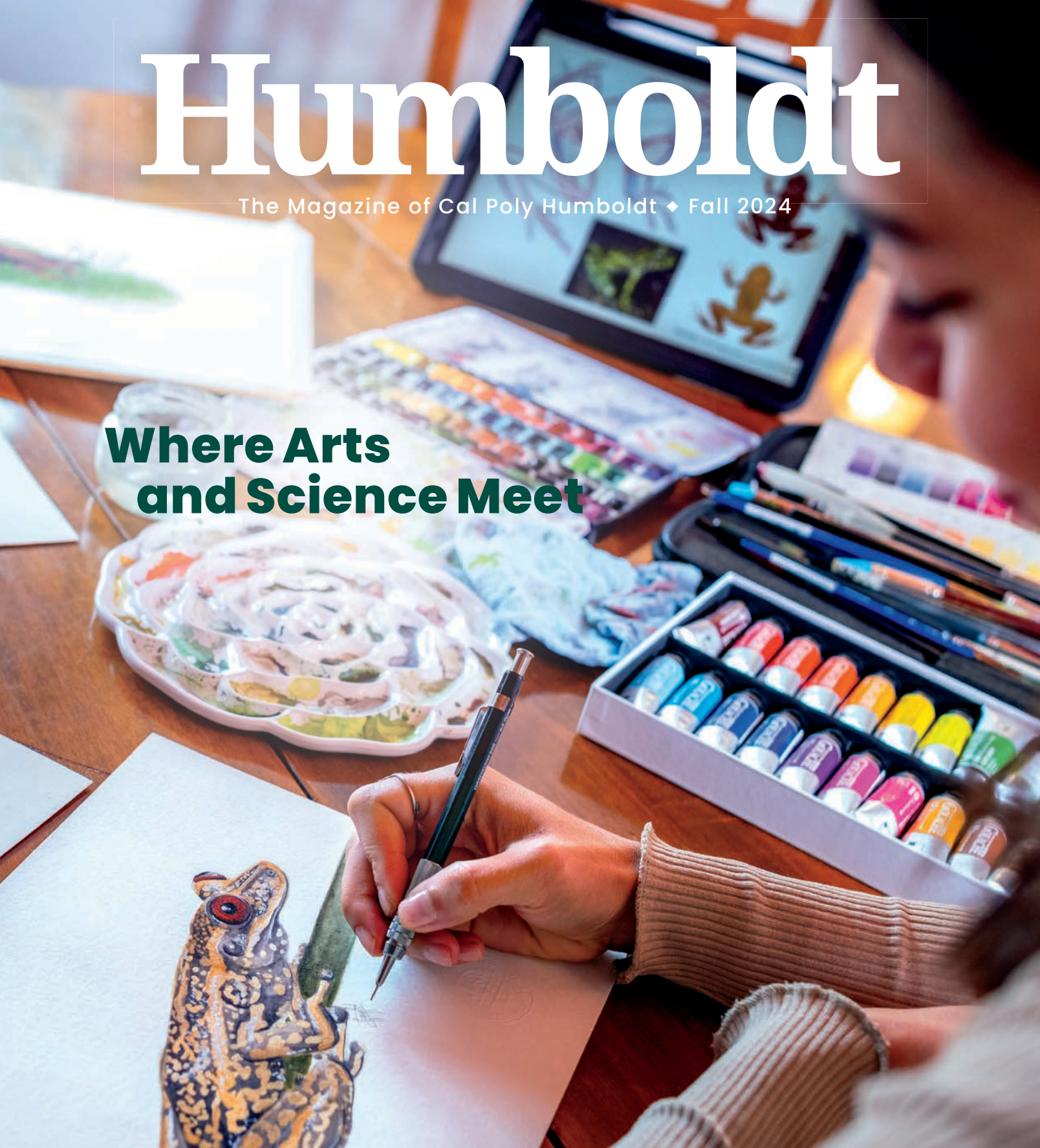


Humboldt

The Magazine of Cal Poly Humboldt ♦ Fall 2024

Where Arts and Science Meet



Presidential Legacy of
Transformation and
Innovation

Campus Scene: Child
Development Lab

Improving the Health
and Wellbeing of the
North Coast



fall 2024

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ON THE COVER: Scientific illustration intern Dani Cafaggi collaborated with the Biological Sciences and Art + Film departments for a semester. Through internship, Cafaggi breathed life into species that of the Rio Pomba casque-headed tree frog (pictur

THIS SPREAD: A fallen tree in Redwood Park across the perfect home for moss and mushrooms.

LUMBERJACK WEEKEND

Homecoming

Thursday, Oct. 17 – Sunday, Oct. 20

Mark your calendar and get ready for a fun-filled weekend!

Join us for the Block Party on
Saturday, Oct. 19, featuring music from
THE BEACH BOYS!

Lumberjack Weekend Kick-Off Party
Thursday, Oct. 17, 6 p.m.
Gutswurrak Student Activities Center Quad

Forever Humboldt Families Mixer
Friday, Oct. 18, 5 p.m.
Septentrio Winery
...and much more!

Registration is required. See the full line-up of events and register at homecoming.humboldt.edu



Humboldt

The Magazine of Cal Poly Humboldt

magazine.humboldt.edu

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Study Aims to Protect Elk on Roadways with Collar-Activated Signs

A STUDY UNDERWAY WILL HELP DETERMINE whether electronic detection of elk along North Coast highways will help protect elk, as well as human drivers.

Micaela Szykman Gunther, Wildlife Professor, and undergraduate and graduate students are focused on a particular stretch of highway near Stone Lagoon, about 30 miles north of Arcata, that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has designated as an area of concern for traffic collisions with wildlife. They are researching if warning signs installed along highways that signal to drivers when collared elk are on or close to the roadway will slow down drivers and reduce collisions.

Gunther has spent seven years monitoring elk along the North Coast, collaborating with biologists at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to track their movements and other behaviors to better understand and conserve the species.

Preliminary data collection for this study includes analyzing data on elk movements and road crossings to inform the Electronic Detection System, which will run on software designed by the technology company Lotek. With assistance from Caltrans, Gunther

hopes to have the physical system in place by next year.

Highways fragment elk and other wildlife habitats, serving as impediments to daily and seasonal movements. Crossing highways to access available habitat increases the chances of wildlife-vehicle collisions that affect both human and wildlife safety, as well as damage property. Implementing an Electronic Detection System that alerts drivers to a hazard (i.e., a large elk) on the roadway can mitigate damage and loss.

While the elk have collars to track them, the study also focuses on the behavior of another species: humans. Researchers will be developing signage that stands out from static wildlife crossing signs, and that will be triggered to flash lights when collared elk approach the roadway, similar to pedestrian crossing signage that has been adopted across California in the last decade.

Gunther and students are observing how motorists respond to the signage to understand if they reduce their speed and, as a result, the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions and other incidents along the highway.



Roadways with collar-activated signs will help protect elk and people driving along a stretch of Highway 101 near Stone Lagoon.

Promotorx Transformative Educator Program Empowers Future Educators and Local Youth

THE NATION'S CLASSROOMS ARE BECOMING MORE DIVERSE, underscoring the need for a teaching force and curricula that reflect this diversity.

For this reason, Education Professor Marisol Ruiz created the Promotorx Transformative Educator Program. Program fellows learn to create sustainable curricula and literacy workshops driven by the needs of the youth they work with. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions grant.

The program has taught Education graduate student and fellow Gina Cerda Salvarrey sustainable pedagogies that she can put into practice.

"It's very motivating professionally because the students allow me to learn from them and about the needs they have as non-dominant students," Cerda Salvarrey adds. "But what is most impactful for me is when students comment that this is the first time a class has given them a space where they can express themselves and show their abilities without fear."

The program also gives its fellows resources they need for success. For example, fellows fulfill service hours needed to apply for credential programs and prepare for the CSET and CBEST

exams. They also learn about policy, decolonizing pedagogy, and how to approach issues such as harassment.

"It's important for people who want to be teachers to understand the dynamics of learning," Ruiz says. "It's not just teaching and learning—there's so much happening in schools." For Cerda Salvarrey, "it has been a niche where we can explore ideas and reimagine the educational world we want to be a part of."



Noah Zerbe—believe it is another tool students can use in their coursework.

Zerbe teaches his students how to use it for their assignments. One of his assignments asks students to use ChatGPT to provide feedback on their papers, like outlining missing concepts.

"Teaching students how to use AI effectively is important. It's useful for clarifying concepts, brainstorming, and editing writing. Through my assignments and courses, I guide students through effectively using AI and emphasize the importance of fact-checking and not blindly relying on AI-generated content," Zerbe says.

Zerbe also requires students to explain how they use AI software and analyze its results.

"We're teaching our students to be critical thinkers. Therefore, engaging critically with AI is just as important as engaging critically with any other source," Zerbe says.

He believes future employers will expect graduates to know how to use AI effectively in the way an engineer would know how to use a calculator.

"It's certainly not going away. I think that trying to ignore it or pretend like it doesn't exist, or not thinking about how to integrate it into teaching, is problematic. That's why I've been embracing it. I think it's the future," Zerbe says.

(TOP) Education Professor Marisol Ruiz created the program to help teach future educators how to incorporate student experiences and counter-narratives into curriculum.

(LEFT) Political Science Professor Noah Zerbe teaches his students how to use AI for assignments.



Navigating AI

DUE TO ITS RAPID EVOLUTION, artificial intelligence is a popular topic among academics. It has transformed into a tool capable of answering complicated questions and even writing entire papers within minutes.

"Two years ago, AI tools were simpler, but now companies like ChatGPT and many others are evolving AI at a pace that academia was unprepared for. As educators, we should seriously consider its implications for teaching and learning and find mindful ways to incorporate it into the classroom to improve learning outcomes where relevant," says Enoch Hale, director of Cal Poly Humboldt's Center for Teaching & Learning.

The Center is helping faculty navigate the new academic world overwhelmed by AI with caution and intention.

While some believe AI could negatively affect students' critical thinking skills, others—like Political Science Professor



Cal Poly Humboldt's Model UN students spend the year learning debate rules, studying negotiation and consensus building, and researching their assigned countries before a competition.

Students Shine at Model UN Conference in New York City

OVER THE LAST YEAR, several dozen students spent months analyzing the complex challenges facing Algeria, Ethiopia, Malta, and Guinea-Bissau, preparing how best to represent their assigned countries.

Their hard work culminated in March, when the team won an Outstanding Delegation Award, placing it in the top 20% of teams at the Model United Nations Conference in New York. It was the highest ranking a team from Humboldt has ever achieved.

Model UN is a worldwide organization that sees students roleplay as delegates for nations, research and propose policy, debate, give speeches, and negotiate with each other—as the real UN does. These experiences build a variety of skills that are applicable in a wide array of fields.

Each year Political Science Professor Noah Zerbe teaches a course that prepares students to compete in two competitions: a smaller, regional conference in San Francisco and the national conference in New York City. The San Francisco conference acts as an introduction to competition for most students, and those with more experience attend the New York conference.

The New York conference sees more than 5,000 students from around the world competing at a high level. Many of them get years of training, and get support from the diplomatic structures of their home governments.

Humboldt makes its name with a scrappier approach. Students spend the year learning the rules of Model UN debate, studying negotiation and consensus building, and researching the countries they've been assigned to represent. They research policies and develop resolutions and position papers based on committees that reflect their skills and interests.

The skills that Model UN develops—team building, negotiation, and public speaking—have to be applied.

"That sense of self-confidence is not something you can teach," Zerbe says. "They have to experience it. And it's even more transformative for the students who feel unprepared."

College Corps Humboldt Prepares Students for Leadership Development

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FULL-TIME STUDENTS from Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods are pledging to help 25 local nonprofits as part of the statewide Californians ForAll College Corps program.

Through service activities and leadership development, College Corps seeks to foster a new generation of civic-minded leaders who can help bridge divides, solve problems, and address pressing social issues to build stronger and more equitable communities across California. In addition, the program provides financial support to low- and middle-income students, helping to reduce their debt burden and making it easier for them to graduate confidently and without debt.

"This program helps students to pay for college. But it doesn't only do that. College Corps allows students to practice service leadership in our local community and support and uplift local nonprofits. It's a win-win-win: good for the students, the campus, and the community," says Sara Hart, College Corps principal investigator and Religious Studies Professor.

In January 2022, the state awarded Cal Poly Humboldt \$3.3 million to support approximately 100 students yearly for their community projects and community partners that host students through the 2025-2026 academic year. Since the announcement, Humboldt partnered with Founders Mark, an organization that provides career training for young adults, to develop a custom curriculum in service leadership for College Corps fellows. As part of their curriculum, the fellows collaborate with their local nonprofit community partners to identify a challenge faced by those community partners and to develop potential solutions as their final project.

This spring, College Corps Fellows pitched their proposed solutions to a panel of national nonprofit leaders in a Shark Tank-style event. The fellows spent the remainder of the academic year activating their ideas and solving the immediate problems that their community partners identified.

In addition to working with their community partners, College Corps fellows will partner with the University's three colleges to offer service-oriented programs. The College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences held an Art in Service series.

"Our goal with these projects is largely on-campus outreach. College Corps is a new program. Partnering with the colleges on projects involving faculty and students—including College Corps fellows—is a way for us to get the word out about the program," Hart says.

New Vessel to Support Research



TO REVEAL THE MYSTERIES OF OUR OCEAN, Cal Poly Humboldt is looking toward the future with a new oceanographic research vessel.

The 78-foot-by-28-foot custom-built aluminum catamaran powered by twin 1,100-horsepower Tier 4 engines will travel at speeds up to 24 knots. The vessel—expected to be operational in early 2025—will carry up to 40 students, faculty, and crew on day trips and accommodate up to 14 people on multi-day research voyages. The vessel will have a variety of hydraulic deck machinery for handling up to 5,000 pounds of oceanographic equipment and instrumentation.

The deck will also accommodate divers entering the water from two dive platforms off the stern. The vessel's laboratory and pilot house will carry a diverse array of state-of-the-art navigation and oceanographic electronics to measure physical and biological features of the ocean bottom and water column.

The legacy of fostering undergraduate and graduate academic experiences while promoting marine research spans decades with programs and facilities that include the R.V. Coral Sea.

Since then, thousands of students have learned first-hand everything from gathering and analyzing water and sediment samples to collecting fish from the deep ocean.

Though well-maintained, the Coral Sea turns 50 this year, far exceeding the average 30-year lifespan of a research vessel. In addition, the state passed new emission standards effective in 2026 for vessels in the Coral Sea's class, and replacing the ship's five diesel engines to meet the new standards would cost up to \$2 million.

The new \$7.9 million new research vessel is made possible by the state's historic investment in Humboldt's expansion as a polytechnic university.

collaborating with the Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe, the Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA), Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), and Cal Poly Humboldt's Schatz Energy Research Center to develop nested microgrid solutions.

The project will include the deployment of three nested microgrids for the Hoopa, Yurok, and Karuk Tribes. These microgrids will be capable of powering a portion of PG&E's electrical circuit during local outages and will be able to function jointly or independently as necessary.

The Blue Lake Rancheria (BLR) is also expanding its own campus energy system into four nested, behind-the-meter microgrids to support the project. This expansion will provide a demonstration site for the control system that will subsequently be deployed along the Hoopa 1101.

The technical development for TERAS is being led by the Schatz Center, which has previously worked on innovative renewable energy projects in California. The Tribal partnership involved in the project sees this initiative as a crucial step towards energy sovereignty and resilience. The project is also seen as a model for rural communities and is focused on intertribal collaboration.

Transformative Energy Solution for Rural Northern California Tribes

The Tribal Energy Resilience and Sovereignty Project (TERAS) aims to empower four Tribes in Northern California to convert one of the state's least reliable electrical circuits into a highly resilient renewable energy system.

The project is supported by \$88 million in funding from the Department of Energy's Grid Resilience and Innovative Partnerships (GRIP) program. It is expected to advance Tribal energy sovereignty, climate resilience, jobs equity, and clean energy innovation.

