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REDWOOD ROOTS

**FALL 2021
VOLUME 3
ISSUE 1**

**CENTER FOR
COMMUNITY BASED
LEARNING
&
HSU PRESS**



Letter From the Editors

As we move forward within the ever-changing circumstances of COVID-19, we may find ourselves feeling overwhelmed by this time of transition. Change is far from always being easy, and, undoubtedly, we have seen many difficult changes during the pandemic. Although these changing circumstances have brought many struggles, including the ability to find community and be social in person, as vaccines become available and restrictions are lifted we find ourselves in a new world; a world where we have the chance to change. As we hope this volume will show, in many ways this arduous time is also a time of renewed opportunity. As a university and a community, we are working hard to create innovative ways to move forward. By cultivating new ways to establish broader connections, we are building a more interconnected community than ever before. Our ever increasing interconnectedness allows us to do things we never thought possible, both in-person and virtually. This is only the beginning and, through the continuous, dedicated efforts of our community, we are developing tangible hopes for our future.

Our team has worked diligently to reflect upon the ways the Humboldt State University community and beyond has stepped up during these difficult times. The overall goal of this issue is to continue to spread awareness and provide insight into what the community is doing to better serve those in their area. The pandemic is still



very evident, and so is the need to acknowledge the efforts of those on the frontlines of community-based work. This issue will serve as a reminder that although challenges arose during this time, so has the hunger to be of service in new ways.


This issue has not only opened doors for more shared experiences, it has allowed us to have bigger conversations about how we can better serve *you*, our readers and contributors. We are planning to open up workshops to help people submit their stories for our publication as well as connecting them to other publications on campus. We are also working to incorporate alternative media like art, poetry, and other creative outlets because we strive to be a more multimodal platform. At Redwood Roots Digital Magazine, we are dedicated to helping you highlight the contributions you do in and beyond Humboldt County.

Redwood Roots Digital Magazine seeks out and shares uplifting stories surrounding community-based learning. These narratives provide us with a sense of forward momentum, recognition of the past, and ultimately, hope. For the team of Redwood Roots Digital Magazine, our hope is that these stories can teach and inspire us to continue to work together, to support ethical relationships of health and well-being within our community and beyond.



Land Acknowledgement

Redwood Roots would like to acknowledge that Humboldt State University sits on the unceded, ancestral and current homelands of the many local tribes such as the Wiyot and Yurok people, who live, and have lived, in this area since time immemorial. We would like the community to continue to take action to move toward a future where local tribes have sovereignty over their homeland. You can take action to further this vision: take part in efforts to give land back to local tribes; pay an [honor tax](#) to the tribe whose land you reside on.





Purpose and Values

Redwood Roots' purpose is to provide a platform that highlights and shares stories of HSU's community engagement in Humboldt County and beyond. We publish stories that promote deep and enriching connections through learning, and enhance inclusivity within the community through efforts and examples of social and environmental justice.

1. Redwood Roots is a community platform that serves to provide a direct, diverse, and transparent narrative that further encourages communal collaborations between students, alumni, faculty, and community partners.
2. We highlight the diverse approaches HSU students engage in by combining learning objectives with community service, providing enriched experiences for personal and professional growth, and meeting the local needs of different communities.
3. We share stories promoting the welfare of others through an intersectional lens that creates lasting change, with acknowledgment and respect for the past.

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What is Community-based Learning?

Every semester hundreds of HSU students apply their classroom studies to hands-on experiences through community-based learning courses. These courses provide students opportunities to deepen their understanding of curriculum by connecting academic concepts to community-focused action. Community-based learning practices promote academic development, personal growth, and professional connections between our students, campus, and the community.

"I learned how to communicate with others, advocate for student growth, and use cultural humility and empathy to support others."

"This internship is providing me the opportunity to learn how to be effective in community-based work, allows me to network, and apply my academic knowledge to real experiences."

The Center for Community Based Learning (CCBL) facilitates class to community connections. The CCBL supports students, faculty, and community partners throughout the process of course development and implementation.

Redwood Roots Digital Magazine highlights experiences related to community-based learning courses and celebrates the students, community partners, and faculty involved in these practices.





By Leo Kepcke, Kelly Fortner,
Aaron Laughlin

Finding Community on Campus: HSU Library

Community encompasses so much more than simply referring to the people in one's close proximity. Perhaps it has never been more important to expand our idea of community than it is now. Having spent the last academic year immersed in various virtual settings, finding and building community often seems like a difficult task. The Humboldt State University Library is a vital place to look in order to access resources and participate in community building. Despite the Library's main floors being closed for the fall 2021 semester, the Library continues to house and offer an array of wonderful and impactful virtual community and educational resources, including [research help](#), the [Brain Booth](#), [SkillShops](#), and much more.

According to Victoria Bruner, the Library's Access Services Coordinator, "We promote a sense of access to resources, whether that be by purchasing materials or creating teams of diverse voices—such as students, staff, faculty, and community members. We try to engage with folks who will share what we are doing and who have time and space to also work on the projects collaboratively."

Now more than ever, it is clear that our ideas and practices of community need not solely be confined to the physical spaces we inhabit. While we may still connect with the people physically around us, the virtual community has grown even stronger with the ever increasing connectivity of the world. Kumi Watanabe-Schock, Library Media Coordinator, said, "I think that the community has gotten even larger, because more people can attend book circles and workshops no matter where [they] live." Watanabe-Schock reflected upon the many book circles held by the Library that have drawn peo-

ple from all over the country, and even internationally from France. This accessibility is unprecedented and growing.

There are a myriad of indispensable communities at HSU, but one of the core communities that the Library supports is the academic community. This is achieved by placing the support of the Library towards scholarships, research, and learning—which are also central values of the Library. Cyril Oberlander, Dean of the University Library and an advocate for building strong communities, said, "What an academic community is about is how [people] work side by side in ways that support each other... we're trying to expand everyone's learning, it includes the faculty and the students, so everyone is learning together." This collaborative approach to academics has numerous implications for the future of learning at HSU. "In reality we've done enough distinction building in academics," said Oberlander, "and we need to now bridge the disciplines."

