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Alumni Update

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alumni in focus

DAVID BURKE (1984)

David Burke graduated in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in Geography from Humboldt State University and continued his education at Fresno State University, where he earned a master's degree in regional and city planning in 1986. He recalls being the only freshman in the Department of Geography during his time at Humboldt, which reinforced close connection with his professors. Humboldt Geography degrees run in the family. Burke gained his BA in 1980s, following his sister-in-law, who earned her HSU Geography degree in the 1970s. Visiting his family prior to entering HSU, Burke fell in love with "all the things that make Humboldt 'Humboldt': the natural beauty, the granola lifestyle, the Arcata Square, etc..."

Although his interest was originally in transferring as a Geography major and switching to Oceanography, the allure of pursuing Geography manifested in Burke after just one engaging class project. The class project was researching some demographics related to the local school population for the City of Arcata. This course demonstrated the vast utility of Geography, answering a single spatial question. After that class, the lifelong interest in Geography as well as planning developed within Burke, serving him both personally as well as professionally. Today, Burke applies the skills learned at his time in Humboldt and Fresno in his job as director of Facilities for the Davis Joint Unified School District in Davis, California. He supervises a department of 75 employees, planning and



David poses with his daughter Kendall, who graduated from HSU with a Geography degree this year.

implementing a \$225 million school program. Critical thinking, data analysis, and proper communication of data analysis are just a few skills he uses daily, which began developing as an HSU Geography major.

Thanks to his family's introduction to Humboldt State, Burke sent only one application out knowing his place was in Arcata. The family legacy continues with his daughter Kendall Burke, a Geography major who is a member of the team producing this very journal. Exploring different realms of geography is a family pastime, as the Burke family has traveled much of California and the United States.



Monica Moreno-Espinoza (2015)

Research Data Analyst II (GIS)

Division of Research, Innovation, and System Information
California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, CA

"HSU Geography and its faculty fostered immense growth in me as a researcher. They challenged, guided, and inspired me to go above and beyond what I thought I could do. I recently transferred from Caltrans' Eureka office to Sacramento, where I support the Caltrans linear reference system and perform analysis of project impacts to the surrounding environment. I am excited for the new chapter in my life and am forever grateful to HSU Geography"

David Burke Speaks to Current Humboldt Geography Students

IN ONE SENTENCE, HOW DO YOU DEFINE GEOGRAPHY AS A STUDY OR FIELD?

The study of past, current, and future spatial relationships amongst and between the natural, cultural, and built environments.

WHAT STANDS OUT ABOUT YOUR TIME AT HSU?

The friendships developed that continue to this day. The quality academic environment. All the things that make Humboldt “Humboldt”: the natural beauty, the granola lifestyle, the Arcata Square, etc. My Geography professors really stand out. Doctors Hammasi, Bennion, Harper, and, of course, Leeper were outstanding. I still keep in contact with Joe and remember playing softball with him. It helped me develop a lifelong interest in Geography and planning that has served me well professionally and personally.

HOW DO PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF HUMBOLDT RESPOND TO YOUR DEGREE AT HSU?

The folks who don’t know Humboldt, it’s “wink, wink, nudge, nudge, bet you had a great time, right?” The folks who know Humboldt always share great stories at HSU. I’m always surprised to find out how many people I run into are HSU alumni.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF WORK?

California and western US geography! I love to explore, go places I’ve never been before. Within the last two years, I have stood at the northeastern and northwestern corners of California. Only three more corners to go: the elbow in Lake Tahoe and the southeastern and southwestern corners. Sharing these interests with my family has been really important. I am so proud of Kendall that she shares many of these same interests. These are interests that my father passed to me.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR CURRENT GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS?

Enjoy and appreciate each day, study hard, do your best, leave things better than you found them, and be kind.

BRIAN MILLAR (1982)

President
Land Logistics, Inc.
Davis, CA

“The broad range of education I received as an HSU Geography major in the natural sciences, along with the technical skills I learned and courses I had with an emphasis on human influences on the land, have served me especially well in my professional career as a land planner.”