The "Hoopa 1101" distribution circuit, which spans 142 miles, provides electricity to three Tribes in eastern Humboldt County - the Hoopa, Yurok, and Karuk Tribes. These Tribes frequently experience long power outages. To address this issue, they are

Reasons to Cheer: New Sports Channel Lumberjack Spirit

NEW COLLEGIATE SPORTS are expanding opportunities for student-athletes and Lumberjacks fans as the University continues to grow. With the planned addition of Wrestling in the 2024-25 year, Cal Poly Humboldt Athletics will have a slate of 14 sports teams that compete at the Division II level.

Humboldt will become only the second NCAA Division II men's wrestling program, along with San Francisco State University, in the 23-campus California State University system. Lennie Zalesky was hired as the head coach in March and has since been building a roster for the resurging program.

The Lumberjacks have a rich, storied history of wrestling. The program launched in 1952 and flourished under the legendary late coach Frank Cheek, the all-time winningest coach in Humboldt history. Due to budget considerations and the withdrawal of several conference members from the sport, Humboldt dropped intercollegiate wrestling.

Virgil Moorehead ('83, Education), Craig Vejvoda ('80, Business Administration), and Dan Phillips ('91, Business and Computer Information Systems), who were members of the

Humboldt wrestling community, have each committed a gift of \$50,000 to help build upon Cal Poly Humboldt's wrestling legacy.

Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods are set to launch a new men's and women's rodeo program in 2024. This innovative collaboration will provide students with exceptional opportunities to engage in rodeo activities while pursuing their degrees at both institutions.

Men's and Women's Indoor Track & Field recently completed its first season. The teams are composed of existing members of the Outdoor Track & Field team. The inclusion of Indoor Track & Field allows athletes to dedicate more time during the fall and winter to refine their skills and participate in competitive races that surpass the benefits of regular practice sessions in the winter months.

And in 2022, Humboldt became the 42nd program to offer women's triathlon at the collegiate level. In October 2023, the team finished fourth among Division II opponents and 12th out of 16 teams at the West Regional Championship.

First New Academic Building of the Polytech Era



Ushering in a new era for Northern California's first polytechnic university, construction is about to begin on Cal Poly Humboldt's Engineering & Technology Building. The flagship building of the polytechnic transformation will be Humboldt's first major academic infrastructure project since 2008 and will emphasize student-centered learning and sustainable design.

The \$100 million project was made possible with one-time funding from the historic \$458 million investment in the University's polytechnic effort approved by Governor Gavin Newsom and the State Legislature in 2021.

The 74,000 square-foot, three-story structure designed by AC Martin will be located at the northeast corner of B and 17th streets, the current site of the Campus Events Field. Swinerton began construction in May 2024, with opening planned for Spring 2026.

The building will provide much-needed lab and research spaces, faculty offices, and student support spaces that promote

collaboration and hands-on learning. It will house the School of Engineering and its five high-demand bachelor's and master's programs: Energy Systems Engineering, Engineering & Community Practice, Environmental Resources Engineering, Environmental Systems, and Mechanical Engineering. It will also accommodate the Computer Science and Software Engineering degree programs.

The state-of-the-art facility will highlight the University's long-standing commitment to sustainable practices. Rather than being made of steel, the beams are mass timber sourced from the Pacific Northwest. This will be the University's first mass timber building. Proposed sustainability features include high-efficiency irrigation, water-efficient plumbing, and energy-efficient and Cal Green-compliant lighting and appliances. Its rooftop will have solar panels consistent with CSU Sustainability Policy and will be integrated into the future campus microgrid system.

The interior spaces reflect Cal Poly Humboldt's vision as a polytechnic for the 21st century: a university where STEM and the liberal arts programs intersect and are grounded in practical experience for students. Designed to foster interaction across disciplines, most of the building's classrooms and labs will be used for everything from classes to meetings. An interdisciplinary makerspace will feature wood and metal shops, project storage, and fabrication spaces.

For more information about the University's polytechnic buildout, visit humboldt.edu/about/polytechnic.

Campus Scene

Nurturing Futures: Child Development Lab

- ▶ For 56 years, the Child Development Lab, as a part of the Child Development Department, has been a special environment designed to provide a model preschool for children, create a learning center for University students and faculty, support and educate parents of young children, and serve as a research and instructional center at Cal Poly Humboldt.
- ▶ The first and longest nationally accredited preschool program in Humboldt County, the Child Development Lab was founded in 1968 by School of Home Economics Professor Emilla Tschant.
- ▶ The Child Development Lab provides a sliding-scale tuition program for families who may need financial assistance. Each year, families receive support with their children's tuition, aiming to enhance program diversity and support local communities. This is made possible through a trust fund in memory of Emilla Tschanz.
- ▶ An important feature of the Child Development Lab is the observation booth. In a private room overlooking the classroom, Child Development students learn the art and skill of observation. They record observations to compile anecdotes of developmental processes, using an interactive live video and audio streaming system.
- ▶ The Child Development Lab is located in the University's Trinity Early Learning Center, which is also home to the Children's Center, a childcare program for the University community. Open since August 2023, the Trinity Early Learning Center represents the important roles the programs play in supporting local families and future educators



BOLDLY RISING

The Campaign for Cal Poly Humboldt

Surpasses \$50 Million Goal

By Frank Whitlatch

Cal Poly Humboldt's first comprehensive fundraising campaign has surpassed its goal of at least \$50 million, with more than 10,000 people giving at record levels to support dramatic growth in student scholarships and campus programs. The campaign goal was reached more than a year early.

During the Boldly Rising Campaign, there have been gifts to start new scholarships and bolster existing ones. Other donors created new research opportunities for students, as well as additional internships, paid research, and other hands on experiences. Donors have funded new specialized equipment, and supported intercollegiate athletics, field trips, travel to conferences, and more.

Due to the success of the Campaign, the number of students receiving donor funded scholarships each year has grown from about 500 to more than 800. This includes the donor funded Humboldt First initiative, which provides \$1,000 scholarships to all students who attended high school in Humboldt County.

"This is an exciting milestone in Cal Poly Humboldt's journey with the first fundraising campaign in its history. The response and support from our alumni and our community have been amazing," said Dan Phillips, a Humboldt alum and chair of the Campaign Cabinet. "Most important is the profound impact that the Boldly Rising Campaign is having for our students, providing greater access to higher education, and elevating the excellence in Cal Poly Humboldt programs. We are truly making a difference."

A series of events celebrating the success of the Boldly Rising Campaign will be held in October during Lumberjack Weekend, Oct. 17-20, and the final amount raised will be announced at that time.

"The Foundation Board congratulates Cal Poly Humboldt on the successful completion of its first ever comprehensive fundraising campaign. This was a longtime aspirational goal of the University and the Foundation," said Robin Smith, a Humboldt alum who serves as chair of the Cal Poly Humboldt Foundation and a vice chair of the Campaign Cabinet. "We are grateful to all of the donors who supported this comprehensive effort, and we are thrilled for all of the students who will benefit in the years to come."

Boldly Rising was conceived more than four years ago as a way to support Humboldt's aspirational vision for its future. Volunteers and campus leaders prioritized making a Humboldt education possible for more students through not only scholarships and other financial support, but also hands on learning and applied research, acquisition of

new and emerging technology, enhancement of academic programs, and creating more equitable communities.

Donor response to the effort was enthusiastic, and the initial goal was reached during the silent phase, before the effort was publicly announced. The revised goal of at least \$50 million over five years was met in less than four years.

Over the course of the Campaign, more than 10,000 individuals with a variety of different connections to Cal Poly Humboldt have become donors. They range in age from 18 to 102, and include alumni from many eras, parents and other family members, faculty and staff, community members, public and private foundations, and many others.

"We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has been a part of this very successful campaign. Humboldt has a global community of alumni and other friends, and with this Campaign, they've come together to truly lift Humboldt up and carry it boldly forward," said former President Tom Jackson, Jr.

The donations from Humboldt's wide array of supporters have impacted every program at the University, with some exciting highlights.

In the very early stage of the Campaign, multiple donors led by St. Joseph Health Humboldt County created a new endowment to enable the launch of the Nursing program. Gifts from donors also helped create the new Rou Dalagurr Food Sovereignty Lab & Traditional Ecological Knowledges Institute. Humboldt's first endowed professorship and a new student research program were created in Psychology. An endowment was created to establish a new Visiting Artist program. Another endowment was created to support the Cal Poly Humboldt Press and Special Collections in the Library.

During the initial very challenging months of the pandemic, hundreds of donors gave more than \$150,000 for student's basic needs and to help ensure access to technology and specialized materials. Donor support during the Campaign has also been instrumental in expanding emergency housing, providing funds for the campus food pantry, and helping fund programs to help students dealing with unexpected adversity or health challenges.

The first endowed scholarship in Intercollegiate Athletics was created, supporting students on the Women's Rowing Team. Other donors came together to create more scholarships for basketball athletes, giving enough to also name Tom Wood Court. New donations also support the Athletics weight room, the training room, and club sports at Humboldt.

The Campaign publicly launched in Fall 2022. It officially reached \$50 million in February 2024 when members of the Campaign Cabinet and Foundation Board came together to give more than \$100,000 in matching funds for Giving Day.

Record giving during any month in Humboldt history hit a new high in May 2024, with \$4.74 million donated. By May 2024, a total of \$15.4 million in gift commitments had been raised in the 2023-24 academic year, setting a record for the University.

The four years of the Campaign represent the four highest years of donor support ever for the University. There were more than 10,500 individuals who made gifts at all levels during the Campaign. Of these donors, 51% made their first gift ever to support Cal Poly Humboldt.

Also during the Campaign, the overall endowment in the Cal Poly Humboldt Foundation saw significant growth, from roughly \$30 million to over \$45 million. Many people made significant long term commitments through their estate plans resulting in more than \$21 million in planned gifts.

"It's been inspiring to see how much passion there is for Cal Poly Humboldt, and it's been a privilege to experience how meaningful and emotional it can be for individuals to make a significant gift," said Frank Whitlatch, former vice president for University Advancement and former executive director of the Cal Poly Humboldt Foundation.

The Boldly Rising Campaign was led by volunteers on the Campaign Cabinet and the Cal Poly Humboldt Foundation Board, who not only made significant financial contributions but also gave significant time.

It's not too late to make a gift. If you'd like to donate to Cal Poly Humboldt, visit boldlyrising.humboldt.edu.



\$21.1M+
IN PLANNED GIFTS

\$30M to \$45M
ENDOWMENT
GROWTH

274
NUMBER OF DONORS
GIVING \$10,000+

10,649
TOTAL
CAMPAIGN DONORS

51%
ARE FIRST-TIME DONORS

800+
STUDENTS RECEIVING
DONOR-FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS

\$4.74M
RECORD GIVING IN
MAY 2024

\$15.4M
RECORD GIFT COMMITMENTS
IN 2023-24



Tom Jackson, Jr.

A Legacy of Transformation and Innovation

TOM JACKSON, JR. has achieved many “firsts.” He is the first in his family to earn a college degree. He was the first African American president of Cal Poly Humboldt. And he was the president who spearheaded the University’s effort to become a polytechnic—the first in Northern California.

These and other inspiring firsts have been the hallmarks of Jackson’s run as president of Cal Poly Humboldt, which ended when he made the decision to step away from his position in August.

His departure caps a five-year tenure that saw a dramatic reshaping of the University, paving the way for innovative academic programs, new infrastructure, community collaborations, and record-breaking fundraising to support students.

When Jackson first experienced Humboldt, he was struck by the region’s natural and cultural beauty—the redwoods, the oceans, the community. That sense of place and sense of community remained a source of inspiration for him.

“Cal Poly Humboldt is an amazing place with special people. I have had the privilege to work alongside scientists and future scientists, teachers and future teachers, artists and future artists, engineers and future engineers, and leaders and future leaders. I wake up every day and remember what a gift I have been given: to have the opportunity to inspire and lead others,” says Jackson.

Jackson is moving to his tenured professorship in the College of Professional Studies, where he will also work with the College of Extended Education & Global Engagement at Cal Poly Humboldt.

It’s a fitting transition for Jackson, whose higher education career has spanned nearly 40 years. He served 18 years as both a dean and a vice president at a number of institutions. Over the last decade, he served as president of Cal Poly Humboldt and, prior to that, Black Hills State University in South Dakota.

From the beginning of his time at Humboldt, Jackson encouraged the University to raise its sights, innovate and lead, find the good in people, and always focus on providing a positive and meaningful educational experience for students, including improving the residential experiences for students moving to the North Coast.

His visionary leadership resulted in one of the most significant transformative efforts in University history. The conversion to a polytechnic, along with the historic state investment of \$458 million to help bring the plans to reality, will have a positive impact on the campus and community for generations to come. Within just a few years, Cal Poly Humboldt has added nine new bachelor’s degrees and a new master’s degree and is building a new residence hall complex that will house nearly 1,000 students.

Construction is poised to begin on a new Engineering & Technology Building, which will be the signature new academic facility of the polytechnic effort. Polytechnic funding and other efforts have also supported the acquisition of new properties, a state-of-the-art replacement for the

Coral Sea research vessel, and updates to campus labs. Additional new academic programs will be added over the next six years, including those in the engineering and healthcare fields. A new facility to support sustainability efforts and additional campus housing are also in the works.

Jackson has led a significant expansion of outreach by the University including a new brand that showcases academic excellence and opportunities for student engagement. He has led growth in important funding in support of students. This has included a doubling of the amount of research grants and contracts to more than \$67 million annually, one of the highest in the 23-campus CSU system. The University has also seen record levels of support from alumni and others. It recently completed its first comprehensive fundraising campaign, Boldly Rising, with more than 10,000 donors giving well over the campaign goal of \$50 million to support scholarships, academic programs, and other campus priorities.

Budget and enrollment have been a focus throughout Jackson’s tenure, as the University had experienced a number of years of declining enrollment and resources. The campus successfully balanced budgets after climbing out of a substantial \$25 million deficit. Overall enrollment has turned around and is about to enter its third straight year of growth, even as many campuses throughout the nation struggle with declines. Overall applications by new students have reached record levels. In addition, a variety of efforts have led to more students staying in school and graduating.

Community outreach and engagement have been a major priority for Jackson. He has built trust and launched partnerships with the region’s Tribal Nations, which he cites as “generational work” and among his most important successes. He has also worked closely with President Keith Flamer and College of the Redwoods to forge a model relationship between a two-year and a four-year institution. Both Jackson and President Flamer are proud military veterans and have strongly supported veteran students.

Jackson spent significant time and energy with outreach to regional government leaders at all levels as well as community organizations, including Chambers of Commerce. He has involved the University in important community development efforts, including wind power and undersea high-speed internet cable with a focus on educational needs, grants, and partnerships. In all of these community efforts, the goal was to engage individuals across campus in order to build deeper and broader connections.

An area of emphasis throughout Jackson’s career has been international education. He believes international competency will someday be considered as important as digital competency for college graduates and frequently speaks of Humboldt’s potential for creating a “model global community.” Successes in this area include implementing the International Service Learning Program, with current offerings in both the Philippines and Mexico. In addition, the University recently signed an expansive new agreement



to cooperate on research and more with Charles Darwin University in Australia, Blue Lake Rancheria, and College of the Redwoods. Cal Poly Humboldt will continue its international engagement with Cebu Technological University and Cebu Normal University, both located in the Philippines. Jackson, as a professor, hopes to help create a unique ISLP experience for graduate students.

Among the new programs launched in the last five years was a first-of-its-kind bachelor's degree program at Pelican Bay State Prison, which is a partnership with College of the Redwoods and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Jackson oversaw the launch of fall commencement ceremonies so that more students and families would have a chance to participate in the important rite of passage, and then went a step further and added a regional commencement ceremony in the Los Angeles area. Jackson has said, "Not every family has a few thousand dollars to travel to Arcata for commencement, as much as they may want to. As a campus, we must find ways to bring the celebration to the families so the entire support system of our students can share in the joy of seeing that person awarded their earned degree."

As a result of many efforts in facilities, academics, research, and more, Cal Poly Humboldt achieved its highest-ever rating on STARS (the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System), which is used by hundreds

of colleges and universities nationwide to measure their sustainability efforts. Humboldt's Gold rating and overall score are the second highest among CSU campuses.