Increasing our capacity for interdisciplinary learning is key to Oberlander's vision for the role that the Library can play in building connections between academic communities. Often, collaborative growth is limited by insular ideas of what is possible, and by facilitating collaborations between various communities, the Library seeks to expand upon the limits of what has been previously accepted and practiced.

At times, we may become transfixed on our own immediate community, and tend to forego outward thought toward the rest of the world. This occurrence is often referred to as the "Redwood Curtain," representing the isolation of extreme northwestern California. As an academic community, it has become increasingly important to remember our ability to affect the world in a greater sense. Oberlander asked a perti-

nent question, “How do we make our classroom learning relevant to the world and useful?” Instead of seeing the challenges presented by the pandemic as insurmountable and inevitably isolating, the Library’s vision is to create possibilities of community in innovative and accessible ways.

One of these community-building measures is the Library’s [Lifelong Learning Lounge \(L4HSU\)](#), which consists of free learning events that are open to, and conducted by, campus and community members. L4HSU has quickly become, as Bruner noted, “A space where community members and students and folks from HSU could get together and learn.” This helps to form a bridge between the university and the broader community. Bruner, who does scheduling for L4HSU, explained how they have incorporated participant feedback to expand and develop this program in community enhancing ways. “Our Lifelong Learning Lounge happened in the summertime and then we got feedback from participants who had come to those virtual events asking for us to continue, so we, for the first time ever, ran L4HSU events during the semester. There were film screenings, there were book discussions, there were speakers from around the US. We partnered with different departments on campus. So I think there’s this very strong line of sharing—sharing information, sharing access.” Bruner’s explanation expands upon the notion that community is more than physical proximity. Community, the kind that the Library is working to build, thrives on participation, communication, and sharing.

In addition to their free learning events, The LifeLong Learning Lounge has also cultivated community by assisting with HSU’s 22nd annual Campus/Community Dialogue on Race (CDOR). This week-long event aims to spark a dialogue about racial injustice, inequality, and oppression, as well as positive strategies for change by hosting workshops and keynote speakers. The development of a welcoming and inclusive community for all is paramount—HSU, along with the Library, is dedicated to that mission. Watanabe-Schock said, “A good example is Equity Arcata, which is a partnership between the city of Arcata, Humboldt State University, local businesses, and members of the community working to make Arcata a more inclusive and welcoming environment for people of color.” These initiatives are very important to HSU, and library affiliates are not only integrally involved in these matters, but are outspoken about them as well.

The HSU Library also coordinates the [Textbooks on Reserve program](#). Bruner, who runs this program explained that it “makes materials that are often very expensive, say \$200 or \$300, accessible for people.” She went on to explain how the Library has increased access to resources in virtual settings: “I also connect with faculty to see what we might be able to purchase in terms of e-books... As we’ve gone to more virtual spaces, one of the Library’s goals is to acquire more virtual content for folks for their classes.” Through the dedicated efforts of those like Bruner, these virtual settings have created opportunities for expansion of accessible resources to support our community. This dedication to providing as many free resources as possible is one of the hallmarks of the HSU Library’s work to increase accessibility for all.

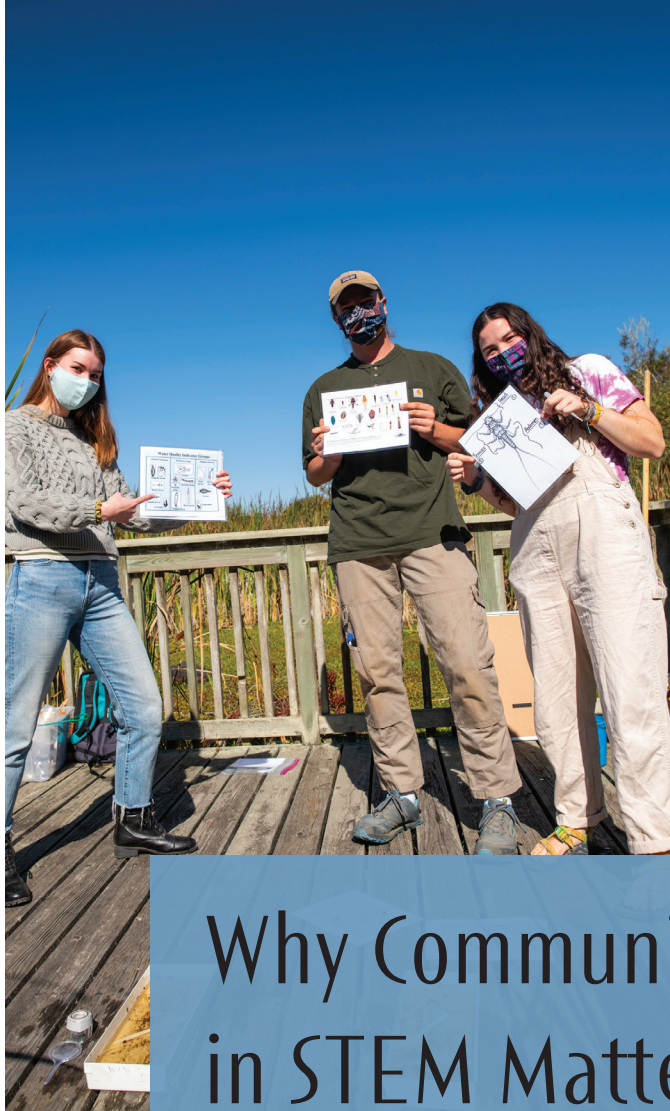
Another hallmark is the Library’s [SkillShops](#), which now include both synchronous and asynchronous offerings. Bruner explained how the Library increased their offerings of asynchronous SkillShops so that students could move through them at their own pace: “Through the pandemic, we started getting together as a community virtually, and librarians and students designed some Canvas SkillShops so people could go at their own pace, because we knew everybody had different access to technology, different bandwidth, attention, and time to put towards projects. We changed how we taught our SkillShops and what we offer to folks and made it something that could be done at your own pace and available on Canvas, which is a platform that most of the student community was already using.”