CYNTHIA LYNN TARWATER (1991)

Project Coordinator
Trinity County Resource Conservation District
Weaverville, CA

“I’m still living in Trinity County, Big Bar, California. Still working as Project Coordinator at Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) based in Weaverville. I’ve been there since 1993. My primary tasks include watershed restoration/sediment reduction work related to roads, road improvement, and road decommissioning projects on USFS, BLM and private lands. The TCRCD is a Special District and 100 percent grant funded. My favorite Geography teacher was John Harper, RIP. And my buddy Geography counselor: Joe Leeper.”



JOEL E. CORREIA (2004)

Assistant Professor
Center for Latin American Studies
University of Florida

“I began to understand how geographic inquiry helps reveal roots of social and environmental injustice—and can change them through the department’s field trips to local sites of social-environmental change later on a summer field research trip to China and Tibet with Rossi. HSU Geography courses and applied experiences enabled me to build the skills needed to pursue activism, work in international development and later a PhD in Geography. I now use those skills in my research and teaching at University of Florida. Yo no creo en fronteras (I don’t believe in borders/boundaries), in part because of the support and education I gained at HSU.”

JILL BECKMANN (2006)

Lead Ecological Forester
Lomakatsi Restoration Project
Ashland, OR

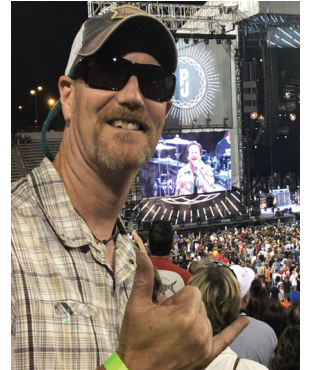
"Working with tribal governments, my recent work has focused on revitalizing relationships between human communities and the natural landscape by facilitating the removal of encroaching conifer trees and reinstatement of cultural and prescribed fire practices in landscapes that have been shaped by natural and anthropogenic fire for millennia. I recently joined the team at Lomakatsi Restoration Project in Ashland, Oregon as Lead Ecological Forester where I will continue to work collaboratively with tribal governments, state and federal agencies, and other non-profit entities."



KEVIN McMANIGAL (2006)

Lecturer in GIS/Cartography
University of Montana, Missoula, MT

"As a geographer, a cartographer, and a human being, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to HSU's Department of Geography. My degree laid the foundation for a career in academia, not only with highly specialized skills in Geographic Information Science, but also with a deep understanding of our complex cultural and physical environment. Beyond the classroom, my professors were caring mentors that became life-long friends. They continue to inspire and support me both professionally and personally. I am fond of telling young people, 'Journey to the coast and become a Lumberjack. You can't go wrong!'"



CASSANDRA HANSEN (2006)

Environmental GIS Faculty
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

"Small-sized classes combined with instructors who are passionate about Environmental Science, GIS, and Geography is what you can expect at HSU. I could not believe how many opportunities were available to me as an HSU Geography/GIS major. From mapping and surveying mountains in Alaska to patrolling the backcountry of Devil's Postpile National Monument. Take advantage of all these opportunities and keep your mind and heart open. Never stop searching for the Why of Where in every aspect of your life."

AYLSIA BALLINGER (2010)

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Malawi (2011-13)
Conservationist II
California Conservation Corps
Ukiah, NV

"After graduating from HSU with a BA in Geography in 2010, I joined the Peace Corps and served in Malawi as a Community Based Natural Resource Manager from 2011-13."

After studying the elements of Geography and putting theory to practice in the Peace Corps, this solidified for me that human and environmental rights go hand in hand and serving the needs of both is imperative to a healthy existence. I feel lucky to have a career which allows me to work at the cornerstone of human development and environmental conservation."



