberal Arts," *Criminal Justice Symposium*, Pomona College, Claremont, March 2016.
2. Student Convocation Speaker, University College in Arts & Sciences, Washington University in St. Louis, September 2015.
1. Panelist, "Seeking Justice Inside and Outside the Walls: A Roundtable," National Women's Studies Association annual conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2014.

Training & Professional Development

- Alive and Well St. Louis, How Trauma Impacts Social, Emotional and Mental Health workshop, February 8, 2016.
- Peacemaking Circles within a Restorative Justice Framework Workshop presented by Kay Pranis, February 1, 2016.
- New Leadership Southern California: *Training Women for Politics and Public Affairs*, Scripps College, CA, June 22-27, 2014.

Media Appearances

- <https://omny.fm/shows/righteous-convictions-with-jason-flom/romarilyn-ralston-on-building-a-more-just-justice>
- <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-05-24/woman-who-killed-abuser-as-teen-seeks-newsom-pardon>
- <https://news.fullerton.edu/2022/02/governors-pardon-empowers-project-rebound-staff-members/>
- <http://www.ilanotreview.com/>
- <https://sojo.net/biography/romarilyn-ralston>
- https://laist.com/2020/04/29/coronavirus_women_state_prison_forgotten_testin_g.php
- https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=Romarilyn#id=1&v_id=7deffe6b23cd3da0aab29d83623080b8&action=click
- <https://www.pitzer.edu/alumni/2020-distinguished-alumni-award-romarilyn-ralston-14/>
- <https://www.earhustlesq.com/episodes/2020/5/13/catch-a-kite-5>
- <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/webinar-women-life->

[imprisonment/](#)

- <http://testif-i.com/our-stories/>
- <https://www.opendemocracy.net/romarilyn-ralston/revisiting-prison-industrial-complex>
- <http://justusvoices.com/romarilyn-ralston/>
- <https://ilusa.org/leader/romarilyn-ralston/>
- https://www.democracynow.org/appearances/romarilyn_ralston
- <https://capitalandmain.com/paroling-the-mind-a-college-program-opens-new-doors-for-former-convicts-1107>
- https://dailytitan.com/lifestyle/project-rebound-coordinator-uses-education-to-help-formerly-incarcerated-students/article_a5ce8caa-ee69-5408-a39d-2cb05a3b5b39.html
- <https://medium.com/@csuftuskmagazine/from-prisoner-to-scholar-138b68d403fa>
- <https://www.scpr.org/programs/take-two/2016/12/19/53870/program-for-formerly-incarcerated-students-expands/>
- https://dailytitan.com/news/campus/project-rebound-hits-csuf/article_def83a0b-b1c5-5ccc-bfab-ed3ce26d2c25.html

Service

- The Education Trust Advisory Board Member, Appointed May 2022.
- Alliance for Higher Education in Prison Board Member, Appointed August 2021
- MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Equity Cohort Committee Member, 2021.
- Pitzer College Alumni Board Member, Appointed June 2021.
- The Million Book Project, The Justice Collaborative at Yale University. The Million Book Project will bring curated 500-book literary time-capsules to 1,000 prisons and juvenile detention centers to each state in the United States, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.
- Steering Committee Member, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation CARE Grant Program (\$10 million), FY 2021.
- Steering Committee Member, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation CARE Grant Program (\$10 million), FY 2020.
Innovative Programming Grants (IPG) offer funding to eligible nonprofit organizations to provide programs that have demonstrated success and focus on incarcerated individuals' responsibility and restorative justice principles. The goal of IPG is to improve access to programming and increase the percentage of incarcerated individuals served in California's adult prisons.
- Member, Blue Ribbon Commission on Fair Employment & Equity, City of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, an alliance of private and public sector employers committed to providing opportunities for people who have been historically excluded from upwardly mobile jobs. Los Angeles, CA, July 2017- 2019.

- California Coalition for Women Prisoners, Co-coordinator research & organizing, Core Committee Los Angeles Chapter, October 2016- present. CCWP Statewide Coordinating team member since 2018.
- Strategic Planning Committee Member for the National Alliance for Higher Education in Prison, June 2016 – Jan 2017.
- Concordance Institute for Advancing Social Justice, Community Liaison Board, Washington University in St. Louis, May 2016 – 2018.
- Volunteer, Ferguson Commission, *“Forward Through Ferguson,”* St. Louis, Missouri, 2014-2015

References available upon request