Bruner emphasized an underlying value and purpose that drives this work when she explained that “the Library facilitates partnerships around campus and the community... [to provide] student-centered workshops that center around personal, professional, and academic growth.” These SkillShops, and the multitude of other library resources available to students, are undoubtedly indispensable towards fostering growth and connection between our academic and personal communities here at HSU.

This centralized hub dedicated to inclusion and access to resources, as well as personal, professional, academic, and community growth, is crucial in HSU’s goal to build strong communities for all. During a time when university life has moved off campus in many ways, it has been challenging for us to develop the same sense of community that we once had. But, as the brilliant and dedicated folks at the Library have helped us to see, perhaps it is not necessarily about returning to the exact world we had before. We can continue to develop new innovations out of the hardship and chaos. Perhaps there is no better opportunity than now to strive for building better, more interconnected, more collaborative, more accessible and inclusive communal realities for all.

*To learn more about the
Library’s many resources visit:*

- [HSU Press](#)
- [Special Collections](#)
- [Brain booth](#)
- [Library Scholar Internships](#)
- [Databases by Discipline](#)
- [Research help](#)
- [Interlibrary loan](#)
- [Campus services](#)
- [SkillShops](#)
- [L4HSU](#)
- [Study spaces](#)
- [Library Staff and Faculty](#)
- [Digital Media Lab](#)
- [HSU Library Blog](#)
- [Library Partners](#)
- [HSU Authors celebration](#)
- [ideaFest](#)
- [Library YouTube channel](#)
- [Resources for students](#)
- [Resources for faculty](#)
- [Resources for staff](#)
- [Resources for community](#)
- [Resources for alumni](#)



Why Community-based Learning in STEM Matters

By Savannah Sonia

Each semester, HSU students from many disciplines participate in Academic Internship and field placement opportunities in order to gain hands-on experience with community partners and to better understand their career goals. Through these experiences, students grow their leadership and communication skills, make connections with the community and potential employers, meet community needs, and understand themselves better as collaborators and learners. With these experiences, students are able to broaden their grasp on the interconnectedness of HSU and the local community.

Across the STEM disciplines at HSU, internships are a great way for students to gain experiences specific to their area of study. Dr. Eric Riggs, the Dean for the College of Natural Resources and Sciences, provided some insight on the connections that HSU is able to make with the community through internships. Riggs said, "Internships serve as a living bridge between employers in all the sectors of the economy we serve and the faculty and curricula we build here at HSU to serve our students." This living aspect of internships and the need for them to constantly evolve is especially important now, both with the pandemic and as HSU begins the shift to a polytechnic institution. Riggs expanded on this sentiment by adding, "As we transition to becoming a polytechnic university in the

coming months and years, these strong linkages will become even more important, and internships are a key component of our development as a regional catalyst for economic growth and technical-fields employment in Northern California."

The following featurettes highlight conversations with STEM students and faculty from four different HSU departments and programs that offer Academic Internship and field placement courses: biology, forestry, ¡Échale Ganas! & Camino al Rancho, and nursing. During these conversations, many students and faculty remarked upon the ways in which these real-world experiences help students fully understand their professional goals and the direction they want to go with their careers in the future. We discussed the incredible benefits that working in the community brought to students' education as well as the reciprocal benefits that these practices bring to community partners and the local community.

Biology's Pre-Med Shadowing Internships (Biology 482)

Dr. Jianmin Zhong, who teaches the Biology 482 internship course, talked at length about the importance of understanding

the ins and outs of working in hospitals. Students in Zhong's course participate in a clinical shadowing program in which they are expected to spend a minimum of 45 hours on site shadowing a medical professional in the local community. Zhong explained that the program was developed because many medical and professional schools require a certain number of hours shadowing in a hospital in order to be accepted.

Zhong also discussed the ways in which these placements offer reciprocal benefits to all parties involved: the Biology students are able to participate in the fast-paced environment of a hospital and make connections with future employers, and the hospitals are able to make connections and learn from the students. He mentioned that much of this work could not have been done without the support of the Humboldt-Del Norte County Medical Society. Zhong said that some students, after receiving their professional degrees, return to the Humboldt area because of the impact that their undergraduate work had on their career trajectory.

One student who took Zhong's Biology course and participated in the hospital placements was Annie Jensen, who recently graduated from Humboldt State with a bachelor's degree in Cellular and Molecular Biology and a minor in

Chemistry. She is now participating in the [HSU CIRM program](#), a 12-month research experience in stem cell biology and regenerative medicine. Jensen explained that a part of her experience involved observing patient interactions, where she was able to gain an understanding of how different treatments work for individual people. She said, “It’s a constant adjustment to find the perfect treatment plan to help the patient.” She explained that it takes time to understand both the complexity of working in hospitals and the specific needs of each patient.

Jensen mentioned that her mentor, Dr. Madeleine Ramos, was very inspiring to her, and that the chance to “talk to someone in the field you want to go into and see if it is something you want for your future” was a valuable part of the experience. Students like Jensen are able to understand their future goals in a deep way through this shadowing experience. They are able to experience their own potential in the field and learn more about themselves as learners and medical professionals.

Forestry’s Wildland Fire Internship (Forestry 424)

Dr. Jeffrey Kane teaches the Forestry 424 internship course, in which forestry students work with government agencies, non-profits, or private companies to learn more about wildland fire management. Kane explained that a major reason that he wanted to get his students out into the field was because he felt that his own college experience lacked this real-world experience. He said, “I wasn’t aware that I should have tried to get work experience related to my major and I didn’t really have a vision for what I was planning to do with my degree.”

Kane wants to provide students with the chance to apply the knowledge they gain in the classroom to real-world situations where they are able to develop an understanding of professional expectations. He noted that these placements “also have the benefit of improving students’ confidence and sense of belonging in the community through work with

fire professionals.” Kane hopes that this kind of learning will motivate students in the classroom. Two of his students, Angel Moo and Evan Tontini, shared that they gained inspiration from their internship experiences.

