Humboldt State University
Digital Commons @ Humboldt State University

Newsletters | University Archives

Spring 2019

Graduate Studies Newsletter

Graduate Studies Office

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/campus_pub

SPRING 2019

GRADUATE STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Important Dates, Deadlines, and Helpful Resources
Page 1

Featured Faculty
Page 2

Patricia O. McConkey Outstanding Graduate Student Awards
Page 8

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

APRIL 29 - Deadline for Courtesy Format Review (submit to cfr2@humboldt.edu)

MAY 13 - Final Thesis or Project Submission Deadline for Spring 2019 Graduation

term (submit to Digital Commons at least one business day before deadline)

MAY 13 - Spring Final Exams Begin

MAY 18 - Spring 2019 Commencement

HELPFUL RESOURCES

-Academic & Career Advising Center

(707) 826-3341

http://www2.humboldt.edu/acac/

-College of eLearning & Extended Education

(707) 826-3731

http://www2.humboldt.edu/extended/

(707) 826-5165

-Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee

(707) 826-3256

http://www2.humboldt.edu/iacuc/

-Institutional Review Board

(707) 826-5165

http://www2.humboldt.edu/irb/

-Office of Graduate Studies

(707) 826-5194

http://gradprograms.humboldt.edu/graduate-programs

-Office of the Registrar

(707) 826-4101

http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/students/

Featured Faculty

Erik Jules

Professor of Ecology
Biology Graduate Coordinator

1. How long have you been at HSU? Can you tell us about your academic history?

I started working at HSU in the spring of 2000 which means I'm in my 20th year of teaching here! Before coming to HSU, I was a postdoctoral researcher at UC, Santa Cruz and before that a PhD student at the University of Michigan.

2.. What kind of research or academic social work are you involved with?

I'm a plant ecologist focused on conservation-related questions. Most of the work I do involves understanding why so many trees in northern California are dying, either from drought, non-native diseases, or climate change. My lab uses field studies and remote sensing (e.g., satellite data) to measure how many trees are dying. I also work on how small forest understory plants respond to fire, including how those plants respond to having fire come through an area more than once.

3. Are any students involved in your research?

I usually have 2-4 graduate students and several undergraduates working with me on various research projects. The last few summers, we've had a field crew of three undergraduates, led by a graduate student, working full-time all summer in pretty rugged field sites of the Klamath Mountains. Some of those undergraduates end up working with us in the lab during the school year as well.

Graduate student Jenell Jackson (second from the right) with her undergraduate field crew at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. Jenell studied how a high-elevation tree, whitebark pine, is being impacted by climate change and invasive diseases. Left to right, Rachael Patton, Kelsey Guest, and David McLean.

Graduate student Jane Cipra stands among her experimental set up for her thesis on the local sand dunes. Jane studied how an invasive plant disrupts the native plant community by altering shade, wind, and soil nutrients.

4. What is your favorite part of your job?

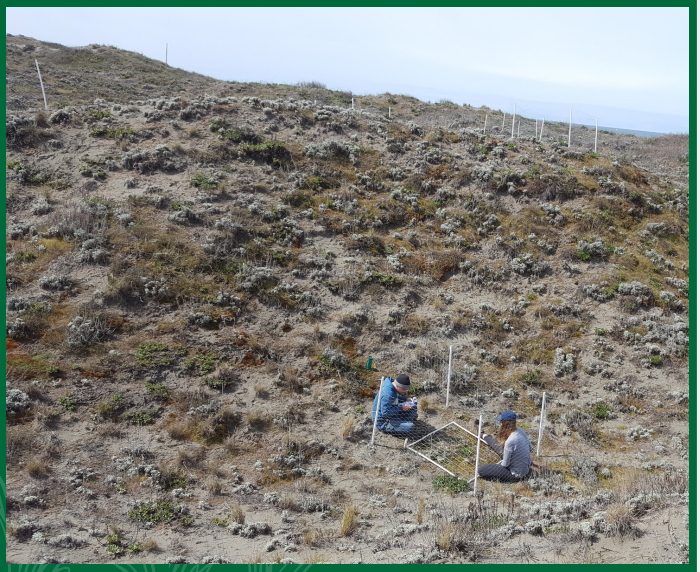
I love to watch a student develop from being fairly inexperienced and new at ecology to being full-fledged participants in the science. HSU does a great job of training field ecologists, and we often graduate students who are truly ready to do their own, original research. I love watching that happen.

5. How do you spend your time outside of HSU?

I have a family and I spend my free time with my wife and two young sons, ages 8 and 10. We all love to mountain bike, ski, and hike, so there is plenty of fun stuff for us to do in northern California.

6. Do you have any advice for current or prospective students?

The hardest part of earning your graduate degree is often the very first step: trying to design your study. It's a tough process because you have to work-out all the potential problems and challenges, and make sure it will be a solid contribution to your field. So, plan to put in some of the hardest work right at the beginning. And don't get discouraged that it seems stressful or difficult, because it really is for everyone going through that process!



Two Biology undergraduate students collecting vegetation data in cages that exclude rabbits on the local dunes. The students are assisting Andres Rodriguez, a graduate student studying how rabbits shape dune vegetation, and how invasive plants can alter rabbit abundance.