Kirsten Ray (2012)

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Mongolia (2014-16)
Program Analyst, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
Portland, OR

"Being part of the HSU Geography Department means being immersed in a strong community of passionate people. The connections I made in this department are certainly lifelong. I've been able to use my Geography degree in many ways—primarily as a valuable lens through which to view the world. I am thankful and grateful to the department faculty who went above and beyond their roles as mentors. They ensured an incredible education and supported me in my continued academic and professional endeavors."



DANIELLE TIJERINA (KREUZER) (2010)

PhD Student, Hydrologic Science and Engineering
Colorado School of Mines, Golden, CO



"The HSU Geography Department helped shape me not only as a professional, but as a human. The department was a truly cohesive community, where we were encouraged to push our educational limits and explore beyond our learned perspectives. In

particular, my experience in the China and Tibet program with Tony Rossi influenced me in ways I never thought possible and has continued to inspire me to have a more open and inquisitive worldview."

YANG YANG (2011)

Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Asia Research Institute
National University of Singapore



"HSU Geography opens up many new possibilities for students to become critical thinkers. Professors and students, with a wide range of academic background and interests, collaborate to foster an inclusive learning environment. The ability to understand differences and to think about them in a relational way will benefit the students in the long term."

AARON TAVERAS (2012)

GIS Program Manager
Nevada Division of Forestry
Carson City, NV

"I truly enjoyed my time in Humboldt State Geography and have fond memories of the people and experiences that made my education so valuable. The skills and connections I made at HSU have allowed me the opportunity to do what I love in my career, and I wish HSU Geography all the best."

PAUL CASTANEDA (2013)

Utility Forester (GIS)
CN Utility Consulting
Los Angeles, CA

"I encourage current Geography students to establish an academic rapport with your professors, seek out internships, and get involved

in research and clubs affiliated with the department. Put your passions to work. I enjoyed my first few jobs after graduation—and I have my studies at HSU Geography to thank for it—because they allowed me to travel throughout California while getting paid and earning relevant work experience. Don't shy away from opportunities in your career—I got my first internship at Sequoia National Park from networking with a fellow Geography student. Gathering as many skills and building a professional network makes you a versatile candidate for the next step in your career."



Emanuel Delgado (2014)

Tenure-Track Geography Faculty
Reedley College, Reedley, CA

"HSU Geography professors will open many doors for you. Work hard at your craft. Develop your research interests and skills. GIS is a growing field, take full advantage of that training. Visualize what you want, write down your goals, and do it! Disregard obstacles, believe in yourself. Have a strong grounding with family, peers, and a higher power. Love yourself and don't stop moving forward."



alumni in focus

CRISTINA BAUSS (2016)

Cristina Bauss was born and raised in Brazil of American parents and has lived in the United States since age 11. A mother at 18, she has worked as a casino housekeeper, room-service waitress, newspaper and radio reporter, bilingual tutor for migrant workers' children, and office minion in more places than she cares to remember. She returned to college in her late 30s and graduated from HSU with a BA in Geography and an Advanced Geospatial Certificate. After graduation, she spent a year as a writer and editor under temporary contract with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. She's currently an Office Technician for the Fortuna District of the California Conservation Corps, where she's unwittingly become an expert in FI\$Cal, the state's fiscal-management system.

Bauss decided to pursue a career in geography and GIS after interviewing several wildlife trackers during an international tracking conference held in southern Humboldt County (yes, you read that correctly). HSU's reputation for having one of the strongest undergraduate Geography programs on the West Coast did not disappoint her: She felt challenged and enriched in all her coursework (no exaggeration), received more than \$10,000 in scholarships, spent a summer in Washington, D.C. as an intern with the National Geographic Society, and was named Outstanding Student of the Year in 2016-17.

Bauss suggests that Geography majors take advantage of as many field experience and internships—both local and elsewhere—as they can while at HSU. Internships are valuable, especially for students who choose to remain in Humboldt County; finding GIS work in a rural area can be challenging (as she can attest), and her classmates who have succeeded in doing so all had local internships or temporary



positions first. On the flip side, she says, do not be afraid to relocate for an entry-level GIS or any other geography-related position. Why study geography if not to become an explorer?