Moo, a forestry major with a concentration in wildland fire management, worked over the summer as a Forestry Technician with the United States Fire Service at Cherry Lake, Groveland, located in the Stanislaus National Forest. He mentioned that his internship experience was a great way for him to “bridge the gap between field work and classroom learning because I got to see a lot of wildland fire aspects that I would learn in class, in-person and right in front of me.” Moo explained that some of his favorite parts about this experience, which he had been wanting to participate in for years, were “being able to see fire behavior first-hand, talking yourself into new challenges, and traveling along the U.S. It’s the adrenaline rush and excitement of being challenged that had me intrigued on the job.”

Tontini, who is also a forestry major with a concentration in wildland fire management, worked for the Watershed and Research Training Center out of Hayfork, CA, over the summer. Through this internship, he was hired to do salvage work after the August Complex Fire. Much like Moo, Tontini mentioned that he appreciated how the field work he participated in helped him make connections to his school work. He was also thankful for his experience because he was able to share what he participated in “with others who may be interested in this type of work.” Not only did Tontini get the chance to experience the kind of work that he might do once he graduates first-hand, but he also gained practical training as well. He mentioned that this course helped him improve his resume building skills and taught him how to write strong cover letters for future jobs.

¡Échale Ganas! & Camino al Rancho Programs

[¡Échale Ganas! & Camino al Rancho](#) are campus programs that





provide Latinx and other underrepresented students interested in natural resource sciences and conservation to work in the community and make connections. This program uses grant funding to provide internships for students who are interested in fields like wildlife, fisheries, forestry, rangeland resources, and environmental science and management.

Dr. Matthew Johnson from the wildlife department, along with Dr. Rafael Cuevas Uribe from fisheries, and Dr. Susan Marshall from rangeland resources helped to write the grant proposals for ¡Échale Ganas! and Camino al Rancho. Johnson shared that he and his colleagues felt the need for these grants because students who participate in the program are able to “apply their learning in real-world, hands-on settings, and they get exposure to the variety of careers available to them in their chosen fields.” Field experiences help students become aware of the different avenues they can take once they graduate.

Johnson and his colleagues have worked to find ways to make internships more accessible. “Our grants aim to increase the accessibility and equity of these internships because they are paid, and offered over the summer.” To mitigate the barrier that distance learning has caused, Johnson discussed how they found clever ways to connect with students, like sending them materials to use to work from home.

Johnson shared that reciprocal benefits for both students and their communities include having scientists in the field who understand the complexities of current problems. “In today’s world, we must grapple with the triple challenge of meeting the world’s food demand, arresting biodiversity loss, and adapting to and mitigating climate change—all at the same time.”

Community Placements in Nursing’s RN to BSN Program

Dr. Kimberly Perris, the Director of the nursing (RN-BSN) program, and Eden Donahue, the Associate Director of nursing, are currently working to set up field-based placements for HSU’s new RN to BSN nursing degree. Perris and Donahue spoke about the necessity for this program, and their hopes for creating placements that are beneficial to both the students and the community. We discussed the importance of students being able to listen to community needs, and to be proactive

about understanding the complexities of healthcare in different communities.

Donahue explained how their department is working to format these placements in a way that “breaks down the barriers of ‘I’m the teacher and you’re the student.’” They are aiming to create a collaborative environment that fosters different ways of thinking and incorporates an interdisciplinary lens. Donahue also spoke about the type of leadership qualities that they hope their students will develop in these placements: “The nurses see [leadership] in themselves when interacting with the community and being that link to fight and advocate for underrepresented groups who do not always have equal access to healthcare.”

When asked about the benefits of having programs like the nursing placements, Perris spoke about how it gives students a direct path to understanding and assessing their own strengths. Perris said, “These placements give students the opportunity to be who they are, to embrace their authentic selves, and to be vulnerable.” Through these placements, nurses learn how to strategize and think for themselves within tough or stressful situations. Not only are these field opportunities being set up to be chances for nursing students to make plans for their futures, but also to understand their personal and professional selves on a deeper level.

After discussing internships and field placements with those interviewed, the benefits are clear. Students are able to understand their work outside the classroom on a deeper level, they are able to connect with individuals from their field outside of the university, and they are able to gain confidence in themselves as professionals. Faculty members who teach these courses also benefit from offering internship opportunities because it helps to spark connections between what they teach in class and what students learn in the field. Community partners receive benefits from having students work with them because they are able to make connections and learn from every new person that comes onto their teams. These reciprocal practices are a vital part of STEM education, which is clearly shown by the inspiring work of students, faculty, and community partners who engage in the biology, forestry, ¡Échale Ganas! and Camino al Rancho, and nursing programs at HSU.



By Loren Collins, Kelly Fortner, and
Savannah Sonia

A Shared Spotlight and a Shared Experience: Serving Veterans on the North Coast

While quoting Professor Emeritus Steve Jenkins from the Department of Religious Studies (RS) at Humboldt State, Dr. Sara Hart reflected on the value of community-engaged learning practices: “I can teach you a lot of things with books and readings and slides and even guest lecturers. I can enrich this curriculum through reflective assignments, as well as research. But if I tried to teach you all about the history and culturally embedded significance of the handshake, that’s something you’re not going to learn until you shake someone’s hand. And probably not until you do it a few times.” Hart has been a lecturer with the religious studies department at HSU since 2008 and has been leading her students in community-engaged work since 2014. Through dedicated pursuits based on concepts like these, Hart and the religious studies department continually strive to bring learning beyond the classroom.

The religious studies department has valued community engagement and experiential learning opportunities for decades. The department connects students with speakers and lecturers from local religious and spiritual organizations and hosts a substantial offering of embedded religious experiences. For example, for the past 30 years

the department has hosted the innovative opportunities known as “Experiential Weekends,” workshops that provide a platform for students to engage in participant observation with local religious communities (see [Redwood Roots’ Spring 2020 edition, page 26](#) to read all about these valuable workshops). Among the multitude of sites of engagement for religious studies students is the Arcata Veterans Hall. “The Veterans Hall has offered an extraordinary opportunity for students to practice civic discourse, and to see what it looks like in action,” Hart said.