There have also been many successes within Athletics, an important area to Jackson, who himself was a student-athlete. He was known to seek input from the Student Athletic Advisory Committee, which often had highly balanced and



engaged students representing the first-year to graduate levels. During his tenure, the Athletics program earned two national championships in Men's Rugby and Women's Rowing, improved academic performance, and added additional sports, including triathlon, men's wrestling, and men's and women's rodeo. He sought out opportunities to know the student-athletes and their parents. His goal was to travel to at least one away event per team, per season, to spend time with

students and their families. He would admit that he failed frequently at this goal. But it never stopped him from trying.

Jackson led Cal Poly Humboldt through a number of crises. Very shortly after he began, there were two multi-day power outages, followed closely by the COVID-19 pandemic, which struck halfway through his first year. Rather than retrench, he encouraged the campus to continue pursuing its aspirations and to prepare for opportunities to grow and support the region.

From his point of view, every week there were incidents large and small on campus. The staff and administrative



teams were at their best during these moments. "It truly was inspiring to see the true dedication to each other and to this campus during the tougher moments," Jackson says.

Over the past five years, Presidents Flamer and Jackson have shared the biweekly *Times-Standard* column "College Matters." They have authored more than 100 articles each. The two presidents have also shared a KHSU talk radio show called, "Talk Humboldt with Keith and Tom." Together they have interviewed dozens of local business and community leaders on subjects related to the North Coast. These were strategies used to share important information with the community about higher education and to highlight the unique people of the North Coast.

Leading the campus during these transformational times has been the pinnacle of Jackson's long career in higher education. Even so, he has remained steadfast in his commitment to his family, balancing the heavy demands of leadership with time and attention given to his surviving daughter and spouse. The Jacksons lost their 22-year-old son in a car accident in 2020, a heartbreaking loss that he and his family still feel deeply.

When sharing his plans, Jackson highlighted the transformation underway on campus as well as some of the personal reasons guiding his decision. "As a president within the CSU, I have had 22 other close colleagues who matter greatly. Working beside them has helped this campus immensely when needed most."

"I am a dad at heart," he said. "I come to work every day to provide for my family while trying to make a difference in the lives of others. It was the desire to serve and help others that led me to this profession. Today, I find great joy in being

the passenger in a small plane that my daughter is piloting. It was 23 years ago that I was the one flying and she was the nine-month-old sleeping beside me in the plane's cabin.

"We do the very best we can every day, trusting the students, staff, and faculty to do the same." "In the end, it remains about the students. And what has been most rewarding are the many students who have graduated over the last five years. Nothing replaces the smiles of a student and the applause and excitement from their family as their student crosses the stage to receive their diploma. That is what it is all about." ♦



Tom Jackson, Jr.'s departure as president of Cal Poly Humboldt caps a five-year tenure that saw a dramatic reshaping of the University, paving the way for innovative academic programs, new infrastructure, community collaborations, and record-breaking fundraising to support students.

Program Changes Lives at **Pelican Bay** State Prison

By Melissa Hutsell

Photos by Tiffany L. Conover, Pelican Bay State Prison



EACH WEEK, STUDENTS file into their classroom to learn about topics including culture, gender, social advocacy, and theories of communication—a familiar scene on college campuses. But what sets this classroom apart is that it's in Pelican Bay State Prison, where the first program of its kind is increasing employment opportunities while also decreasing the chance inmates will return to prison once they serve their time.

For Antonio, who's been incarcerated for two decades, the program is a lighthouse for inmates navigating stormy seas.

He is one of 16 students in Cal Poly Humboldt's B.A. in Communication program at Pelican Bay State Prison. It's the first B.A. program to be taught in person on a Level IV yard (high-security facility) in California.

Antonio, who's serving 90-years-to-life at Pelican Bay, is pursuing the program to better himself and show his family that he is more than his past.

"Knowledge and self-education have helped me a great deal. It has allowed me to develop and grow in a place that lacks milestones ordinary human beings have in a free society," he says. "Education has freed my mind even as my body remains incarcerated."

The program is a partnership among Humboldt, College of the Redwoods, and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The first cohort started in January 2024 with 16 students who completed their associate's degrees through College of the Redwoods' Pelican Bay Scholars Program.

"CDCR is proud to partner with Cal Poly Humboldt to greatly expand degree-earning opportunities for incarcerated students and further the Department's commitment in expanding 'grade school to grad school' opportunities," said CDCR Secretary Jeff Macomber. "Collaborative efforts between CDCR and California's public higher education system are truly transforming lives."

"It saved mine," says Darryl, who has spent several decades in the Security Housing Unit.

Darryl says the program is changing the narrative and setting an example for the future at Pelican Bay State Prison. It is giving students the opportunity to look at life through a different lens and a greater chance of success once released.

"You begin to mold and create a better version of yourself, an image that reflects your true being, something you can be proud of... a persona that begins to take on a new meaning with principles, someone with integrity that's in conjunction with pro-social values," he says.

Research shows that access to education significantly reduces recidivism rates. According to the nonprofit global policy think tank RAND Corporation, formerly incarcerated people are 43% less likely to re-offend and are more likely to be employed when they participate in any type of education program.

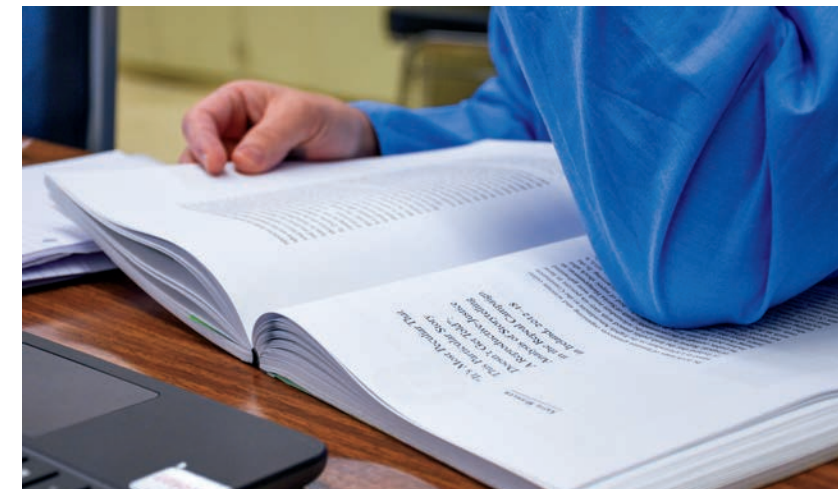
The economic impact is also measurable, adds RAND, which finds that every dollar invested in prison education programs saves nearly \$5 in reincarceration costs over a period of three years. "Education is medicine for recidivism," says Tony Wallin-Sato ('20, Journalism) director of the Cal Poly Humboldt chapter of Project Rebound, which helped to start the B.A. program. "It is one of the greatest rehabilitative programs we can offer."

Project Rebound provides support for formerly incarcerated individuals at 15 California State University (CSU) campuses throughout the state. It stands as a testament to the transformative power of education with less than a 1% recidivism rate among its students who finish their degree.

"Ninety-five percent of incarcerated individuals are going to come home, and we should create the greatest possible reentry plan for them for success," Wallin-Sato says. "A four-year degree from a public university in California costs approximately \$32,000, and a single year in prison in California on average costs \$100,000. If we deny formerly incarcerated people an education, we are throwing away money instead of working towards compassionate-centered work."

"At Cal Poly Humboldt, we define ourselves by who we include and not who we exclude," says Jenn Capps, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Cal Poly Humboldt. "Creating access to education is one of our primary goals, and launching the bachelor's degree at Pelican Bay does just that."

Cal Poly Humboldt joins several higher education institutions across the U.S. that are expanding access to education to incarcerated students, including Cal State San Bernardino.



Students enrolled in the B.A. program can now receive Pell Grants, starting in Fall 2024. The program is the first in the nation to be approved for eligibility by the U.S. Department of Education under a new federal policy that went into effect last July.

The Communication degree is particularly advantageous for Pelican Bay scholars. It prepares graduates for a wide range of career options and teaches skills that employers desire, such as effective communication and critical listening skills. The job market for this and similar fields is expected to grow over the next decade, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Communication is the only B.A. currently offered through the program, but project partners hope to expand options. The first cohort is expected to graduate in spring 2028 with a commencement ceremony in the prison.

Jaime, a Pelican Bay B.A. scholar who's serving a 40-years-to-life sentence, hopes to use his degree to inspire and improve the conditions of people who have been systemically oppressed and marginalized, and who have been left to fend for themselves. Jaime says, "I want to create programs that provide awareness and different visions of success for Black and Brown kids who look up to gang members, drug dealers, and criminals as role models."

"I want to be that person who these kids can relate to through my story of struggle and success. By introducing kids to people who look like them and come from the same environment they do, I hope to sow seeds of aspiration and self-determination. I want to be of service to those who do not believe in themselves because life has placed them within the lower rung of the social ladder—this is how I plan to apply my degree and knowledge I've gained through Cal Poly Humboldt." ♦

(LEFT & TOP) Cal Poly Humboldt's B.A. in Communication program at Pelican Bay State Prison is the first B.A. program to be taught in person in a Level IV yard (high-security facility) in California



Strengthening Educational and CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

By Grant Scott-Goforth

BUILDING ON A long history of collaboration, Cal Poly Humboldt and the area's Tribal communities are forging new partnerships by expanding work and educational opportunities for Native people, strengthening the management of cultural resources, and improving resilience for the North Coast.

Humboldt's Northern California service area includes the unceded territories of 13 Tribal Nations, each with its own governing body and structures. To help better engage with Tribal communities, former Cal Poly Humboldt President Tom Jackson, Jr. appointed Adrienne Colegrove-Raymond as special assistant to the president for Tribal & Community Engagement in Spring 2022.

In this position, Colegrove-Raymond, a member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe, helps develop collaborative partnerships in the community while leading key initiatives. She is also the President's Office's primary liaison for select campus committees, external partnerships, and collaborations.

Colegrove-Raymond is an alumna ('04, MBA) with deep ties to local Native Tribes, Cal Poly Humboldt, and the North Coast. For more than 15 years, she has supported the success

of underrepresented students of all backgrounds through a variety of important roles on campus.

Part of the importance of this new position, Colegrove-Raymond explains, is councils, Tribal chairs, and University administrators change over time. "We're trying to add stability with this position to navigate when these changes happen and provide continuity long into the future," she says.

She says the University has opened its doors to Tribal leadership, receiving requests and proposals rather than trying to impose ideas or solutions. Outreach includes administrators attending cultural events, visiting Tribal lands, and other activities to build trusting relationships.

Jackson created a joint Native American advisory council with Cal Poly Humboldt, College of the Redwoods (CR), and North Coast Tribes in recognition of Tribal sovereignty. The group meets annually, and Jackson and CR President Keith Flamer also separately attended the Northern California Chairs Association. These meetings and the conversations they generate helped Jackson and Flamer understand what Tribes need when it comes to serving their students and communities.

Colegrove-Raymond has helped Tribes develop official agreements called Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the University. "The goal is for the University and Tribes to become partners in strengthening educational opportunities that benefit everyone involved," she says. "Some Tribes have felt for the first time comfortable entering into an MOU with the University. They appreciate that the partnership is ongoing and the importance of updating them by including addendums to increase the value of the MOUs."

The Yurok Tribe was the first to approach the University, wanting to focus on workforce development to make sure Native students and Tribal members were well-positioned with new industries coming to the area, including wind energy and aquaculture.

Additionally, the Hoopa Valley Tribe signed an MOU specifying a focus on infrastructure in the Hoopa Valley, particularly related to renewable energy and energy resilience. They also want to increase the rates of their students who transfer from CR to Humboldt and expand Native youth summer camps and youth outreach.

Trinidad Rancheria's MOU focuses on preserving culturally important species and marine restoration. The Rancheria wants to strengthen its Marina and Trinidad properties and has asked for co-management of some spaces with the University, relying on faculty expertise.

Colegrove-Raymond's work also entails tracking enrollment of Native students and their progress through the University, particularly in STEM fields. Following a dip in Native enrollment during the pandemic, the University is looking to increase Native enrollment, not just in California but in states beyond.

The new First Start funding will increase outreach to Native foster youth to help build cohorts that are ready to enter college. The University is also looking at building more athletic summer camps to attract Native youth. New sports like wrestling and rodeo may attract more students as well, Colegrove-Raymond says.

Blue Lake Rancheria, the U.S. Department of Education's TRIO Talent Search, and Cal Poly Humboldt's Indian Tribal & Educational Personnel Program (ITEPP) developed new dual-enrollment classes for high school students to gain college credit. Tribes provided funding to develop classes for local and nonlocal Native students on subjects like Native American studies, fisheries, environment, and community.

ITEPP and Native American Studies also partnered with the UC Davis Medical School on a post-baccalaureate program. Every year, Humboldt students who are on a pre-med track will get support to prepare for the MCAT and, if successful, will be able to transfer into the UC Davis medical program.

The University's successful Place-Based Learning Communities, which helps first-year students connect to their faculty, peers, and the community, has received support from Tribes. "They have shared information from Tribal members and lands for learning and has introduced

students to indigenous ideology," Colegrove-Raymond says. "They're offering a lot to our campus at large."

Tribes also offer job placements for graduates and current students, and Tribes are often on the cutting edge of science, industry, and local issues, including dam removal, fisheries, aquaculture, renewable energy, energy resilience, and climate change.

Many faculty projects rely on good working relationships with Tribes and Tribal lands. The project to remove four dams on the Klamath River and the ongoing restoration of the watershed is one example of an area where Humboldt and Tribal scientists are working closely together.

As one of history's largest dam removals, the project will have historic impacts on a variety of issues, including wildlife, water quality, cultural resources, economics, and much more. Researchers are working hard on projects up and down the river to understand what happens as the dams are removed.

For example, Wildlife graduate student Ryan Matilton, in a collaboration between Humboldt, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Yurok Tribe Wildlife Department, and the U.S. Forest Service, is studying the activities of bat species at a number of points along the river.

The University's Schatz Energy Research Center has worked on energy issues with local Tribes for more than 20 years.

The Schatz Center collaborated with Blue Lake Rancheria to build its innovative microgrid, which provides energy during county-wide outages, crucial to community safety and resilience. It's also now helping to develop a microgrid project in the Hoopa Valley to provide energy resilience along the Trinity and Klamath rivers, a project that would benefit the Hoopa, Karuk, and Yurok Tribal communities in the area.

In July 2023, through a historic acquisition, the Wiyot Tribe gained back Tribal stewardship of a 46-acre coastal property in the ecologically and culturally significant Wiyot place of Mouralherwaq or "wolf's house."

Under Wiyot Tribe leadership and stewardship, the site will be prioritized for ecocultural restoration. The property is located near what is currently known as King Salmon at the base of Humboldt Hill and represents the first forestland to be returned to the Tribe. The acquisition project was conceived and led by the Wiyot Tribe with supporting partnerships from Cal Poly Humboldt, Humboldt Baykeeper, and Friends of the Dunes.

Improving relationships and being a good neighbor is a priority for the University, Colegrove-Raymond says. "It's ongoing work—we're never finished." ♦

Opposite page: Former Cal Poly Humboldt President Tom Jackson, Jr. (far left) and College of the Redwoods President Keith Flamer (far right) signed an official Memorandum of Understanding with Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation Tribal Chairman Joe Davis (center) in 2023.

Improving Health and Wellbeing of the North Coast

By Iridian Casarez

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of North Coast communities through initiatives like diversifying healthcare professionals, building a facility to train healthcare workers, and creating partnerships with other colleges and universities.

The result is a significant evolution in healthcare education and practice. Programs grounded in practical experience for students and collaborations at the local and state levels are at the heart of it.

These efforts are critical at a time when many Northern California counties, including Humboldt County, are medically underserved. In Humboldt County, the ratio of patients to medical providers is 1,390-to-1, significantly higher than the state average of 1,294-to-1, says Biology Professor and pre-med advisor Jianmin Zhong. Many factors

exacerbate this shortage, such as higher poverty rates and a need for workforce diversity.

Humboldt's Healthcare Career Pathways Program, launched by Zhong, aims to increase and diversify the healthcare workforce in rural and minority communities in California. The program offers paid summer internships to students interested in medical careers and provides them with career guidance through collaborations with healthcare professionals. The University is partnering with Humboldt-Del Norte Medical Society to match students with healthcare professionals for career guidance under the pathway program.