Bauss credits the Department of Geography and its outstanding faculty for the success she has enjoyed post-commencement. State and federal positions are highly competitive, and the education she received at HSU has been integral in both her day job, which demands incredible accuracy and attention to detail, and in her freelance cartography, including a set of maps for a local healthcare district.



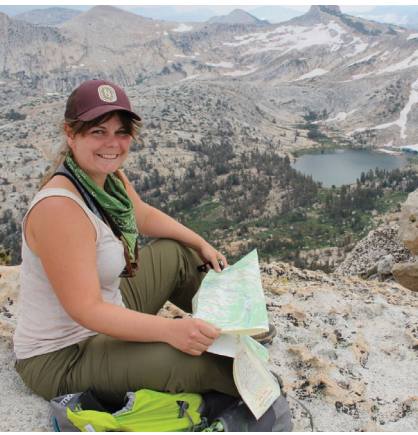
Hailey Lang (2014)

Regional Planner
San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stockton, CA

"My geography degree has directly affected my success as a planning professional. Many planning managers only hires planners with both geography and planning backgrounds, mostly because they make versatile and well-rounded planners. The reasoning for this is that planners that have studied geography have a great understanding of spatiality and regionalism. I have been able to utilize my coursework and research from HSU to analyze and solve in the planning challenges."

SARA MATTHEWS (2014)

Program Coordinator
Tahoe Resource Conservation District
South Lake Tahoe, CA



"Joining the Humboldt State University Geography program is one of the best decisions that I've made. The mentorship and support that I received at HSU helped me develop critical thinking skills that undoubtedly have allowed me to succeed – both in my graduate education and in my career. In addition to GIS and cartography, my job calls for a nuanced understanding of the complex

issues that surround land management and conservation. There is nothing better for this than Geography. Being a geographer has honed my ability to understand the world around me; for that I am forever thankful."

JESSE VAD (2014)

Reporter/Graduate Student
CUNY Newmark Graduate School of Journalism
New York, NY



"The HSU Geography department taught me how to analyze and read landscapes, study relationships between people and place and ultimately led me to my current career path. I'm at an advantage in the field of journalism purely because of those skills I learned at HSU. I'm still in touch with my professors who, years later, continue to guide and mentor me."

LUCIA "SUNFLOWER" WITTENBERG (2014)

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Nepal (2016-18)
Agriculture Marketing Specialist
US Department of Agriculture



"The professors of the HSU Geography department showed me a true map of the world. From that map I learned that a place is not just space on a map. And a map is not just a projection of space, but rather another lens through which history, nature, and culture can be understood and explored. HSU Geography inspired me to chart my own map of the world."

KRISTOPHER ANDERSON (2015)

Development Lead
Alpine Land Information Services
Bend, OR

"HSU gave me the foundational skills in Geographic Information Systems I needed to launch my career. This led me to not just GIS but project management and software development. Currently I am leading a team of programmers to create an entirely proprietary GIS. Understanding geography has changed my life. Human behavior and physical science are

brought together to describe our world. This foundational knowledge has helped me professionally and privately to grow and succeed at many pursuits."



Albert Gonzalo Bautista (2015)

Geospatial Technical Program Manager I
Uber, Palo Alto, CA

"HSU Geography gives you access to a community that will help you grow your interests and professional career. Geography provides a unique set of concepts, theories, and methods that lead to developing a dynamic array of skills that apply to various career paths in government, technology, and more! It was my training at HSU Geography that provided me with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle a career starting as a GIS Data Analyst, then promoted to Technical Program Manager at Uber."