One recent HSU alumni, Samuel Dorsey, who graduated with both a political science degree and a religious studies degree, has been an active participant with the Arcata Veterans Hall. Both Dorsey and Hart spoke about the invaluable learning experience that the Veterans Hall has provided to them in their work. For Dorsey, the benefit of working with the veteran population in Arcata helped him learn how to “interact with veterans in their space, on their terms, with their projects.” Dorsey shared that a majority of the service work that he participated in throughout high school was purposely political, but that his time with the Veterans Hall in Arcata expanded his understanding of community engagement. “[The work] wasn’t for a specific goal,” Dorsey said, “It wasn’t because the experience would be politically expedient, and there was no kind of second motivation towards it. This was just interacting with people on a human level.”

Hart shared a similar sentiment when she expanded upon the kind of knowledge that students gain by working in the community in this capacity. She said, “It’s really humbling to recognize that all of the learning that [my students and I have] built up over the years... wonderful and excellent and enriching though it is, in a lot of ways it doesn’t hold a candle to the experience of these communities.” Not only can these experiences be an opportunity for Hart’s students to interact with their classroom material in an authentic way, this is also a time for students to understand themselves and the folk in their community on deeper levels. This type of understanding, as Dorsey noted, is integral to the role Service Learning can play towards connecting student populations and the broader community. Dorsey said, “Service Learning is a really powerful tool in improving the relationship between the student body and the town itself.”

One of Hart’s volunteer projects, which involves cleaning Veteran graves at the Greenwood Cemetery, exemplifies the value of the knowledge students gain when working with the community. Dorsey mentioned that his initial interest in cleaning the graves came from his experience and background in politics. Yet, as he started to do the work and interact with people from the community, he began to cultivate a deeper understanding of the complex topics involved in the religious studies coursework that he was learning in class. He explained, “Being a part of that community, cleaning graves, and seeing religion in real life with real people is way different than just learning about it in a book.”

Hart asserted that these connections between students and the veteran population have been incredibly important to form within the community of Arcata because of the nature of many college campuses. “Veterans seek communities like Humboldt County because of the peacefulness that it offers,” said Hart, “but they often feel isolated from the political realities on college campuses.” Hart recognized that HSU’s Veterans Enrollment and Transition Services (VETS) program, even in the midst of budget cuts, has worked hard to create a community on campus and a home for our veterans. Hart acknowledged that any environment where veterans feel marginalized exacerbates the fact that many veterans have been recruited from minority communities, creating overlapping intersections of marginalization. This is a key reason why Hart collaborated with the American Legion and the Arcata Vets Hall as community partners for her classes; Hart was seeking a meaningful way to extend community and inclusivity.

Another enriching opportunity for religious studies students was when the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) offered Hart a mini-grant to bring United States Marine Corps veteran Ehren Tool to Humboldt State. Tool, the ceramics studio manager in the department of art practice at UC Berkeley, [makes ceramic cups that are decorated with images about war](#), images that he hopes will open up more conversations about war and its considerable impacts. There are currently about 200 of Tool’s cups held in a permanent collection of the Smithsonian Museum. Hart invited Tool to



lead an engaged experiential workshop with students, where they were also able to host a veterans panel at the Arcata Veterans Hall.

Hart spoke about the way in which the Veterans Hall, unlike many other volunteer organizations, has the incredible ability to dramatically alter perceptions. “The students walk in expecting something and expecting the kind of people they’re going to meet there,” said Hart, “and that expectation is just destroyed by the degree to which they encounter humans who are working with the same operative values, towards very similar goals.” Dorsey added that “As a student you don’t interact with veterans very often, unless you yourself are in that community already or have some sort of natural connection to it.” He explained that taking the time to speak with veterans, to hear their stories and hear their feelings about what they were fighting for, was a profound experience.

Hart would like to express the gratitude that she and her students have for Commander Jeffrey Sterling of the Arcata Veterans Memorial Building. They are also deeply grateful to the Greenwood Cemeteries Board who have supported and welcomed the students into their space. Hart and her students appreciate HSU’s institutional commitment to veterans and they are very excited about the new Director of the VETS program, Clifford McMasters. McMasters has been working with Commander Sterling, Dorsey, and Hart to continue to build partnerships between the campus and the community, especially through the lens of respect toward the veteran population.

Student Spotlight: Samuel Dorsey

Samuel Dorsey came to HSU as a politics major with extensive experience in politics and serving in the community. He later added a religious studies major after taking a class that exposed him to the faculty and the discipline. “I really liked politics, but I realized that, especially with how polarizing it was, that I wasn’t doing what I wanted to do in the way that I wanted to do it. I took a religious studies class just because it filled some requirements and I noticed that everybody was really excited to be there. The teachers were extremely involved and passionate and excited about it, and I was like, wow, all these people are really invested in this and they’re all happy.”

Dorsey completed a number of Service Learning and Experiential Workshops with the religious studies department, as well a political science Academic Internship with a congressional office prior to his graduation in 2021. While at HSU, Dorsey worked with Dr. Sara Hart to expand Service Learning opportunities. He found community partners, mapped religious sites, and created a survey for religious studies students to gather information that could help Hart connect her students to the most meaningful opportunities.

Dorsey shared how his experiences connecting with people, and truly serving them, changed his outlook. “Veterans are people that I care about now in a real way, not a superficial



way like a lot of people. I don’t think it’s their fault, it’s just lack of exposure. It’s kind of the culture that we have—to let it go over your head, don’t think about it, it’s just how it’s always been. But, Service Learning and the experiential workshop, One Nation Under Gods, profoundly changed how I thought about veterans and how I thought about America’s role in war and the human cost of our endeavors abroad.”

He continues to serve in many of the same ways that he did in his time with Dr. Hart—with compassion, openness, and a commitment to shaping, and contributing to, the community in positive ways. He cites his time at HSU as one of the reasons community service has taken a place next to civic engagement in his work. He spoke of cleaning gravesites as a contemplative experience that resonated with him. “I found that I really liked it, and I did not expect to like it, because it was just cleaning concrete. I expected it to be kind of a burden. But I really enjoyed it...being part of that community and cleaning graves and seeing religion in real life with real people is way different than just learning about it in a book. Graves are long term things and cleaning people’s graves, who you’ve never met, while you’re interacting with the curriculum of Death and Dying and talking to other people is interesting.”