Launched with more than \$500,000 in grant funding from the California Department of Health Care Access and Information, the program supports 10 student interns, like



Student summer interns in the Healthcare Career Pathways Program, launched by Biology Professor and pre-med advisor Jianmin Zhong, learn how to suture in the Library.

alum Jaquelinee Salas Haro ('22, Biology), for five years. The program aims to inspire students, especially those from traditionally underrepresented communities, to pursue healthcare careers and return to rural areas to practice.

Salas Haro, who completed the program in 2021, is a first-generation Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) student who aspires to be a physician's assistant. She says she knows what it's like to feel unrepresented in the healthcare field and wants to represent her community.

The Department of Social Work at Cal Poly Humboldt has launched the Rural and Tribal Behavioral Health Master of Social Work Fellowship program to promote diversity and equity in behavioral healthcare in Humboldt.

"A big part of this fellowship is getting more people into the public behavioral health workforce who represent the cultural and linguistic diversity of people receiving services," says Ronnie Swartz, Social Work professor and behavioral health workforce development coordinator.

The fellowship is designed to provide students pursuing the two-year program with financial support and experience at local community-based organizations, such as Two Feathers Native American Family Services, Southern Humboldt Family Resource Center, the Northern California Indian Development Council, United Indian Health Services Potawatow Health Village, and more.

In return, each fellow pledges to work in underserved rural and Tribal behavioral health settings during their fellowship and two years after graduation. This program aims to improve behavioral health in California, addressing inequality, increasing graduation rates, and enhancing care accessibility in response to a professional shortage.

One of the many healthcare disparities on the North Coast is the severe shortage of nurses who understand rural communities' complexities and unique needs. Humboldt launched the Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing program (RN to BSN) to address this.

The hybrid program allows registered nurses with an associate's degree to pursue a bachelor's degree while working in Humboldt County. The curriculum emphasizes professional knowledge, leadership skills, and community-focused healthcare. It aims to foster a culture of compassion and resiliency. Since its launch in 2020, 18 nurses have graduated with a bachelor's degree in nursing, and more are making progress.

In addition to the BSN program, Humboldt and College of the Redwoods are collaborating to shape the future of a robust healthcare workforce on the North Coast. In 2022, California Senate Majority Leader Mike McGuire announced a \$10 million investment to create a Healthcare Education Hub in Arcata to be shared by both institutions. The hub will have classrooms, instructional labs, and other facilities for training health professionals, including nurses and technicians. Construction is expected to begin in August 2024 with the goal of completion by December 2025.

The University is also supporting Native students' access to medical school and addressing health disparities in Native and Tribal communities. In a joint partnership with the UC Davis School of Medicine, Cal Poly Humboldt introduced the Huwighurruk (pronounced hee-way-gou-duck) Tribal Health Postbaccalaureate Program for pre-med students passionate about providing healthcare to American Indian/Alaska Native communities in rural and urban areas.

The program offers eligible students a stipend to help offset living and tuition costs. Students who successfully complete the Huwighurruk program with a 3.7 GPA or higher, score 499 or higher on the MCAT, and complete all the prerequisite courses at UC Davis School of Medicine will receive conditional acceptance into the school tuition-free.

"The goal of this program is to break down the barriers associated with applying to medical school. It's disheartening to know that less than 50% of Native students are accepted into medical school, and out of those, 43% never apply again. This program aims to successfully recruit, retain, and train aspiring medical students to accomplish their objectives," says Dr. Antoinette Martinez ('94, Psychology), a physician at United Indian Health Services in Humboldt County and co-director of Tribal Health Initiatives for UC Davis School of Medicine.

In the Wiyot language, "huwighurruk" means plants, grass, leaves, and medicine. Huwighurruk scholars will be immersed in a culturally focused framework intertwined with courses at Cal Poly Humboldt that will focus on Tribal culture and connections.



Alum Jaquelinee Salas Haro at a fully segmented, real-human 3D anatomage table at the Library.



Where *Arts*
& **Science**
Meet

by Melissa Hutsell

All across Cal Poly Humboldt, these fields of study converge through rich, interdisciplinary experiences inside classrooms and beyond.

The Lutz's rapids frog has not been seen since the late 1970's and is presumed to be extinct. Cal Poly Humboldt's scientific illustration interns bring them back to life.

KEN BALLINGER IS an engineer at the U.S. Mint, where he maintains, designs and builds machines. So, it may come as a surprise that his journey has roots in music at Cal Poly Humboldt.

For Ballinger—who pursued a degree in mechanical engineering at Sacramento State University after completing a music degree at Cal Poly Humboldt in 1999—it’s not hard to see how music and engineering intersect.

“My observation is that my brain handles mathematics and formulas similarly to musical patterns, permutations, and compound thinking,” he says. “I think this helped me with my math and engineering classes. Engineers have to be creative, not just technical, to arrive at good solutions. And teamwork, listening, and humility, as with writing and performing music, are still very important.”

Ballinger’s career path represents the importance of the arts and the University’s strength in arts and science programs.

Research from the Brookings Institute and others shows that arts education improves student motivation and engagement, creativity, empathy, communication and critical-thinking as well as leadership skills. These are among the top skills that employers look for in candidates, according to platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed.

The intersection of arts and science proves not just that there’s a science to art and an art to science. These fields of study are foundational to developing cultural competency and critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

As the University enters into its polytechnic era, both are also integral to its purpose to prepare students to solve the world’s environmental and social challenges.

“When we sought the polytechnic designation, we were purposeful in centering our polytechnic identity on the principles of interdisciplinarity and leveraging our strong foundation in liberal arts, acknowledging that our best graduates exude elements of scientific inquiry, creativity, innovation, and collaboration, which come from students’ engagement in arts and sciences,” says Jenn Capps, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

All over campus, these fields holistically converge in classrooms and field experiences through interdisciplinary projects that contribute to society.



Opposite page: (TOP RIGHT) For their Plant Taxonomy course, students draw various flora in their plant journals. **(BOTTOM RIGHT)** Students Carrie White (foreground) and Joella Holmes in the University’s Biological Anthropology Research Center learn 3D facial reconstruction methods, which can sometimes be used to help identify human remains or give a glimpse into the past.



Each week, Scientific Illustration intern Jamie Hefley attended an Illustration course where she interacted with art students. Hefley’s work included drawing the Campo Grande tree frog, which was last observed in 1963 in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. It’s one of two species of frogs formally declared to be extinct in Brazil.

For hundreds of years, scientific inquiry has taken viewers to the unobservable—from the contents of cells and the universe to extinct species.

To enhance knowledge of the natural world, Cal Poly Humboldt launched its scientific illustration internship in Fall 2023, a collaboration between professors Pedro Peloso (Biological Sciences) and Brandice Gonzalez-Guerra (Art + Film).

The competitive internship is part of a groundbreaking project by Peloso that aims to raise awareness about the nearly 200 amphibian species at risk of disappearing forever.

He and Gonzalez-Guerra work with interns to bring the extinct species back to life by creating portraits of them.



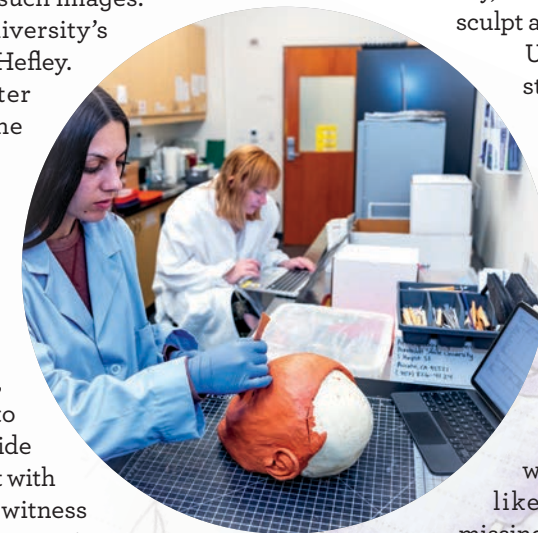
There are little to no known photos of some of the animals being illustrated, which requires deep dives into scientific literature and museum archives—a process that further emphasizes the importance of such images.

Art is a powerful tool, says the University’s first scientific illustration intern Jamie Hefley. “Through art, we can inspire a greater appreciation and understanding of the natural world and, in turn, encourage efforts to protect and conserve it.”

As part of the program, Hefley works with students in Gonzalez-Guerra’s Illustration I course, allowing for organic interactions with students while they are working on their own illustrations.

“With the polytechnic transformation, we felt that this would be a good way to bridge those courses of study and provide students with the opportunity to interact with a professional scientific illustrator and witness the collaborative process that goes into creating a series of scientific illustrations,” Gonzalez-Guerra says.

The internship is not the only opportunity of its type available on campus. Students can take Scientific Drawing I, a popular course on campus among science and art



majors in which students create natural history drawings, Gonzalez-Guerra explains. The University’s Natural History Museum also offers similar courses to campus and community members.

Art is a powerful tool for scientists to relay information, explains Oscar Vargas, Biological Sciences professor. Vargas’ Plant Taxonomy students create plant journals with drawings of various flora. In fact, nearly all Botany labs require students to illustrate.

“We require students to make art because you learn a lot when you make art,” says Vargas. For example, it helps students memorize plant features and more.

Knowing how to visually present scientific information is an important outreach and communication tool, Vargas explains. “It just makes the understanding of science so much better because language is limited.”

Creative skills can be especially valuable for scientists. “When a scientist is thinking about a new project, there is a lot of creativity that comes into this,” says Vargas. “When we publish our papers, they have illustrations; these illustrations are the easiest way for readers to understand the science.”



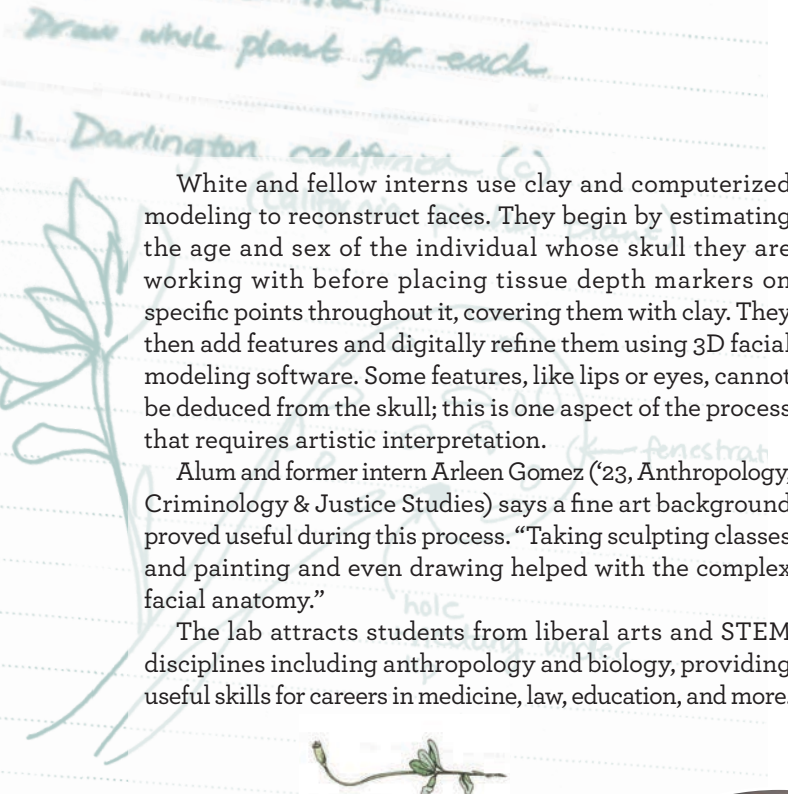
In the University’s Biological Anthropology Research Center, students practice the science and art of forensic 3D facial reconstruction.

Facial reconstruction generates images of an individual’s face based on their skull features. It can recreate images of Neanderthals, mummies, or modern-day unidentified remains.

The process requires extensive knowledge of facial anatomy, scientific methods, and artistic skills to sculpt a final product with likeness to life.

Using replicas of human skulls, students in the center’s 3D Facial Reconstruction lab apply these methods to reimagine faces of those who have passed. “The skulls we work with are casts from some very special people who chose to donate their body to science,” explains Carrie White, Biology major and lab intern.

Nearly a decade ago, White’s uncle went missing. “As someone who has experienced what it feels like to have a family member go missing, I hope that my skills gained from this project can allow me to work on unidentified missing persons cases in the future and potentially reunite someone who is lost with their family,” she says.



White and fellow interns use clay and computerized modeling to reconstruct faces. They begin by estimating the age and sex of the individual whose skull they are working with before placing tissue depth markers on specific points throughout it, covering them with clay. They then add features and digitally refine them using 3D facial modeling software. Some features, like lips or eyes, cannot be deduced from the skull; this is one aspect of the process that requires artistic interpretation.

Alum and former intern Arleen Gomez ('23, Anthropology, Criminology & Justice Studies) says a fine art background proved useful during this process. "Taking sculpting classes and painting and even drawing helped with the complex facial anatomy."

The lab attracts students from liberal arts and STEM disciplines including anthropology and biology, providing useful skills for careers in medicine, law, education, and more.

“With its thoughtful design inside and out, the Engineering & Technology Building will reflect who we are—a polytechnic university where all majors across disciplines can learn from each other.”

Michael Fisher,
Associate Vice President
for Facilities Management

In some cases, multiple disciplines can be nurtured by a physical space. That's the inspiration behind two new makerspaces where students have the room and the tools to explore their passions.

The makerspaces, which opened in Fall 2023 and are currently located in the Forestry and Natural Resources buildings, are furnished with custom workbenches and tools, including 3D printers, soldering stations, table saws, sand blasters, textiles stations, a desktop lathe and mill, and more.

Designed to foster interaction across disciplines, they are intended to serve the campus at large. For example, students can utilize the metal shop to produce parts for a robot or a metal frame for a clay sculpture.

So far, they have created 3D-printed signs, an innovative battery-management system, aprons, professional personal protective equipment, and a magnetic tug-of-war prototype game.

The spaces will eventually converge into one makerspace in the University's new Engineering & Technology Building, which will open in 2026.

"The look and feel of a University can be found through its architecture," says Michael Fisher, associate vice president for Facilities Management. "With its thoughtful design inside and out, the Engineering & Technology Building will reflect who we are—a polytechnic university where all majors across disciplines can learn from each other."



The makerspaces in the Forestry (TOP LEFT) and Natural Resources (TOP RIGHT) buildings give students the tools, knowledge, inspiration, and space to craft objects. Both will relocate to the new Engineering & Technology Building (BOTTOM) which is slated to open in 2026.



Meanwhile, students and graduates are looking through many lenses to better understand the world around us, exploring solutions to real-world challenges.

In the rugged mountain ranges of Northern California, a group of students and faculty in the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences and the College of Natural Resources & Sciences are surveying more than 1,600 locations in an effort to learn more about the plant biodiversity in the Klamath Mountains. The range spans 19,000 square miles from Northern California to Southern Oregon.

"The Klamath Mountains are home to more than 3,500 vascular plant taxa, making it one of the most botanically diverse places in North America," says Forestry Professor Lucy Kerhoulas ('06, Botany, '08, M.S. Biological Sciences), who co-leads the study with other University faculty including Professor Rosemary Sherriff of the Geography, Environment & Spatial Analysis department and Biology Professor Erik Jules. They are also working alongside the California Native Plant Society on the project.

Through this multidisciplinary effort, they will produce maps that will help with restoration and preservation efforts. It will also promote an understanding of how plant communities are affected by climate change and how vegetation regenerates after fire.



Cal Poly Humboldt's newest degree programs further emphasize the University's strengths in arts and science courses to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce.

Among the first B.A. programs of its type and launched in Fall 2023, the Cannabis Studies degree explores the historical, geographical, cultural, economic, and political contexts of cannabis legalization.

With a focus on social and environmental responsibility, it draws on curriculum from 18 disciplines.

Students must take both liberal arts and STEM classes, explains Dominic Corva, Sociology professor and Cannabis Studies program director. That's because they must understand things about chemistry to regulate cannabis; they must learn to make maps if they go into public health.

"We're drawing on all these other applied sciences, including in the natural sciences, to give them tools they need," Corva says, "Some of them will go into science fields like hydrology. Some will become lawyers. Others will go into nonprofit grant writing or community organizing."

