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GESA Student Life

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GESA STUDENT LIFE

kourtney boone

When I stepped on to the Humboldt State University campus in 2018, I was fresh off the plane from Colorado, where I had previously been living. Like many other Geography, Environment, and Spatial Analysis (GESA) majors, I am a transfer student who was filled with pride and excitement to finally finish my bachelor's degree. However, by the time I hiked the stairs to Founders Hall and entered the beautiful arched doorway, I had succumbed to the fear that I would not be able to hack it at a brand new school, let alone at a campus of the California State University system. After all, if there is a time to do well and be involved with the community on and off campus, this is it.

These nerves subsided almost as quickly as they came when I was greeted by the lively department chair and subsequently a long list of equally friendly GESA students and faculty. I was in awe that a department could have so much fun and act as a unit while being so motivated and academically proficient. This awe is the same for many students who are fortunate enough to stumble upon the Geography major. Within this department, there are many opportunities to get involved on and off campus, all the while adding impressive bullet points to your resume. During my time in this program, I have encountered great opportunities to explore my ever-changing interests in the numerous subfields of Geography, all while making impactful connections. These are just a few of the awesome people I have encountered along the way that are

working at expanding their social and career circles through the opportunities provided in GESA.

Although involved in many activities outside of the classroom, **KATIE PIPER** was able to spare some time to tell me about her internship over last summer. Mendocino National Forest provided the perfect opportunity to

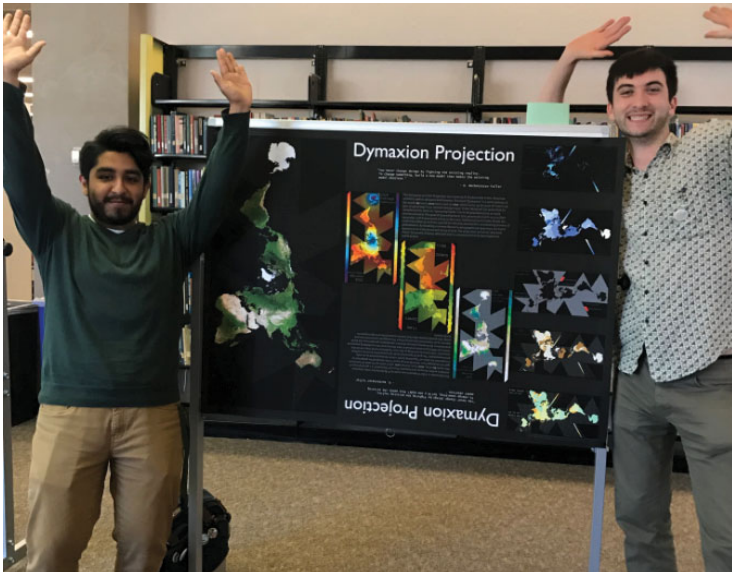


Left to right: Geography majors Monica Wingett, author Kourtney Boone, and Miyako Namba share a bus ride to campus.

get hands-on experience with hydrology. Katie says the internship provided her and her coworkers with training that allowed them to work on their own. "This not only boosted our confidence but allowed us to use our practical knowledge to deal with things that were unplanned," Piper said. "I learned how to use a number of tools (clinometer, GPS, range finder) that will help me in the future." Fortunately, an HSU alumni was available to be their mentor and host, and helped them feel more at home. Piper's interests lie mainly in physical geography, "so this internship allowed me to get a bigger picture of how drainage systems work within mountainous terrain." She gives a strong recommendation that each student in GESA gets an internship while they are pursuing their degree.



Katie Piper



Gilbert Trejo (left) and Brian Murphy present at HSU's IdeaFest.

Between designing visually fascinating maps and the new GESA logo, **GILBERT TREJO** took the time to talk about his experience helping some faculty transform their front lawn into a viable garden. “As goes with permaculture and sustainability, the best classroom is outside,” he said. By joining Cooperation Humboldt, Trejo was able to grasp “a unique opportunity to practice techniques and principles that I have previously only read about and end with a tangible and useful result.” Working through Cooperation Humboldt provided him with connection to people that share his interest in food studies, and is an organization that he looks forward to working with in the future. While the American view of lawns is one of status and conformity, Trejo sees that “in any empty lawn, there is an opportunity to connect with the land in a way that benefits people and the environment.” His hands-on work in the field allowed for use of reusable material that will be ready for a fruitful garden by next spring.