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Sara Hart

Dr. Sara Hart is a professor of religious studies whose thoughtful student and community-centered approach to teaching continually inspires students, staff, faculty, and community alike. Hart grew up in the rural farm town of Valley Center, California, in northern San Diego county. She



graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz in 2000 with a double major in literature and philosophy, with a concentration in religious studies, and a minor in classics, with an emphasis in Latin.

What initially brought Hart to religious studies was literature and art. “I wanted to understand the stories and the poems and the paintings and the music.” She explained her history growing up with experiences of different religions. “As a kid I had been sort of taken on a spiritual tour by my dad. We went to almost every church, temple, and mosque in San Diego County for a while, while he was seeking. So, I had been exposed to a great deal of different religious environments, as a child of a person who was in crisis and spiritually seeking before he landed back at his childhood home of Irish Catholicism. I was fluent with what religion looked like in a pretty touristic, superficial way, but I was not fluent with the religious traditions or able to understand the poetry and the music and the art.” After graduating from U.C. Santa Cruz, Hart went to graduate school for religion and literature at Boston University. She began teaching at HSU in the fall of 2008.

Hart’s specialty in the field of religious studies lands outside of what many would typically think of as religion, and she is most interested in the way that people “engage religious impulses outside of our institutional worlds.” She expressed that “I’ve always been interested in the way that religious impulses are expressed outside of the institutional balance of religion, so I’m most drawn to the ways that, as individuals and communities, we understand and embody a sense of meaning, values, and purpose outside of our institutional religions.” Her teaching often focuses on the rituals associated with literature and American Civil Religion.

With a passion for doing work in the local community, Hart explained that this likely came from her father, who was a marine combat veteran. She said that her father “always saw service as integral to who he was... service was a part of who he was and he, mostly through veterans organizations, helped to bring Stand Down [a resources and support services event for veterans] to Humboldt County from San Diego.” She first got involved with Service Learning at HSU in 2014 after she had a conversation with Stacy Becker, Community Partner Coordinator with the Center for Community Based Learning, during a professional development day. Hart explained that Becker gave an “impassioned plug about the degree to which Service Learning can help students to integrate themselves into professionalized roles as self-determined members of a community whose learning reaches beyond the classroom. That plug really struck me from my experience as a teacher and as a parent—that this is something that we’re missing in our very standard classroom curriculum that the students have a need for.”

Hart appreciates the opportunities community-based learning practices give students to develop their professional skills. She stated, “These experiences give students a chance to practice professionalism, to be able to look somebody in the eyes and say hello...to introduce themselves and articulate what it is that they offer and what it is that they need.”

Hart has been integral to developing community-based learning experiences for many of the major’s classes and states, “Much like Professor Steve Jenkins said, you’re never going to understand a handshake until you shake a few hands, and maybe during the pandemic it’s an elbow bump but, whatever it is, you’re never going to understand those basic mechanisms of human engagement without engaging other humans.”



Dr. Sara Hart

Community as a Geographic Story Map

By Kathy Thornhill



*Road Map to Learning: HSU
Community Partner Sites*



Sam Salek

Sam Salek will graduate from HSU in Fall 2021 with a degree in Geography. While at HSU, Salek took advantage of opportunities to enhance her education and advance her skillset. Her legacy includes the [*Road Map to Learning: HSU Community Partner Sites*](#), an interactive, geographical Story Map charting local community partners to bus routes. The *Road Map to Learning* includes mapped links to explore some of the most popular community learning sites in the greater Arcata and Eureka area, and associated bus routes.

Salek transferred to HSU from Santa Rosa Junior College originally as an Environmental Studies major. She chose Humboldt State as it seemed the perfect place to study the environment. However, in her first semester, she took a Geographic Research and Writing course that inspired her to change her major to Geography. She was excited about the technical aspects of geography and the many career paths the major offers. In her second year at HSU, she was hired by the Center for Community Based Learning (CCBL) to do database work. She expanded her role to include website maintenance and accessibility for the Academic and Career Advising Center, as well as other technical work for both centers.

The Story Map idea stemmed from a presentation that Raven Palomera, Hispanic Serving Institution Stem Coordinator, had given about HSU's Place Based Learning Communities. Salek used this project to bring her passion into her current workplace. "When I first started at CCBL, I thought it would be great to have that kind of visual representation of the community partner sites. I like things in map form, which makes sense so I was happy to get involved in something like that." She went on to explain the synergy between CCBL and this Story Map. "A community you can think of as a geographic entity. The work that CCBL does just lends itself to tell geographic stories. Using a Story Map allows you to tell the work that CCBL, community partners and students are doing in those courses."

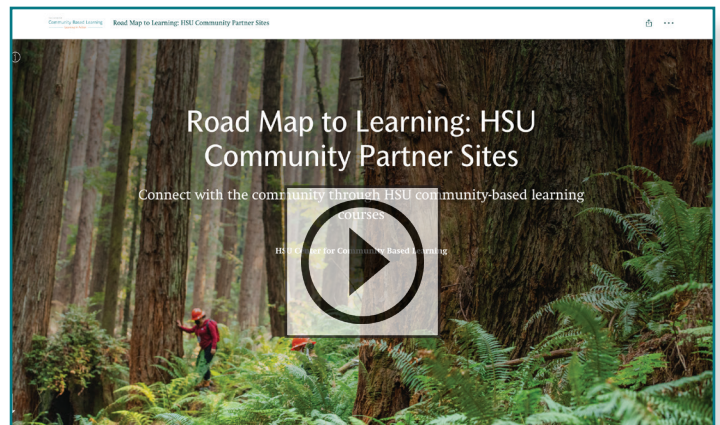
Although Salek had built a Story Map in a cartography course, she had to learn quite a bit for this project. Salek explained that there are two different types, the classic ESRI Story Maps, which are currently being phased out, and the current ArcGIS Story Maps. This project gave her more real-world, hands-on experience delving into the platform. She noted that Story Maps are applicable to many different fields. "I've seen Story Maps for government entities, journalists use them to tell stories, scientists use them to show research.