(TOP) Cal Poly Humboldt students and faculty are surveying plants in 1,600 different locations in Northern California. **(BOTTOM)** Dominic Corva (right), Sociology professor and Cannabis Studies program director, leads a discussion for a podcast project.



“Some of them will go into science fields like hydrology. Some will become lawyers. Others will go into nonprofit grant writing or community organizing.”

Dominic Corva,
Sociology professor and
Cannabis Studies program director

The need for cannabis professionals has grown as more states welcome legal markets and as federal legalization looms. Currently, there are more than 417,000 full-time jobs in the legal cannabis industry with hundreds more added each day, according to job reports. Program graduates are prepared to fill roles including regulators, policy makers, chemists and more.

Kaid Chapman, Cannabis Studies major, does not think he would get this education anywhere else.

“Humboldt is a magical place. There are other Cannabis Studies programs out there, but nothing like what Cal Poly Humboldt offers.”

Chapman’s interest in medicinal cannabis drew him to the program. “Cannabis Studies is perfect because not only do I get to learn about plant science, I also learn about social equity, social justice, and the political and economic part of cannabis.

“The program is helping lay the foundation for a future cannabis industry that we hope to build,” he says. “We’re going to make history.”

The University’s Individualized Degree Program (IDP) also allows students to combine coursework from different disciplines to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

The IDP allows students to design their own degree around their own interests. If a student is interested in illustration and computer science, for example, they can unify that into a degree in video game design.

The possibilities are endless, says program director Rebecca Robertson. “As they explore and bridge gaps between fields, they develop the ability to synthesize ideas,

tackle complex problems, and communicate effectively across differences.”

Such interdisciplinary skills provide career flexibility while preparing graduates for jobs in emerging industries like renewable energy, user experience research, or sustainable design. Hannah Kolkmann is combining her passions for healthcare and gender studies. Her IDP degree plan encompasses courses in health education, psychology, and women’s studies—topics that spark her interest and make her want to learn.

Kolkmann hopes to be a doctor or nurse, and knowledge in these different fields will allow her to have more holistic interactions with her future patients.

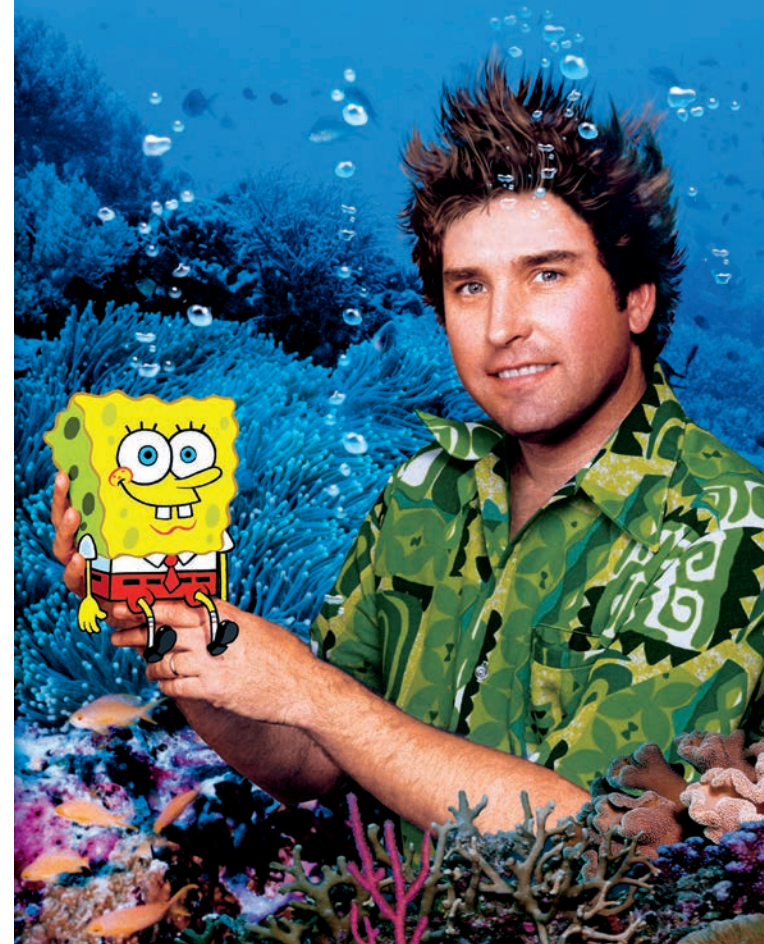
“One needs to look at the entire person when providing medical care. Intertwining health sciences and psychology will provide me with tools to better acknowledge the entire person,” she adds. “Incorporating women’s and gender studies will allow me to better address each patient’s unique experiences and provide them with the care they need and deserve.”

For Aubrey Sabre, the IDP is liberating and creative. Pursuing it allows her to better care for herself and, in turn, her community. Sabre is fusing her passions for fine art, plants, and community organizing into a career in community event planning and sustainable-living practices. Her current pathway will include courses in business, botany, and art, she says.

Although these are traditionally seen as different fields, Sabre considers them symbiotic. “You cannot have one without the other.” A passion for both the arts and sciences, and the ability to create a career at their intersection, is something that Humboldt alumni do well.



Aubrey Sabre, a student in the Individualized Degree Program, is fusing her passions for fine art, plants, and community organizing into a career in community event planning and sustainable living practices.



Perhaps the most famous example is the late Stephen Hillenburg (’84, Natural Resources Planning & Interpretation), whose passion for marine science and art converged in the animated character SpongeBob SquarePants. Hillenburg originally created the TV program to engage young marine biology students. It is now one of the longest-running, highest-grossing children’s TV programs.

Every day, Humboldt alumni are finding innovative ways to engage youth and impact future generations.

Julie Geary’s (’11, Biological Sciences) goal as an educator is to nurture an appreciation for nature and give her students the tools to be critical thinkers, good communicators, and problem solvers.

With a background as a dancer and choreographer, Geary was in the premed program at Humboldt. Now she’s a science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) teacher at Mead Valley Elementary School in Perris, California, where she serves 4-11 year olds. She wants to make learning fun and squash misconceptions that these subjects are too hard.

She creates arts-integrated lessons that deepen the understanding of the classroom curricula. “I have the best job,” she says. “I get to infuse art, science, and engineering into hands-on lessons and activities for students.”

Geary’s students learn to analyze oil paintings and use rulers and math to understand scale, proportion, and perspective to make art more realistic. These observational skills deepen comprehension and understanding and allow students to think about details in their work, she explains.

“Artists and scientists make careful observations about the world and try to communicate their ideas to others,” Geary adds. “The more opportunities children have to explore ideas through art and science, the greater and deeper their understanding of the natural world is.”

Incorporating science and art is one of the greatest aspects of her job. “They seem like polar opposite ways of looking at and understanding the world, but they really complement each other,” she says.

Geary fondly reflects on her time at Humboldt. “Humboldt is a special place that cultivates and inspires people who are passionate for both scientific and artistic exploration,” she explains. “My science and art professors encouraged me to be creative, a critical thinker, and a keen observer of the natural world. Through both art and science, I was able to explore questions and ideas as well as solve complicated problems in novel and creative ways.”



(TOP) “My pragmatic side had been saying, ‘Well, you better learn something practical.’ So I decided to shift gears and pursue both science and art,” said the late Stephen Hillenburg (’84, Natural Resources Planning & Interpretation), creator of SpongeBob SquarePants.

(BOTTOM) Julie Geary (’11, Biological Sciences) was in the premed program at Humboldt. Now, she’s a science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) teacher at Mead Valley Elementary School in Perris, California.

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT HONORS

Recognizing the achievements and contributions of the Lumberjack community

2024 Distinguished Alumni



Mark Bransom ('87, Natural Resources Planning & Interpretation) is the CEO of the Klamath River Renewal Corporation with 25 years of experience in water resources and environmental management. He is leading the KRRC to support the restoration of the Klamath River by removing four hydroelectric dams.



Aldaron Laird (Biology), has contributed to environmental planning, sea-level rise assessment, and habitat restoration in the Humboldt Bay region and beyond. His interdisciplinary expertise has had a profound impact, from early work in tree planting and watershed restoration to documenting threats to local infrastructure and advancing planning for sea-level rise.



Mark Murray (Political Science) has been a leader in environmental and recycling policy in California for more than three decades. He is developing, advocating, and negotiating much of California's waste reduction and recycling policy, from the Bottle Bill to E-waste recycling to the ban on plastic grocery bags.



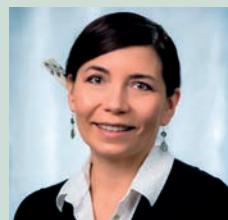
Dan Sealy ('75, Natural Resources) is a dedicated environmental advocate and mentor who retired from a 33-year career with the National Park Service. He volunteers with the Northcoast Environmental Center

board of directors, serves on the cabinet of Cal Poly Humboldt Foundation's Boldly Rising Campaign, and is the Humboldt alumni representative of the California State University Alumni Council.



Jessie Uehling ('10, Botany, '12, M.S. Biology) is an assistant professor at Oregon State University. She's a passionate mycologist known for groundbreaking research on tropical ectomycorrhizal fungi,

the fungal microbiome, and psilocybin policy development. With over 30 published papers and textbook chapters, she's dedicated to research, service, teaching, and mentoring students.



Sawar Young-Tripp ('99, Biology) is the first person from the Yurok Tribe to become a medical doctor. She practices medicine in Humboldt at the Open Door Arcata Community Health Center, emphasizing whole person care and serving

approximately 1,000 patients. Her dedication to care has made her a beloved and respected fi the community.

See full bios at:
forever.humboldt.edu/distinguished-alumni
hum.link/2024-PresDistService
hum.link/2024Outstanding-Students

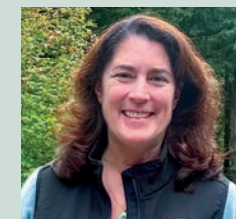
2024 President's Distinguished Service Awards

Former Cal Poly Humboldt President Tom Jackson, Jr. recognized the accomplishments of honorees for their meritorious contributions to the University and community.



For more than two decades, **Kellie Jo Brown** has shared the story of Cal Poly Humboldt as the official University photographer. She graduated in 1990 with a B.S. in Applied Art & Design with a Photography emphasis.

She joined the Marketing & Communications team and since then, she has captured authentic moments at the University, reflecting her commitment to supporting the success of students, faculty, and staff. That shows in her passion for collaborating with diverse members of the campus and local communities. She is an equally dedicated artist, playing with angles, shadows, depth and colors that reflect the wonders of the world in the classroom and beyond.



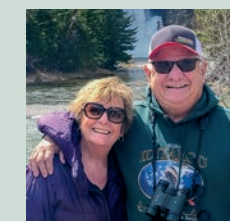
Karen Diemer ('91, Wildlife Management), longtime City Manager for the city of Arcata, has dedicated her 30-year career to public service. Her work to build a deep partnership with the University

led to the employment of hundreds of interns and staff. Under her leadership, the city built programs to improve the water quality of local creeks and the bay; and to expand trails, and transit and bike services. Diemer assisted in the founding of Equity Arcata, a program designed to remove racial barriers and ensure students, staff, and faculty of all backgrounds feel safe and welcome in Arcata.



President and CEO of American Hydroponics Jenny Harris is a longtime supporter of students through the Cal Poly Humboldt Foundation, which ran the largest comprehensive campaign in University history,

Boldly Rising. The former board chair and current Campaign cabinet member, Harris helped double the Campaign's fundraising goal to \$50 million. Under her leadership, the Foundation purchased property, holding it an investment until the University needed it. The property is now the future site of a new student housing complex that will house nearly 1,000 students.



Jim and Sharon Redd, retired owners and brokers of Four Star Realty for over 44 years, are recognized as local business and community leaders who believe in the power of Cal Poly Humboldt athletics to build

character and shape the future of students. Jim ('74 Rangeland Resources Management) was past president of the Humboldt Association of Realtors and on various committees at the state and local levels. Sharon is a member of the Cal Poly Humboldt Boldly Rising Campaign Cabinet, past president of the Humboldt Association of Realtors, and a 35-year member of Soroptimist International of Humboldt Bay. The Redds have regularly hosted the football and basketball teams at their home for team dinners. They helped establish an endowment fund for basketball and have made a commitment to support athletics scholarships.

2024 Outstanding Students of the Year



Karina Juarez ('24, Fine Arts & Art Education) is a ceramist who embraces her Zapotec ancestry through her art. She is dedicated to sharing knowledge and expanding space for underrepresented artists in

ceramics. Outside of her art, she volunteers at Centro del Pueblo to support the Latinx community of Humboldt County.



Aerin Monroe ('24, Environmental Studies) is a member of the Indian Natural Resources, Science & Engineering Program + Diversity in STEM (INRSEP+) program. He is committed to

promoting well-balanced leadership and stewardship of resources. Monroe co-founded Pathways of Purpose, a nonprofit focused on empowering youth and the community through STEAM education and vocational programs.

Honorary Degrees Recognize Aileen Meyer and Dan Phillips

Aileen Meyer, vice chairwoman of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria, and Dan Phillips, executive vice president and chief technology officer at Chamberlain Group, were awarded Honorary Doctorates of Humane Letters for their significant contributions to their respective communities, as well as their ongoing support for Cal Poly Humboldt and the North Coast.

Aileen Meyer is the vice chairwoman of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria and a longstanding and formative leader in Tribal Affairs of the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria, serving the Tribe in multiple capacities throughout her storied career. She has worked for years to foster and advance governance and structures and document and disseminate cultural traditions. She has provided leadership in the building of a casino and Tribal headquarters as well as led various housing projects to house Tribal members in need.

Following the re-establishment of Tribal recognition of the Bear River Band and 17 other Tribes in the Tillie Hardwick Supreme Court Decision in 1983, she organized and acted as one of the authors of the Tribe's inaugural constitution. She worked to enshrine the Tribe's governance in 1985, acting as its first chairperson, and pursued significant federal grant

funding and other resource allocations for essential initiatives, all the while navigating and combating existing structural barriers.

Meyer has an impressive knowledge of constitutional law and Tribal history, which she has used to serve her Tribe. Meyer is a committed leader for the Tribal community and a strong example of service, resilience, and tireless dedication to bringing positive change to the Humboldt County area.

Meyer has made an extraordinary impact on thousands of lives in the community surrounding Cal Poly Humboldt. Her lifetime of selfless determination embodies the purpose of The California State University system to provide opportunities for all individuals to develop intellectually, personally, and professionally, while contributing to California's economics, culture, and future.



Dan Phillips ('91, Business and Computer Information Systems) is a great Humboldt County success story. He grew up in the small, rural town of Bridgeville and went on to become a leading innovator and entrepreneur in the technology industry.

After graduating from College of the Redwoods and Cal Poly Humboldt, Phillips started a business with one of his professors, which led to many new opportunities. He then moved to the Bay Area and served as chief operations officer at TiVo and later as chief technology officer at Hulu, where he was responsible for product management, engineering, and company operations. Currently, he is the executive vice president and chief technology officer at Chamberlain Group.

He shares his knowledge, expertise, and resources to make a positive impact. In particular, he has been active in leading the University's first comprehensive fundraising campaign, Boldly Rising, which has been very successful. Phillips and his wife, Cindy, donated

over \$1 million in scholarships to support Humboldt students from the Eel River Valley.

Phillips, along with alumnus and donor John Ballard, co-founded Lost Coast Ventures, a nonprofit fund providing seed money to aspiring entrepreneurs at Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods. Any profits are reinvested in additional businesses or used to benefit the College of the Redwoods and Cal Poly Humboldt. Phillips also mentors students and faculty through the nonprofit.

Phillips' leadership, humility, and positivity inspire those around him. He has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to supporting students at Cal Poly Humboldt and throughout the North Coast.