GRACE HALL, the Cartography Club president, states that her “participation in Cartography Club has proven to be more than just an addition to my resume due to its fun, inspiring, and informative activities.” One of the main focal points of the Cartography

Club is the ability to attend the North American Cartographic Information (NACIS) annual conference. The opportunity to attend this conference provided Hall with the chance to present a map she had put many hours of work into in Advanced Cartography (GSP 416). “I learned new techniques and skills through presentations, and networked with experienced cartographers,” Hall informed. GESA faculty Amy Rock is a prominent figure at the NACIS conference and offers students the chance to share in the vast network of fellow cartographers of all levels that attend this conference. “It was a great opportunity to gain inspiration from established professionals in the field, as well as get to know graduate students from other universities,” Hall stated.

One of my most physically active fellow GESA students is **SAMUEL KING**. He spends most of his free time surfing and rock climbing. Sam is interested in the part of Geography that examines “how human societies and natural environments interact, the spatial

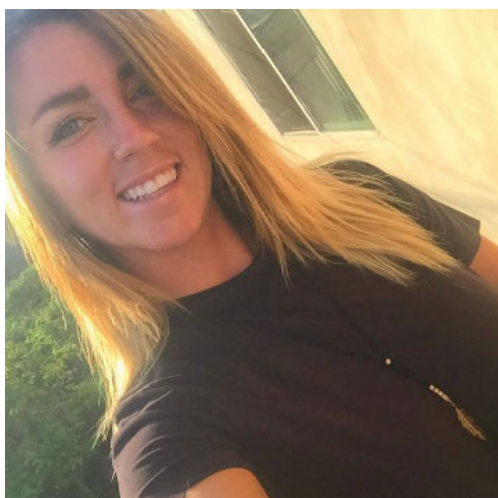


Samuel King, as part of his work as Park Aide at Patrick's Point State Park, gives a tour to first-year HSU students.

relations between the two.” Outside of his involvement in HSU's rock climbing club and the area's surfing community, King is a Park Aide at Patrick's Point State Park. His work at Patrick's Point offers “insights on why people choose ecotourism/nature as a form of leisure and enjoyment.” While he may enjoy getting pitted on the daily, King is able to use both of his current pursuits in alignment with his geographic goals to “greater understand how humans are connected to this big beautiful world.”

In between work and school taking up most of her schedule, **SUMMER OWEN** serves as president of the Humboldt Geographical Society. When asked how she manages to make it all happen, Owen stated that she “likes being on the go. I enjoy being open-minded and learning about different cultures alongside their landscapes, values, and habits.” As a physical and cultural geographer, she delights in sharing her love of the discipline with others. As with the Geography major, the possibilities are fascinating and limitless, she claimed. Whether the spatial patterns be cultural, physical, or a combination of both, Owen finds that the meaningful personal interactions with the GESA community is what helps her relate so much to Geography.

When it comes to resumes, one GESA student in particular stands out. **MIYAKO NAMBA**’s involvement in the university is impressive. She has had a lot of fun working orientation and guiding tours, which



Summer Owen

the China-Tibet Field Studies program. Miyako is a Geology minor, which aids in her understanding of physical geography. Miyako says she “fell in love with learning about the physical world and the empowering feeling it gave me to understand the processes that affect us each and every day. I think it is so dang cool to be able to walk outside and understand what the weather is doing or why it’s doing it. Geology helps add another layer in understanding the planet and it’s still something I get psyched about.” To balance working

hard, Miyako plays hard. She has been involved in intramural soccer for about a year. She thinks “school is really important, but being able to find a balance of having fun, living your life and going to school is even more important.” Taking advantage of programs within her fields has allowed her to travel abroad to places like Ecuador and China-Tibet, which also strengthened her relationship with HSU alumni. Ultimately, Miyako attributes late nights and long hours in the Kosmos Lab to her success at the university. By taking advantage of the school facilities, she has created bonds over mutual frustration and sleep deprivation that “make the work feel less like work, they make the ArcMap crashes a little less painful.”



Miyako Namba (foreground) collaborates with Katie Piper and Mikey Flynn collaborating in the Kosmos lab.