“Using a Story Map allows you to tell the work that CCBL, community partners and students are doing in those courses.”

It is useful technology. Web maps in general, you see them everywhere, but having the experience of creating them is something that I wanted to do while I was in school.”

Salek encouraged other students to learn the platform. “Take advantage of the fact that we have access to all the technology that is included in our school fees right now. It is a great time to learn. It is so easy to jump into it and mess around. There are a lot of different features to explore. It is a great platform.”

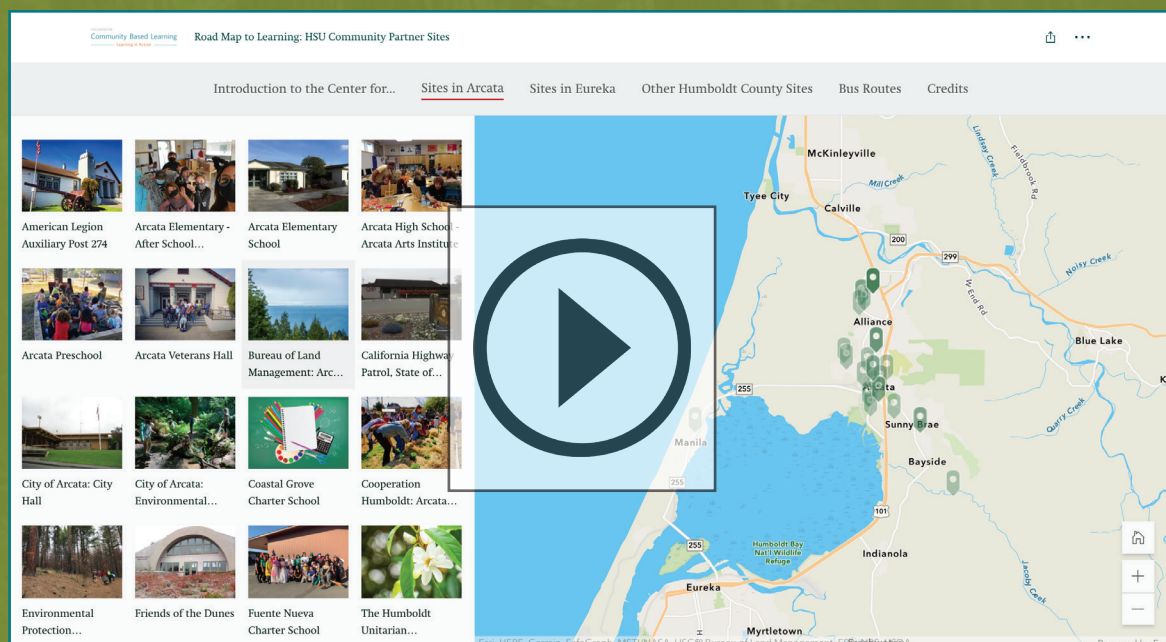
She explained the process she went through to create the Story Map took longer than expected and had aspects that she had not expected, such as getting permission from community partners to use their photos. Salek was grateful for the opportunity to create this project in a learning environment



and feels more prepared for her professional experience. She enjoyed working with the community partners throughout the process and learning the different capabilities and possibilities of the Story Map platform. Salek acknowledged that connecting the bus map took a lot of work, but she is really happy with how it turned out. She also shared ideas for enhancing the Story Map in the future, including featuring specific partner organizations and giving additional context for what it is like to work with different organizations. Salek explained, “There are lots of opportunities to tell stories like those with all the program sites around town, to delve into the work they are doing and share the student experiences.”

Salek credited Faith Rehagen and Reanne Meighan from Amy Rock’s Community Geography course for the original bus map concept. She explained, “I sourced and used entirely new data for all of the map content (routes, stops, program sites, etc.), but the design framework is essentially the same as the product they originally created.” She also thanked Amy Rock “for her continued help and support.”

The CCBL staff is thrilled with the result and appreciate all the efforts to make this useful tool available.





By Shiara Naicker and Stacy Becker

True North: Charting A New Tomorrow

Community leaders formed True North Organizing Network (TNON) to unite in the struggle for justice and equity. Their approach creates connections between individuals and establishes a foundation for community organizing at the grassroots level. According to their website, “True North Organizing Network supports families, elders and youth of diverse faith traditions, ethnicities, cultures, and economic capacities—using the power of relationships and a disciplined community organizing model—to courageously challenge social, economic and environmental injustice in our region.” TNON, commonly referred to as True North, began under the Humboldt Area Foundation and the Wild Rivers Foundation. They now operate as an independent nonprofit organization, encompassing Humboldt, Del Norte, and tribal lands throughout the Redwood region.

The name True North originated in early meetings when people remarked to current Executive Director Terry Supahan that there was an unseen, overlooked part of northern California, a place “north of even Sacramento, the *true north* of California.” The name stuck, and True North has evolved as a multi-faith, multi-race, social justice organization that serves the community through values of inclusivity and love. Supahan shared one of True North’s most important interview questions for new community organizers: “Who do you love?” A few moments later, he provided

his own answer: “Everyone. People who don’t look like us, think like us, *vote* like us. We don’t get to pick and choose who we love.”

True North took inspiration from the Pacific Institute for Community Organizations (PICO) National Network (now called Faith in Action) and modeled their organization around building relationships with individuals. “At the heart of this organizing model is one-to-one relationship building and building power through those relationships,” Supahan said. He also noted that students “bring new life” into the organization and have been a part of True North since its inception. For instance, in 2016, True North supported students who traveled to Standing Rock to help Indigenous communities defend the land against the Dakota Access Pipeline project.

True North continues its dedication to students by participating as a placement site for students in community-based learning courses. Graciela Leal, majoring in political science with a concentration in public policy, is helping with activities such as immigration event planning, vaccine clinics, and the National Catholic Action for Citizenship. Evan Morden interned last year with TNON while working on his sociology master’s thesis in social power and community organizing. Morden is now a True North Community Organizer in training.