2024 Staff Recognition



Sulaina Banks
Visit Experience Coordinator
Office of Admissions



Stacy Becker
Community Partner Coordinator
Center for Community Based Learning



Marisa "Meeka" Day
Scene Shop Technician/Scenic Painter
Department of Dance, Music & Theatre



Deserie Donae
Former Registrar of The College of
Extended Education & Global Engagement,
Currently Interim Director of Enrollment
and OLLI
The College of Extended Education &
Global Engagement



Aubrey Emmons
Administrative Support Coordinator
Redwood Coast K-16
Educational Collaborative



Benjamin Funke
Instructional Support Technician,
Sculpture
Department of Art + Film



Jennifer Gomes
Lead Dispatcher/Records Manager
University Police Department



Marissa "Mari" Holguin
Transfer Coordinator
Office of the Registrar



Elizabeth Lujan
Student Financial Analyst
Student Financial Services



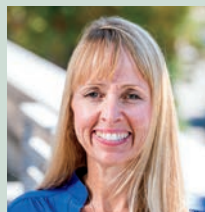
Bernie Levy
Special Education Program Coordinator
School of Education



Laurie Marx
Department Coordinator
Department of Geology



Kristen Radecsky
Senior Research Engineer
Schatz Energy Research Center



Kimberly Vincent-Layton
Educational Developer
Center for Teaching & Learning



Jim Woodhead
Studio Art Technician
Department of Art + Film

Job titles are based on recipients' position at the time they were recognized.

Golden Grads Return to Cal Poly Humboldt

By Iridian Casarez

It's commencement day in the Redwood Bowl, and one group stands out on the field in a sea of black mortar boards. Wearing their bright gold caps and gowns are the Golden Grads, Cal Poly Humboldt alumni who graduated more than 50 years ago.

During Lumberjack Weekend in October, Golden Grads are formally recognized, and in May, they return to be recognized and share words of wisdom to the graduating class during the ceremony. "It's heartwarming to witness this gathering of alumni who graduated more than 50 years ago reuniting after all these years. These alumni share a unique bond of having once been Humboldt students; some even experienced historical events on campus. This allows them to reconnect with the University and each other. It's really a special time," says Stephanie Lane, executive director of Alumni Relations.

Having gained a plethora of knowledge and experiences throughout their lives, Golden Grads offer students invaluable, sincere, and often humorous advice. Their words serve as a reminder to students of what they can accomplish and how to aim for excellence after graduating.

"Whatever career you choose, put forth your best effort and enjoy it, but don't let it define you or dominate your life. Keep your job, family, friends, and other aspects of your life in balance," was some of the advice shared by Golden Grad Doralee Smith ('70, Home Economics).

In 2021, Smith was honored with an induction as a Golden Grad, and she participated in commencement last year, where she connected with new graduates.

"After the ceremony ended, a student approached me and expressed how touched they were by my advice. Given the challenges of the current world, I felt that this advice

was crucial for students entering the professional world," Smith says.

The Golden Grad program serves as an inspiration not just for graduates but also for the alumni who have moved on and away from the University. It provides them with an opportunity, big or small, to reconnect with Humboldt and stay connected to the community that helped shape who they are.

Jack McGurk ('66, Biology) and his late wife, Diana McGurk ('66, Home Economics), were inducted as Golden Grads in 2016.

Being a Golden Grad sparked a meaningful journey for McGurk back to his alma mater. Celebrating 50 years since graduation, McGurk reflected on his memories and the decades long support he and his late wife shared for the University.

After his wife's passing, McGurk joined the Cal Poly Humboldt Foundation as a board member. He soon established the Diana M. McGurk Memorial Scholarship Endowment, supporting scholarships for Nursing students. He also established the Jack S. McGurk Marine Biology Scholarship to support Marine Biology students. McGurk emphasizes that reaching the moment of becoming a Golden Grad can serve as a bridge between past and present, offering alumni a chance to reconnect with their alma mater.

"As a Golden Grad, I feel connected to the University and proud of its achievements and growth. It allowed me to experience the University again 50 years after graduating. I hope the Golden Grad program will continue to grow to be a way for even more individuals to share in this excitement of reconnecting with Humboldt," McGurk says.



During the Spring Commencement ceremony, Golden Grads, who graduated more than 50 years ago, give life and career advice to the graduates.

Lumberjacks in *love*

By Iridian Casarez

THOSE WHO ATTEND Cal Poly Humboldt often discover their love for the outdoors, their community, or a particular discipline—some even find the love of their lives. One in 12 Cal Poly Humboldt alumni is married to another. They share memories of walking through Founders Hall, studying together in the Library, hanging out at the Jolly Giant Commons, and taking small hikes in the redwood forest behind campus. Some of these couples shared the stories of how they met at Humboldt.



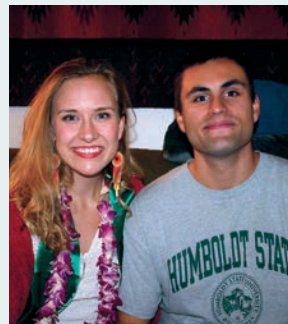
Jayda and Taiden Partlow

Jayda's ('18, Critical Race, Gender & Sexuality Studies) and Taiden's ('18, International Studies) love story was fate. Before arriving at Humboldt, they were involved in the April 2014 Spring Preview bus accident but were on different buses. After recovering, they both decided to attend Humboldt and met each other soon after. After years of flirting, they started dating. They spent six years together before getting married in 2021 and welcoming their son, Adonis, last December.



Sheryl and Patrick Coulston

Sheryl ('74, Business Administration) and Patrick ('74, Biology) met on the first day of orientation in 1970 while waiting in line to get their room keys. Their first date was a bike ride out to Mad River Beach, followed by many more for sundaes at Bims, the ice cream shop at the corner of 16th and G. Summer made them full-time Humboldters for a couple of years. Their fall 1974 marriage was followed by grad school in Virginia, jobs on the East Coast, and raising children in the Bay Area and Central Valley. They are now happily retired in Capitola, California, with a few grandchildren. They will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in September.



Kiara Cuerpo-Hadsall and Quinn Bunstock de Hinojosa

Kiara ('19, Environmental Science & Management) and Quinn ('20, Forestry) met in their first year at Humboldt in professor Hohl's Forestry 100 class in 2015. Kiara quickly noticed how smart and handsome Quinn was and convinced him to help her study. Their friendship status rapidly evolved to "best friends" outside of class, and a romance blossomed between the two. Humboldt holds some of their fondest memories, from traipsing through the Arcata Community Forest to supporting each other in their studies. After eight years together, Quinn and Kiara were married in April 2024.



Lucinda and Gary Jensen

Lucinda ('70, English) first saw Gary ('69, Forestry) when she was moving into Sunset Hall. They became friends and eventually started dating. They participated in many student life events, like Lumberjack Days, and made great memories together. Gary proposed to Lucy before leaving for active service in the U.S. Marine Corps. They've been married for 54 years and have three children and six grandchildren.



Stacey and Bridgette Usher-Wong

Stacey ('18, Liberal Studies Elementary Education) met Bridgette ('21, Communication) when she joined the Humboldt Women's Rowing team in the fall of 2017. They remember early morning practices at the boathouse and traveling to compete in regattas. The following year Stacey volunteered to coach the women's novice team to spend more time with Bridgette while earning her teaching credential. They married in 2021 and continue to give back to the Humboldt community as a University Police Department dispatcher and as an elementary school teacher.



Maggie and Jason White

Jason ('96, Physical Education, '98, M.S. Kinesiology) and Maggie ('96, Physical Education, '97, M.S. Kinesiology) met at the Depot. They had a mutual friend and sat together during the busy time at the crowded lunch spot. Jason was on the football team, and Maggie was on the softball team. They did not start dating until at least a year after meeting but had the same major. They both went on to be coaches in their respective sports and have lived in Humboldt County since graduating. Currently, they both work for College of the Redwoods, where Jason is the head football coach and Maggie is a health/kinesiology instructor. Fun fact: Their wedding reception was held in the West Gym at Humboldt.



Jim and Polly Lugosi

Jim ('97, Geography) and Polly ('96, Child Development) met in Cedar Hall as transfer students in 1994. Jim spent most of his time kicking hacky sacks outside the residence halls. The only way Polly was ever going to get to know him was to learn... and learn she did. The rest is history. After they graduated, they got married in 1998. They now have two children and just celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. Their son will be attending Humboldt this fall ('24). They wouldn't trade their memories at Humboldt for anything.



Amy and Sam Gibson

Amy ('98, History) and Sam ('98, Psychology) met in 1996 through a mutual friend while living in Sunset Hall and Creekview Apartments, respectively. After going on a friendly night out to Cafe Mokka and the Arcata Plaza, they soon fell in love. They remember going to the Siemens Hall basement computer lab to use the old Unix-based Axe network to communicate with friends on campus. They married in 2000.



Latrice and Raymond Watson

Latrice ('01, Social Work, '07, Master of Social Work) and Raymond ('01, Sociology) met in their first year at Humboldt in 1996 and bonded over football, as he was a linebacker and she attended all the games. They loved to play spades and hang out in their rooms in Redwood Hall or Cypress Hall and attend parties after the football games. They had lots of late-night runs to the Cupboard store on campus for ice cream, took short hikes through Redwood Park, and had air hockey battles at Sidelines Bar on the Arcata Plaza. They have four girls and remain connected to college friends who have become their chosen family.



J.D. and Sergio Garza-Valencia

J.D. ('14, Communication) met Sergio ('23, Psychology) back home in the Central Valley at College of the Sequoias, and they moved up to Humboldt together. Since 2011, they have always invited friends and family to visit, and their fondest memories continue to grow. They love to share the magic of Humboldt with the people they love. Sergio is currently pursuing an Master of Social Work at Humboldt, while J.D. is serving as the interim director for the Career Development Center at Humboldt.

1950s

Merle Hagbo, 1957 Liberal Studies Elementary Education, made his biggest mark as a prep football player and went on to quarterback the Humboldt State team during the mid-1950s. He graduated from HSU, where he met his wife, Georgia, in 1957. They were married for 63 years before he passed away in 2020. Clover Park School District has assembled a committee that is considering a request to name the Clover Park High School baseball field after this long-time educator and coach. During his career, he received the Outstanding Official Award for District 8 in 1998 from the National Federation of Interscholastic Officials Association.

1960s

Dennis Ray Kogl, 1962 Fisheries Biology, received his Master of Science in Fisheries Biology from the University of Alaska in 1965. He worked at various jobs with the state in Sport Fish Division in Fairbanks, Alaska, got married, and gravitated to the Denali National Park area, where he started a family and worked seasonally with the National Park Service. After many years, Dennis left the dog driving business and worked full-time with NPS running its Water and Wastewater Systems. He retired in 2004 and stayed in the area.

Sanford "Sandy" Wilbur, 1963 Wildlife, just published his second novel, *Vic and Greg: A Wildlife Refuge Romance*. Set in southern Idaho in 1965-1966, he describes it as one-quarter birds and wildlife refuges, one-quarter sex, and

one-half social commentary. Print copies aren't available yet, but a free full-length PDF can be had by sending a request to symbios@condortales.com.

Harry "Corky" Bartley, 1966 History, always says it's never too late to have fun. After a career of teaching high school drafting classes, then computer-aided design training for engineers, and then computer-aided engineering training and support (28 years at Tektronix), Corky retired. Now, after 10 years of retirement and at 80 years of age, he will be acting in his first play. He has a small role, George Sillers, in "Inherit the Wind" at Mask & Mirror in Tigard, Oregon. His only previous acting experience was as a drill sergeant in the U.S. Army 1968-1970.

Tom Eley, 1969 Wildlife, is retired from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Now he is the biologist and cartographer for the Anchorage Waterways Council.

1970s

Jay Earl Peterson, 1972 Psychology, has been retired for 20 years now and is loving it. He spends most of his time reading and hopes to get more active again once his hips heal and his spinal injuries get better. For the most part, he's been touring the country on his Gold Wing motorcycle and enjoying his time with his grandchildren.

Richard Sayre, 1974 Biological Sciences, is a co-founder and chief scientific officer for Mercury Bio Inc. (mercurybio.com) based in Santa Fe,

New Mexico. Mercury Bio Inc. focuses on the targeted delivery of therapeutic RNAs and small molecular weight drugs to human cells to address various viral and genetic diseases. Sayre recently introduced Mercury Bio's platform drug delivery technology to the pharmaceutical industry at Boston's third mRNA-Based Therapeutics Summit.

Jean Ross Zedekar, 1974 Nursing, retired from hospital nursing after 47 years in 2021. She started her nursing career at Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara, California, and retired from St. John Medical Center in Longview, Washington. She and her husband, Steve, raised two daughters, and are now happy grandparents to four grandchildren with another on the way. They love to boat, travel, scuba dive, and play pickleball. Jean looks forward to a reunion with her fellow nursing classmates for their 50-year graduation celebration.

Rick Tholen, 1976 Forestry & Wildland Resources, continued to work seasonally for the Shasta Trinity National Forest until he was hired permanently with the Forest Service in Potlatch, Idaho, after graduating. From there he went to work for the BLM in Medford, Oregon, and later transferred to Missoula, Montana, and then to Boise, Idaho, where he worked for the Washington Office and then at the National Interagency Fire Center. In Boise, he earned a master's degree. He retired with 34 years of federal service in 2010. He still lives in Eagle, Idaho, and stays active by hiking, backpacking, biking, and golfing.

Patricia (Patty) Brown, 1977 Natural Resources, retired twice, but

you might not know it from how busy she still is. Her first career was as a park ranger for California State Parks in the redwoods and the desert, the National Park Service in Alaska at Katmai and Lake Clark, then on the Kenai Wildlife Refuge, ending in 1995. She then decided to pursue a less itinerant life as a middle school science teacher in Alaska. Currently, she volunteers on the ambulance crew and does humanitarian work in winter at the U.S.-Mexico border. She was recently elected to the local planning commission in Haines.

Lisa Chase (Moran), 1977 Liberal Studies Elementary Education, passed away on October 11, 2021. She and her husband, Craig Chase ('77, Fisheries), joined the Peace Corps after graduation and spent time serving in Chile. She moved to Colorado in 1985 with her family where she had a 25-year career with Jefferson County Public Schools as a kindergarten and first-grade teacher. Loved by her students and fellow educators, her greatest passion was teaching children. After retiring in 2015, she continued to follow her dream as a volunteer with The Audubon Society of Denver.

Marilyn Taylor, 1977 Mathematics, named HSU Women of the year, in 1976, passed away on March 15, 2023, in Spokane, Washington. Marilyn, and her 99 Humboldt State teammates, broke the old record of a 100-mile Relay Race, with the time of 12:26:13 (1976). Marilyn set the PA-AAU record for a One-Hour Run on the track (1977) and holds the Avenue of the Giants Women's Marathon record, 2:45:40 (1984), which stands today. Despite her many winning races, Taylor felt the highlight of her track career was running in the historic First Olympic Women's Marathon Trials on May 12, 1984, in Olympia, Washington.

Rick Williams, 1977 Wildlife, retired in 2022 after a 45-year career as a wildlife biologist that began with waterfowl research for CDFG and USFWS, including a memorable stint chasing then-endangered Aleutian Canada

Geese across their California wintering grounds. From 1980-2022, he worked as a terrestrial biologist and program manager in the private sector, primarily focused on water and energy projects in California and other western states. He credits the late Humboldt professors, Drs. Stan (Doc) Harris and Charles F. (Chuck) Yocum for guiding him into career-long service with The Wildlife Society-Western Section, including terms as president and representative to the TWS National Council.

Rita Carman, 1978 Forestry & Wildland Resources, worked for the USGS Water Resources in Carson City, Nevada, from 1979 to 1998 as a hydrologist. She then went on to Nevada State from 1998 to 2016. She has been happily retired since 2016, is involved in the community, and has been a member of the Carson City Kiwanis since 1991. Living the good life!

Joel D. Eis 1978 M.F.A. Theatre, just published his fifth book, *Standin' in a Hard Rain, the Making of a Revolutionary Life*, with World BEYOND War Press in Charlottesville, Virginia (Available on Amazon.com). It's the life of a radial theater activist (with an FBI file thick as a small city phonebook) from early teens through the current time. Says Eis, "The atmosphere in the theater program at HSU in the '70s was a real engine. Risk-taking among a bunch of outlaws who knew their art. Professors with the wisdom to give good advice then get out of your way." Edgy, unbeatable.