SARAH SERBIN (2015)

Global IT Communications Coordinator
Karl Storz Endoskope SE & Co. KG
Los Angeles, CA

"HSU Geography helped me develop a global mindset and necessary skillset to adapt in a rapidly changing environment. The mixture of technical and critical thinking skills gained from this degree provides a unique perspective, which can be used to your advantage. Pursue an interest, or a few, never stop learning and lava what you do."



ERIK C. KENAS (2016)

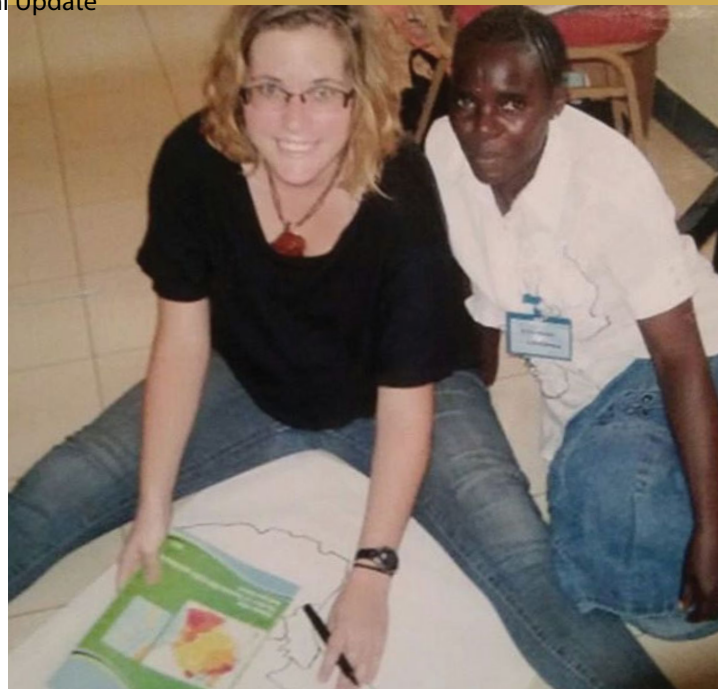
Geographer
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Arcata, CA

"As a Geographer (GS-0150), I support Biologists and Botanists with spatial data to make decisions about species conservation. Geography's strength, to me, is that it understands physical science does not provide every solution. Geography's concern with both the physical Earth and aspects of human culture can allow for more informed decision-making regarding humans' use of resources."

NATHANIEL A. DOUGLASS (2017)

Master's Student, Department of Geography
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR

"With my HSU Geography degree I've been able to work for a handful of great companies, and I was able to create my own business doing freelance cartography. I'm currently working on some amazing projects in the Cascades of Oregon all while pursuing a master's degree in Geography at the University of Oregon. My time at Humboldt State has given me the opportunity to work in some amazing places with some amazing people. I owe much of my success to the dedicated HSU Geography faculty!"



Jocelyn (left), as a Peace Corps volunteer, works with a resident of Manyara, Tanzania on a community mapping project.

Jocelyn Keranen (2013)

Project Specialist
Beacon Health System



JOCELYN KERANEN from HSU with a bachelor's degree in Geography in 2013. Afterward she joined the Peace Corps, serving 2014-17 in Tanzania as a volunteer in environmental science. Jocelyn went right from the Peace Corps into graduate school at the University of Notre Dame, where she earned a Master of Science degree in Global Health. Her thesis consisted of a qualitative study examining access to mental healthcare among people living with HIV. Jocelyn is now employed with Beacon Health System in northern Indiana as a project specialist. Her work consists of four priority areas: maternal/child health, obesity, mental health, and substance use. In these priorities, Jocelyn collaborates with community partners to build upon their capacity to serve vulnerable populations. "I regularly use the skills I learned from the HSU Geography Department during my work, whether it's analyzing data, writing a grant, or thinking through the lens of cultural geography when developing a new program. I regularly draw on my geographic education to make decisions around program development, implementation, and evaluation," Jocelyn says. "What I love most about my job is the ability to work with programs from all different sectors, from housing the homeless to park development for improved safety and physical activity."

daniel blazich