Morden’s early projects involved researching political candidates during a city council election and collecting

information on them. He also researched housing, funding for housing, and emergency shelter programs in Humboldt County. He described his time interning at TNON as transformative and reflected upon his initial goals to complete a degree in criminology and then pursue a career as a police officer. "I wanted to be there for people in their worst moments. I learned that not everyone had the same experience with law enforcement, and I became interested in how to solve the root causes of social injustice instead of treating symptoms with punishment." He later stated, "We are looking for leadership in our community from ordinary people who don't know that they have a voice."

True North facilitates opportunities for community members to take action towards equity and social justice. They help put power back into the hands of the community and show the impact of what can get done through collective action. Leal explained that serving with True North "really did help give me a perspective on how people organize, the different dynamics of power, and how we can use a collection of people to get something done." Leal's experience shows how organizations like True North are invaluable platforms that help make local grassroots community organizing more accessible.

At the start of student internships with TNON, supervisors ask interns to write their "Political Autobiography," where they chronicle what factors in their lives drew them to social justice. Director of Organizing Julia Lerma, who has been with True North since 2011 as a mentor, described the beginnings of the internship as a "baptism by fire," in which students are encouraged to exercise their leadership skills and take the initiative on projects. "If students are going to work in our organization and work with our leaders, it's really important that they understand our process. And they also

need to understand why they want to do this work... So we start out with a Political Autobiography, which means they get to dig into what in their life story has brought them to social justice."

Loren Collins, an HSU faculty member who oversees the Political Science Internship course where students often partner with TNON, had nothing but accolades for True North. He described the organization as "a rare gem that brings community organizing, activism, and very concrete political action together into one place." Collins regarded True North's work with HSU interns as "building the community leaders of tomorrow."

True North currently focuses on vaccine clinics, immigration reform, and collaborations with community faith leaders, among many other active projects. Supahan acknowledged that community organizing is challenging and may feel more like tug-of-war than pulling people together. However, sometimes a community needs to work through challenges together to fight for what they believe is right. "I love the fight, no matter what. Even if it doesn't go well, I think we're moving for things that can make things better. I love them all. I love the whole damn thing!" Supahan said.

For more insights from the interns and leaders of [True North](#), [listen to the full interview, here...](#)

Find out more about Evan Morden's internship experience and how True North works with individuals and communities to address issues of houselessness, public education, immigrant rights, and environmental stewardship from Morden's Fall 2020 Capstone [Internship Report: True North Organizing Network](#), for the Sociology 482 Internship course.

Learn more about True North Organizing Network at <https://www.facebook.com/TrueNorthON/>.



TNON Zoom interview participants, from top left: Shiara Naicker and Stacy Becker (Redwood Roots staff); Evan Morden and Graciela Real (HSU students); Julie Lerma and Terry Supahan (TNON staff)

Serving with True North "really did help give me a perspective on how people organize, the different dynamics of power, and how we can use a collection of people to get something done."

Acknowledgements and Ways to Get Involved

Share Your Story and Get Published

Help us celebrate community engagement at HSU and get published in Redwood Roots Digital Magazine. We are looking for personal reflections, digital stories, creative projects, and articles that celebrate your experiences in the community. Submissions can be individual, as a group, or even as a whole class. For full submission guidelines and to submit completed work, please visit: digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/rr/policies.html. To view previous issues of Redwood Roots Digital Magazine, visit cbl.humboldt.edu/redwood-roots.

Learn more about the **Center for Community Based Learning** at Humboldt State University by visiting cbl.humboldt.edu. Learn more about **Humboldt State University Press** by visiting digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/hsu_press/ or contacting us at hsupress@humboldt.edu.

Join the Team!

Please contact redwoodrootsmagazine@humboldt.edu if you are interested in getting involved with the Redwood Roots Digital Magazine team.

QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS?

Please email us at redwoodrootsmagazine@humboldt.edu with any questions or suggestions you might have. We value your feedback.

Want to stay informed about Redwood Roots and Community-based Learning at HSU? Follow us on Instagram: @redwood-rootsmagazine and Facebook: www.facebook.com/redwoodrootsmagazine.

Special Thanks!

Thank you to Kellie Jo Brown, photographer for HSU's Marketing and Communications Department. Thank you to the [Student Marketing Center](#) for their time, effort, and support promoting our magazine.

Announcing the Community-based Learning Peer Leadership Program!

With the assistance of several campus partners, the Center for Community-based Learning (CCBL) developed a Peer Leadership Program for students in community-based learning classes. Peer Leaders are part-time interns who support students through their community-based learning experience by facilitating reflection activities, assisting with their placement process, and discussing successes and challenges in their community placements.

CCBL staff are especially interested in making sure that Peer Leaders provide specific support to first-generation college students, BIPOC students, low-income students, and women in STEM. Research shows that peer leadership programs in higher education lead to an increased sense of belonging for students. This program has been designed to increase students' sense of belonging and community both on and off-campus.

Peer Leaders who participate in this program will develop a variety of skills that will help prepare them for their careers. They will develop an awareness of and find ways to address community-defined needs, frame communication with respect to a diversity of learning styles, solicit and use feedback from multiple cultural perspectives to make inclusive and equity-minded decisions, and apply strengths-based approaches to leadership and communication.

The Community-based Learning Peer Leadership Program will pilot during the spring semester of 2022.

The CCBL would like to thank the folks from Youth Educational Services (YES), the Retention through Academic Mentoring Program (RAMP), and the Learning Center, along with Service Learning and Academic Internship faculty members, for their collaboration and continued support throughout the development process.

To learn more about these positions, please email Savannah Sonia at savannah.sonia@humboldt.edu.

Meet the Team



Shiara Naicker



Kathy Thornhill



Aaron Laughlin



Leo Kepcke



Mireille Roman



Stacy Becker



Kelly Fortner



Savannah Sonia



Kyle Morgan



Loren Collins



Shannon Berge

Front Cover Artist's Statement

Artist: Shannon Berge

Title: Root Down

Date: 2021

Medium: acrylic on masonite

"In this painting, I investigate the dynamics of landscape and motion, establishing a link between reality and that imagined through the movement of the brushstrokes. I attempt to articulate energy flow within the roots, as public spaces and the stream of daily life."

- Shannon Berge