Marianne Lancaster, 1979 Biological Sciences, retired and took another job serving as the nature education manager for The Nature Education Foundation at the Santa Rosa Plateau in Riverside County, which supports education programs on the 10,000-acre reserve known as the Santa Rosa Plateau after 30-plus years of serving as a high school biology teacher in Humboldt County and Riverside County. Emphasis has been on helping high school students become citizen scientists by participating in data collection for the

National Phenology Network, which collects data on the seasonal changes in plants and animals with the changing climate.

1980s

John Alves, 1980 Wildlife, has retired after a 35-year career as a Colorado Parks and Wildlife fisheries biologist. He managed sport fisheries and native fish, including Rio Grande cutthroat trout. He served as an officer with the Colorado/Wyoming chapter of the American Fisheries Society. He plans to spend more time with his daughter and grandsons, go fishing, and travel to Alaska.

Edward (Ed) Busch, 1980 Fisheries Biology, retired from Michigan State University.

Cynthia Chaney, 1980 Social Work, loved her two years at Humboldt, where she made a lifetime friend and teased her about being a "Humboldt Honey." Cynthia graduated with a bachelor's degree in Social Work and went on to get a master's in Social Work from the University of Hawaii in 1993. She lived in Hawaii for 25 years and never wanted to leave. In 2013, Chaney moved to Arizona to care for her elderly mother. She would love to catch up with her former classmates.

Virginia Howard Mullan, 1980 Anthropology and 2006 M.A. Social Science - Environment & Community, decided to put more time into her writing after teaching middle school, all subjects, at Bridgeville Elementary for 31 years. In the last few years, *the North Coast Journal*, *Senior News*, *The Sun*, *The Times-Standard*, and *The Eel River Valley DAR Newsletter* have included her work in their publications. Virginia published a book entitled *What Remains: the People and Places of California's Expositions* about California World's Fairs in 2021.

Craig Sides, 1980 Communication, was invited to be a guest on the "Bold Leadership Stories Show." Among all the guests, he, by far, has had the most views. He is the owner of Temecula Valley Solar. He thanked Humboldt State on his Facebook page.

Greg Williams, 1980 Environmental Resources Engineering, is the former co-owner of a Humboldt County solar design and build company. His son is also a Humboldt graduate. Greg and his family migrated to the western Washington area where Greg is a senior solar design consultant, NABCEP certified, and an active pilot flying aerobatics and shares his aviation skills with the next generation. Currently, Greg is working on a team building an electric motor glider for pilot training. He was recently awarded the FAA 50-year Master Pilot award.

Mara Cole (Moore), 1982 History, serves on the board for Pass The Word Ministries in Monterey, California. The organization's purpose is to provide for the needs of our underserved and unsheltered individuals and families in the community. She is now also a consultant for Hands Up Foundation in Monterey County. She has a leadership role in the Calvary Chapel Fellowship and was an Oral English Professor in 2019 in Tai'an China to 400 nursing students. Cole is a member of a gospel choir, has been married 38 years, and is the mother of two children and grandmother of two.

Harris Fogel, 1982 Art, is a staff writer and photographer for *Copper Magazine* in Boulder, Colorado. Fogel has authored a monograph called "The Wonder Years 1988-1991, Photographs by Harris Fogel," published in 2017 and revised in 2024, and "Helmut Remiorz, Color 1969-1974, Photographs by Helmut Remiorz," released January 2023. He presented a lecture on the exhibition "About Who? Andy Warhol" at the Passagen Linköping Art Gallery in Sweden in March 2024. Additionally, he is the publisher of Mac Edition Radio and participated in "Plutonium & Silver—The Atomic Photographers Guild (APG)/Imaging The

Nuclear Condition" in Vancouver, Canada, in April 2024.

Henry Mulak, 1984 Journalism, is developing a branded media company following 40 years of reporting, including for the "Big Three" broadcasting networks in the United States. The Ah! Channel focuses on artificial intelligence. This comes on the heels of some six years studying computer science and business in Stanford University's Continuing Studies program. Henry was ahead of the curve when OpenAI released ChatGPT in November of 2022, quickly joining a startup in the development of digital personas. "The potential for growth here is tremendous," Mulak says, noting that business models in everything from media to healthcare are changing rapidly.

Donald Cresse, 1985 Economics, has retired from the LA Department of Water and Power after more than 27 years. He worked as an energy conservation rep and then as a supervisor in recycled water. Cresse says that Drs. Ruprecht and Jewett were instrumental in his education and is thankful for their guidance. Also, Dr. Lehman taught him "appropriate technology." Cresse says if not for Humboldt and these great professors, he would not be happily retired.

Ingrid Hart, 1985 Journalism, is reprinting her "Are You A Humboldt Honey?" poster from 1983 for the first time in 40 years to commemorate this milestone. Visit thehumboldthoney.com. To sweeten this feel-good project, she is donating 25% of the net profits to the North Coast Environmental Center in Arcata. She no longer lives in Humboldt but claims her memories of redwoods, rivers, and the ocean remain with her. She says attending Humboldt in her early 20s shaped the person she is today and that it was a high-vibration place to learn.

Stephen Oram "SeaCowboy," 1985 Environmental Resources Engineering, obtained his final civil engineering degree from Oregon State University in 1985 after four solid years of Environmental Engineering at

Humboldt. He worked in Washington at the Bremerton Shipyard for five years, at a consulting firm in Portland, Oregon, for some ten years, at the Rosenberg Oregon Department of Transportation for a few years, and then at the City of Springfield, Oregon, for a few years. He then moved to Australia, Canberra, Cairns, Brisbane, and now Perth. Oram is now retired and surfs every day in Western Australia.

Kristin Coker, 1989 Communication, worked as an admissions counselor for Heald Business College after graduating. She traveled to San Francisco East Bay high schools and spoke of the importance of staying in school and striving for a higher education. Kristin also worked for a nonprofit organization called Contra Costa ARC, where she was an HR recruiter. The agency was developed to employ and educate adults with developmental disabilities. Coker says her degree was the best choice, as it opened many doors to many job market opportunities.

Terry M. Culton, 1989 Psychology, has been working as a winemaker in California for over 30 years. Culton recently moved to Oregon to take the position of director of winemaking and vineyards at Willamette Valley Vineyards in Turner, Oregon.

1990s

Chris Manning, 1990 Journalism, says attending Humboldt State University was one of the greatest decisions of his life! He has since gone on to have an award-winning and successful career in music performing, production, sound engineering, and sound for film. He works at Skywalker Sound in Marin County on sound for major blockbuster movies. Chris intends to return to Cal Poly Humboldt to help him finish a creative historical novel he has been working on for seven years.



Jon Hoech: From Biology Major to VP of Animal Care

Jon Hoech ('86, Biology), the vice president of animal care at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, loves working with passionate people who share his dedication to marine conservation. He also enjoys the beautiful view of the Monterey Bay from his office, similar to his favorite things about studying at Cal Poly Humboldt.

Hoech's journey to Cal Poly Humboldt reflects a passion for nature that has defined his life. Growing up in San Clemente, surrounded by the ocean, Hoech's early connection to the marine environment and love for scuba diving laid the foundation for his academic pursuits.

Motivated by a curiosity for the natural world, Hoech found his way to Humboldt, drawn by the redwood curtain, unique culture, and the promise of academic training that aligned with his interests. He dove into the College of Natural Resources & Sciences, exploring various fields from marine biology to mycology and physics, finally deciding to pursue Biology as his major.

Reflecting on his time at Humboldt, Hoech emphasizes the influential professors, small class sizes, and the immersive environment as key elements that shaped his educational experience. The redwood forest, Telonicher Marine Lab, and newly built facilities like the Dennis K. Walker Greenhouse added to the richness of his academic journey. Access to unique natural areas like the Lanphere Dunes National Natural Landmark and Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge further enhanced his connection to the environment and learning.

Some of his favorite parts of studying biology were the passionate professors, the experiential learning in the redwood environ-

ment, and the quality of instruction. He specifically mentions the impact of Biology professors like Gary Brusca, Tim Lawlor, and Native American Studies Professor Robert Lake, who broadened his perspectives beyond the scientific realm.

"The quality of the environment, including the resources and infrastructure on campus, the availability of good professors, and lastly, the wonderful environment of Arcata and Humboldt County make Humboldt a great place to study. It is a magical and beautiful place that can open young minds to new concepts and ways of thinking," Hoech says.

After graduating, a serendipitous opportunity at the Monterey Bay Aquarium changed his trajectory. Now, as the vice president of animal care, he oversees five departments: the applied water science team, the dive programs, the veterinary services team, the husbandry team, and the collections team. In managing and leading each department, he is applying everything he learned in the biological sciences curriculum as a student at Humboldt, from math and chemistry to ecology and microbiology.

"I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to work with such a diverse and talented group. Seeing the passion and dedication they bring to their work every day is a joy. I also appreciate the collaborative spirit within the aquarium, where everyone is working toward a common goal of inspiring marine conservation and appreciation for the world's oceans," Hoech says.



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Rebecca Beard: Protecting Privacy in the Metaverse

Being part of the Privacy Leadership Team at Meta, Facebook's parent company, which focuses on developing augmented and virtual reality technology, means thinking outside the box. It's a daunting task for a team responsible for protecting users' privacy rights. However, as a leader on the team, Rebecca Beard ('01, Art) finds this task effortless, thanks to the time she spent as an Art major at Cal Poly Humboldt.

"Meta hires some of the smartest people in the world, and I continue to learn and grow as a leader within the company. The culture at Meta pushes you to think differently and collaborate with teams across the company to develop creative solutions to difficult problems," Beard says.

Beard is excited about the work she does at Meta, getting to set the stage for how privacy-enhancing technologies will change the world. As a leader of a team of global managers who develop privacy practices to protect users' data in the Metaverse, she works with Meta's privacy engineers to create products like virtual reality consoles and smart glasses.

Beard's team at Meta previously worked with Luxottica, makers of Ray-Ban, to create a pair of sunglasses that could record video and post that footage directly to social media. Meta needed to develop a mechanism that allowed users to opt out of sharing their data, a process Beard says took time and innovative solutions.

Beard attributes Humboldt as a massive contributor to her success because she had the freedom to think creatively as a Cal Poly Humboldt Art student.

"I couldn't do what I do now without Humboldt because I must develop creative solutions for new technologies," Beard says. "My experience at Humboldt gave me a new perspective and enabled me to develop creative solutions in my job."

At Humboldt, she was a graphic designer, photographer, and illustrator. As an Art major, she spent much of her time working on projects, from conceptualization to execution. Beard credits the hands-on learning experience and her Humboldt professors for strengthening her creativity. When she thought she was done with an art piece, they pushed her and encouraged her to keep creating.

After graduating and spending a few years in different employment fields, including law and technology, Beard received her Master of Business Administration from San Francisco State University and her Executive Master of Business Administration from The Yale School of Business. She then moved into management roles in the tech industry.

After noticing the gap between male and female leadership and struggling to move up in the workforce, Beard has become passionate about uplifting, empowering, and mentoring other women.

"I'm passionate about helping other women move up, whether through an advanced degree, additional training, or having mentorship from somebody like me or another female leader," Beard says. "In most cases, it takes women more time to get into leadership positions than men. I want to change that and lift other women in the industry."

Ira Goldstein, 1991 Geography, has been a watchmaker for 30 years in Idaho and loves his career, although he says he will always be a geographer at heart. He resides in Boise, Idaho, with his wife, Barbara, (whom he met at Humboldt). He owns Timekeeper Watch Repair & Sales in Eagle, Idaho.

Ken Russo, 1993 Fisheries Biology, moved to the Sacramento area and worked in the aquaculture industry for 18 years, raising white sturgeon for meat and caviar production after graduating. In 2011 he switched gears and went to work as a transportation biologist for Caltrans District 3. Ken is currently a senior resources biologist working with staff on delivering projects, permitting, and addressing wildlife connectivity impacts and remediation. Russo has also been married for 25 years to Tani Russo (Rutherford, Humboldt '92) and has one awesome son who just graduated from Chico State!

Sandra L. Neumann, 1995 Psychology and 1997 M.A. Psychology, was recently awarded the University of Wisconsin system's P.B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People. She is currently an associate professor of psychology at UW Stevens Point-Marshfield campus.

Marie (Laurey) McHaffie, 1996 History, never thought she would be living in Arkansas, but there she is in a truly beautiful state. Marie teaches English, journalism, yearbook, and theatre in a small rural school. She earned her M.A. in English in 2017 and is entering her 19th year of teaching. She's studying art, too, and loves it! She carries a piece of Humboldt with her in her heart. Marie appreciates all the trees and waterfalls out there. She hopes she can get back to campus for a visit someday.

Nathan Delgado, 1997 Recreation Administration, returned to school at 40 and received a B.S. in geology and an M.S. in geology and geomorphology from the University of Nevada, Reno. He

worked researching post-wildfire debris flows, flash floods, and landslides before joining a large international consulting firm. Delgado is now a geomorphologist conducting surveys and research documenting the impacts of hydroelectric projects on rivers and aquatic wildlife.

Dafna Golden, 1997 Geography, is fulfilling a long-time dream and moving to Israel with her husband and two boys after a successful 23-year career as a geography professor at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, California. She credits her education in Geography at Humboldt with preparing her to become a teacher and advises many of her students to consider Cal Poly Humboldt themselves. She completed her master's degree at CSULA with an emphasis on Geographic Information Systems and has created a successful GIS program at Mt. Sac. She hopes to apply her GIS expertise in Israel to help manage the natural resources there.

Kyle Chang, 1997 Natural Resources, retired from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a lieutenant supervisor for San Bernardino and Riverside Counties after almost 24 years with the department.

Billy Lamar Miles, 1999 Liberal Studies Elementary Education, recently celebrated 10 years as a quizmaster for King Trivia Inc. Not everyone can say they love their job, but he does.

2000s

Myshelle Charlon, 2000 Biological Sciences, is now living in the Bay Area with her family. She is working to develop effective, tolerable, and durable treatments to help patients with cancer thrive.

Jerre Winder Maurer, 2001 Single Subject Credential (Biology) and 2002 Biology, just finished her 20th year teaching science for the Bret Harte Union High School District in Angels

Camp, California, and continues to love it! She teaches biology and anatomy/physiology. She is also the science department chair and the recycling coordinator. She says it has been a great place to work all these years with wonderful staff and students! The credential program ensured she was prepared to teach! Thank you, Humboldt!

Joel Heng Hartse, 2007 English, is a senior lecturer at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada. His latest book is *A Very Brief Guide to Reading & Writing in University*.

Garrett Edward Spears, 2007 Journalism, has retired from independent professional wrestling after eight years of traveling throughout California, Oregon, and Mexico. He is now an associate producer for the television show "Horror Hotel." It promotes classic and independent movies within the genres of horror and science fiction. It is shown on Retro TV, The Action Channel, and The Monster Channel. He has also started dabbling in acting and is thinking about getting back into traveling entertainment.

Dan Troxel, 2007 Fisheries Biology and 2010 M.S. Natural Resources (Fisheries Biology), is an environmental scientist for the California Department of Fish & Wildlife based in Arcata, California, working in the Klamath and Trinity Rivers Program. In the face of Klamath basin dam removal efforts, adaptability is key, but generally speaking, he is responsible for recreational fishery surveys and quota management. He is the lead coordinator for mid-Klamath spawning grounds surveys and is the Salmon Report Card lead, amongst other things. Troxel appreciates hiring Cal Poly Humboldt students to give them early career opportunities in fisheries and fieldwork.

2010s

Mark Castro, 2010 Anthropology, is a co-director of the Cultural Resources Facility at Cal Poly Humboldt and has been with the organization for five years. Castro has a holistic work experience through his time with multiple agencies including the BLM working on museum collections and archaeological field surveys, the Eldorado National Forest as a field technician, and the Northwest Information Center (Sonoma State University). He received his master's degree in Cultural Resources Management at Sonoma State, is a board member of the Humboldt County Historical Society, and is the co-lead for the Pride (LGBTQ+) Taskforce for Coalition for Diversity in California Archaeology.

Tara Darlene Smith's, 2010 English, memoir essay collection, *Sunflowers in Iraq: True Stories of Surviving & Thriving*, was published. Further information is available on her website at www.taradarlenesmith.com.

Frankie Baker, 2011 Critical Race, Gender & Sexuality Studies, opened a New York-style bakery serving the Humboldt community up until selling it in 2022. The skills, community, and support they gained while earning their degree—combined with life experience and being an entrepreneur—have brought Baker to their next journey/career in the mental health/social work field. They now work as a youth prevention specialist in school-based wellness centers at various school sites within Humboldt County. They will forever be grateful to the CRGS program for providing them with a solid foundation as they continue serving their community.

Jess Whatcott, 2011 M.A. Social Science - Environment & Community, became a tenure-track professor in women's, gender, and sexuality studies at San Diego State University after completing a Ph.D. at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Whatcott's first

academic book about California's history of eugenics and confining disabled people in state institutions will be published by Duke University Press in August 2024.

Samuel R. Harper, 2014 Fisheries Biology, became a user experience designer at Infinity Ward, having worked on popular video game titles such as *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II*. He is earning a master's degree in Human Factors from Bentley University. Harper has also taught UX courses at the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Central Florida. Harper currently resides in Austin, Texas.

Stephanie Rosier, 2014 Psychology, worked as a senior advocate at Humboldt Domestic Violence Services for two years and as a shelter coordinator at YWCA Glendale after graduating from Humboldt. She then worked as an early recovery specialist at Aegis Treatment Centers in Ventura, California, and two years ago, she moved to Missoula, Montana, where she worked as a county mental health coordinator. She loves the nature-focused culture of Montana but misses the redwoods! Humboldt State University provided her with many experiences and tools that have helped her build her career and give back to the community, and she will always be grateful.

Mary Colleen "MC" Hannon, 2015 Biology and Zoology, successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation at Texas A&M University at Galveston with a study describing the reproductive biology of a local polychaete worm (Family Nereididae) on March 8, 2023. She has accepted a postdoc position at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., where she will continue her research looking into polychaete vision in the open water column. During her time at Humboldt State, she was the captain of the Women's Ultimate Disc club and worked at the University Center Information Desk.

Ashley (Perez) Mezeske, 2015 Environmental Studies, moved her family from Humboldt to rural Michigan

in August of 2023. While living in Humboldt, Mezeske worked briefly in the nonprofit sector, helping to provide resources for various aspects of childcare for a local organization. She has been a stay-at-home mother since she had her first child in 2018. She plans to open up her own business with an interdisciplinary environmental lens this coming year. She says the concept of a "third place" and the loss we have of them in society has become very interesting to her lately. She loves Humboldt!

Robin Rader, 2015 Environmental Studies, is unsure when her last update was, but she had a baby two and a half years ago! She's been a stay-at-home mom ever since and is taking drone courses to get a commercial license for flying one. She's not exactly sure what she'll do with that, but she can be flexible with it and continue raising her son. Robin loves being a mom. She says it's so awesome watching her son grow and learn. They garden, and he loves it. They hike, cook, and learn together.

Javier Rojas, 2016 Journalism, accepted a dream job as a media relations specialist at Cal State Northridge after taking on various reporter roles in Southern California. Rojas has been working toward the transition from daily reporting to a communication position in higher education since graduating from Humboldt State. While his love for writing never wavered, he's excited to return to a role in the CSU system where he can highlight the work of students.

Shiloh (Green) Soto, 2016 Environmental Studies, earned her M.A. in Interdisciplinary Humanities at UC Merced, where she will also graduate with her Ph.D. in Spring 2024. Soto's graduate work is housed in the Department of History & Critical Race and Ethnic Studies and analyzes a public history project she directed about the San Joaquin Valley's City of Livingston. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Soto and her spouse decided to move back to Humboldt with their child, and she found exciting work on campus in Cal Poly



Steve and Amy Bohner: Trailblazers in Community Building and Craft Distilling

Steve ('95, Speech Communications) and Amy Bohner's journey from Humboldt students to successful entrepreneurs underscores the profound impact that their education and experiences at Cal Poly Humboldt had on their lives. They continue to contribute to the community, blending sustainability, creativity, and a strong sense of place in everything they do.

Steve's introduction to Cal Poly Humboldt was through a friend and his love for soccer. He quickly immersed himself in the punk rock scene, becoming a DJ for KHSU before it became a public radio station.

"We played punk rock music and invited bands to come play in Arcata," he says. Among the bands they brought in were soon-to-be legends like Green Day. Thanks to the support of the station's general manager, Parker Van Hecke, this experience was crucial for Steve, teaching him valuable lessons in organization, professionalism, and community engagement.

Amy, a Child Development major at Humboldt, was inspired to attend after visiting the North Coast. She valued her time in the Child Development Lab, gaining hands-on experience with children and observing them through a two-way mirror, offering important learning opportunities.

"I loved working in the Child Development Lab. We would watch the other staff with the kids and just observe how they dealt with misbehaving or not sharing or whatever kind of situations came up. You could just see how it was handled in real-time, and I feel like I learned a lot from that experience," Amy says.

Steve and Amy have nothing but praise for their time at Humboldt. Steve highlights the supportive environment that allowed students like him to take on significant responsibilities, encouraging a sense of professionalism and community.

After graduation, Steve founded Alchemy Construction in 1998, and Amy joined the crew soon after they met. Their firm has been integral in shaping Arcata's landscape, contributing to iconic spots like Café Brio, The Alibi, and the Dead Reckoning Tavern.

Steve manages the construction company, which prides itself on green building practices like solar and radiant heating installations and utilizing recycled materials. His commitment to sustainability began early in his career, influenced by his work at the Arcata Recycling Center, and continues to be a guiding principle in his projects.

In 2015, Steve and Amy expanded their entrepreneurial spirit by founding Alchemy Distillery. Amy manages the whiskey distillery full-time, bringing her passion for sustainable practices to the forefront. The distillery is renowned for its zero-waste efforts, including donating spent grains to local farmers for livestock feed and using upcycled materials like bowling alley lanes for the tasting room's decor.

Steve and Amy believe that experiencing the slower pace and friendly community of Arcata, along with its natural beauty, is an invaluable part of the Cal Poly Humboldt journey. Amy appreciates the lasting sense of community and the energy of living in a college town, making it an ideal place to both study and live.

Humboldt's College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences as the college graduate programs & recruitment coordinator.

Christian Vierra, 2016 Politics, is the associate director of Government Relations for the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health System. Previously, he has served in various roles at the American Heart Association and the California State Assembly.

Emily Frances Klee, 2017 Environmental Resources Engineering, went off to grad school and got a master's in Mechanical Engineering. She then moved to Huntsville, Alabama, and worked at NASA in the Environmental Control and Life Support System branch. After two years of loving her job, but hating the area, she decided to move to Fort Collins, Colorado. She is now an operations manager at a local nonprofit food rescue, Vindeket Foods.

Kaelie Peña, 2017 Rangeland Resource Science, worked as a rangeland management specialist with the U.S. Forest Service, first in the Bridgeport Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and then in the Salmon-Cobalt Ranger District of the Salmon-Challis National Forest upon graduation in 2017. In February of 2024, Kaelie accepted the position of Nevada state coordinator with Pheasants Forever where she will coordinate partnerships amongst NGOs and state and federal agencies across Nevada to accomplish habitat restoration and conservation work.

Claire Roth, 2017 Environmental Studies, lives in Eugene, Oregon, and works as a program manager with the educational nonprofit Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST). BEST advocates for better, more convenient, and safer transportation for everyone, no matter their mode of choice or ability, and believes that community partnership and collaboration are the keys to finding sustainable and equitable solutions to transportation challenges and that the

voices of the most vulnerable users of the transportation system should be continuously elevated. Roth also serves on two local nonprofit boards: Shift Community Cycles and the Whiteaker Community Council. She believes that nonprofits fill the gap that governments cannot cover.

Jenny Werthman, 2017 and 2020 Politics, has taught high school history (mostly juniors and seniors) since 2021, after earning her degree in Political Science and credential in Social Science for Secondary Education. She is entering her third year of teaching. She lives in Rancho Cucamonga, California, and teaches in the inner city of San Bernardino for mostly at-risk youth. She loves helping kids and teaching them about the real world. She uses everything she learned in Humboldt in her classroom and is forever grateful! She is now married with two young kids!

Albert Bernales, 2018 Business Administration, is among the first Peace Corps volunteers to return to overseas service since the agency's unprecedented global evacuation in March 2020. The Peace Corps suspended global operations and evacuated nearly 7,000 volunteers from more than 60 countries at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. "My professors shared their experiences as Peace Corps volunteers during their lectures, and it seemed very impactful on their own personal and professional development," Bernales says. "As a business volunteer, I hope to share an entrepreneur's mindset with community members in Fiji and hopefully get them excited about business."

Anna Petersen, 2018 History, returned to her native country of Hungary in 2019, along with her husband, Jared, and son Tibby. After working for a bilingual education nonprofit in Budapest, where students learn English in a fully immersive environment with lessons co-taught by native Hungarian and English-speaking instructors, she joined the fintech company Wise in 2022 in an anti-money laundering role.

Leah Rankin, 2018 Psychology, started at Humboldt as a single mom juggling home life, work, and school. They obtained a job in the behavioral health field and learned quickly that supporting individuals living with co-occurring disorders was their calling. They've been providing services in the field for ten years and have worked up to becoming the program administrator at a social rehabilitation program that prepares our persons served for community reintegration. Rankin encourages people to continue to follow their passions and dreams, to stay focused on what they wish to accomplish, and to remember it's never too late to get started.

Iris Luana Salamanca, 2018 Wildlife, had the opportunity to serve as a biological technician, public information officer, resource advisor, natural resource and education specialist and obtained her red card, allowing her to assist on four wildfires and two prescribed burns this year alone for the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction Field Office in Colorado. After four years, she is transferring over to the U.S. Forest Service White River, where she will continue to grow as a natural resource specialist and continue assisting with wildfires in various roles.

Crystal Betances, 2019 International Studies, is working with Politics4her on a research project in partnership with the Apolitical Foundation, an organization based in Berlin. The project's focus is on regions with ongoing programs to increase women's political involvement, seeking to create deep partnerships with those leading the political leadership incubators in the region. The project will also highlight the barriers to women's political participation. Betances attributes her interest in this project from her time as an International Studies undergrad and takes with her the research skills learned during that time.

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CAL POLY HUMBOLDT
Alumni Relations
1 Harpst St., Arcata, CA 95521-8299

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Address/Zip

Phone

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Signature

2020s

Adam Cashman, 2021 Environmental Science & Management, is among the first Peace Corps volunteers to return to overseas service since the agency's unprecedented global evacuation in March 2020. Cashman wanted to travel to a different country and work in a different ecosystem and hoped to learn more about agriculture, restoration in subtropical ecosystems, and African culture. He is looking forward to making friends along the way and will serve as a volunteer in Zambia in the environment sector.

Alexander Gant, 2021 Psychology, is working for Hazel Health as an Associate MFT. Hazel Health partners with school districts across the country to provide medical and mental health services to students via telehealth.

Anne Howard, 2022 (M.A.) English, has accepted a position as communications manager for Tacoma Arts Live. The English department wishes to congratulate Anne on her new role!

Leah Meyers, 2022 Botany, was hired as a botanist under Stantec to work in environmental consulting in August 2022 and has recently completed her first year there. She moved to Santa Barbara for this job and has had a wonderful experience working with other biologists and getting out in the field. Living in Santa Barbara is a blast, and Meyers is grateful to be a part of protecting California's amazing wildlife—but she says her heart is always in the Redwoods!

Albert Ochoa-Castillo, 2022 Chemistry, is currently in the second year of his Ph.D. studies at Colorado State

University, focusing on the fundamentals of plant cryopreservation. He recently received the prestigious NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, one of the country's top STEM fellowship programs. Ochoa-Castillo crafted a method to visualize sucrose in plant cells and proposed a technique for simultaneous imaging of two molecules in plant tissue. His research explores cryoprotectant-cell interactions using advanced microscopy methods. After graduating, Ochoa-Castillo aims to teach chemistry at a primarily undergraduate institution, prioritizing research inclusion for first-generation and Hispanic students to enhance diversity in scientific fields.

Abbey Ramirez, 2022 Environmental Studies, moved to Sonoma County on Pomo and Coast Miwok land, where she is the head gardener for Traditional Medicinals Tea Company—the company that makes Throat Coat! She tends the educational garden, which serves as an herbal library, displaying many medicinal herbs the company uses in its teas. She is also the zero-waste coordinator working with the environmental department on getting the tea company recertified as a zero-waste facility. Ramirez is still working with CCAT as a member of the Steering Committee and is always proud to say where her education came from!

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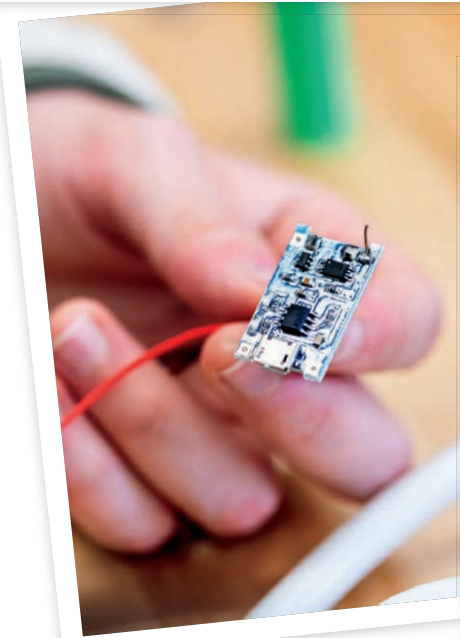
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Meet Humboldt **Shobe Britton**

('25, Child Development & Family Relationships and Native American Studies)

SHOBE BRITTON KEEPS BUSY. A born athlete and scholar, she is enrolled in 18 units as a double major in Child Development & Family Relationships and Native American Studies with a minor in American Indian Education as well. She's been on the honor roll since her freshman year, was named to the dean's list three times, and was a presidential scholar last year.

A member of the Round Valley Indian Tribes (Yuki and Wailaki), she has been named a bilingual scholar for speaking Kin-nis-t'e, the Wailaki language. She's a traditional dancer and travels with the Round Valley Feather Dancers.

She's a youth leader, works with the Indian Tribal & Educational Personnel Program (ITEPP) at the University, and also works with her uncle's nonprofit organization Native Health in Native Hands, which focuses on Traditional Ecological Knowledge and giving non-Indigenous people perspective into Native practices.

"I love the feeling of pride and accomplishment that comes with doing something well," she says. "It reminds me that I genuinely care about what I'm doing."

Family is Everything

"I'm the youngest of seven, with four brothers and two sisters. And I have a lot of cousins. I'm very family oriented—I love working with kids and seeing them do well.

I moved to Humboldt in 2020, the first year of school during the pandemic. My dad wanted me to stay home because classes were online. I felt the need to leave the reservation—not to leave my people but to see outside that world and bring my people with me. At Humboldt I found a family in ITEPP, helping the Indigenous community. I was raised heavily in my culture, which is lucky. Native people have a lot of intergenerational trauma not far removed. We need to know our history so we don't repeat it."

Helping the Next Generation

"I want to be a role model for youth in my community. I see myself as a representative of my people and my family. I want to go far, but I want the next generation to go even farther. After I graduate, I want to return home and open up more opportunities for young people off the reservation, so they can do what they want with their lives. My grandma was a Humboldt alumna, and I hope to pave the way for my nieces and nephews like she did for me."

Ambassadorship through Sports

"I've been playing sports since I could pick up a bat. I played basketball, softball, volleyball, and baseball, and I did cheerleading for my mom and sister. I wouldn't have done it if they didn't want me to, but it's funny because I became captain.

I've embraced the student-athlete lifestyle—though the student comes first. When I was young I would travel a lot for sports. My father always told me that when I leave my house, I'm representing my family. So I always think before I act and consider how it reflects not just on me but my family."

Finding Balance

"My culture teaches me to focus on my mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional balance—if one is out of balance, the others will be as well. I rely a lot on my dad to keep me grounded. Especially being away from my community up here.

When I was young I was taught about the importance of living in two worlds. By living completely in one you can become fully assimilated, though by doing that you risk putting your culture in a position of being abused. The balance between the two is crucial. Not a lot of people have that benefit and understand the hardships of moving off the reservation and going to college. It's hard being away from your roots and your people but I know the only reason I'm still here is because of their love for me. And because of that, I believe in living in harmony."



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