Student Spotlight | College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences

Jenna Horvat

Her work, study, and research

Since entering HSU's Applied Anthropology MA program, Jenna has become involved in a variety of ways on campus. She accepted the temporary lecturer position teaching a course on human evolutionary development and biology. On this, she remarked, "The students inspire me with their passion for the subject matter and ability to think about topics in the class from a completely different perspective than I had envisioned." She also works in the Biological Anthropology Research Center as the graduate lab coordinator, and has held this position for almost 2 years. Here she assists students with research projects, organization, and manages a working lab. The lab provides her with opportunities to be a part of many activities like anthropology department social mixers, facilitating student skill workshops, and leading osteological training.

Jenna's current research focuses on the comparison of dental micro-wear analysis methods using data from a Late Medieval cemetery population in northeastern Poland. She collected this data in a study abroad program in Poland for the Anthropology Department's Field School. The Field School also partners with Slavia Foundation to collaborate with Polish archaeologists on research endeavors.

Her additional interests lie in bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology, which "creates an interdisciplinary crossover between methods and analytical techniques." She applies these skills by volunteering at the Humboldt County Coroner's Office. Here she helps law enforcement agents recover human remains and assist with workshops for law enforcement and tribal members about identify human from animal remains.

What led her here?

Growing up, Jenna was obsessed with books on paleontology and Egyptology, but it wasn't until her introduction to bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology during her undergraduate career that she fully knew where her passions were.

HSU's Applied Anthropology MA program was her best fit, She praised, "Not only was it in a gorgeous location, but I was intrigued by the streamline hybrid (online/on-campus) program and field schools that were offered by the department." The MA program aided her in structuring her independent research goals that connect to her professional work. In combination with her thesis work, teaching and working in the labs on campus were essential for her development.

Impact of her work

Her ultimate goal is to contribute to the body of work around dental microwear analysis, which has implications in human evolution, primatology, historic populations and even modern dentistry! "In terms of the future," Jenna explained, " I'm currently in the process of selecting and applying to Ph.D programs and using the vital skills I've learned at HSU to create and make changes in the fields of forensic anthropology and bioarchaeology."

Student Spotlight | College of Professional Studies

Zahra Shine

Her work, study, and research

Zahra is a Marriage and Family Therapy Trainee that provides individual and group therapy to college students through the university Counseling & Psychological Services Center (CAPS) and has done so for the past year and a half. She is finishing her graduate program in counseling psychology and plans to graduate this Spring! Zahra chose to do her thesis on the occurrence of high rates of masculinity being strongly associated with lower rates of help-seeking in men. She posits "The variability among help-seeking in symptomatic men may be explained by the moderating effect of masculinity. Research examining this relationship is limited. The hypothesis of the present study is that higher conformity to masculine norms will reduce men's help-seeking intentions, even when psychological distress is present." In the past, Zahra earned her BA in Psychology and was named a Presidential Scholar at HSU. She recently won the Fellowship Award, the CSU Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement, and has received certificates of recognition from the California State Senate and Legislature.

What led her here?

Zahra faced a challenging upbringing, enduring homelessness, her parent's divorce and the compounding effects of their mental health issues. Fortunately, she learned certain values through her community. "Having grown up in Hawaii, I was inspired to value social justice through learning about native Hawaiian values and spirituality and the harmful effects of colonization." She moved to California from Hawaii on her own to pursue her education and found her light at HSU. "HSU's student-run programs, such as the Social Justice Summit, and other aspects of social and environmental justice here really align with my values and make me feel good about being part of this community." she acknowledged. Going through a crisis taught Zahra the importance of self-reflection and communication of one's emotions. Having a therapist understand her past struggles and provide

new perspectives for positive change made her want to become a therapist herself.

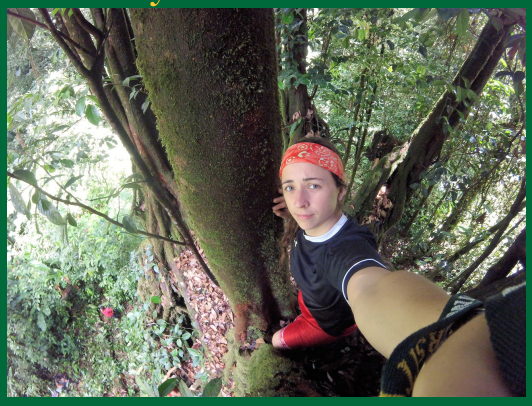
Impact of her work

Zahra has well articulated her work in relation to her past, "My research comes from a place of compassion. Men suffer in silence. They can push people away and stop working toward their dreams and goals, which can lead to larger problems, including a shorter lifespan, higher rates of leading causes of death and chronic illness, which are largely preventable." Her research attempts to illuminate why some men do not seek the help they seriously need, so that interventions and public outreach efforts can be more effective in reaching men and helping them resolve these harmful patterns.

Her plans are to stay in Humboldt County and pursue a clinical position at a local agency that serves at-risk populations, "in order to help repair the social fabric of the community that has nurtured me over the past 10 years." She hopes to become a licensed marriage and family therapist so she can contribute to improving peoples' mental and relational health. She is currently applying to work at United Indian Health Services, County Mental Health, the Juvenile Hall correctional facility, and Changing Tides (child and family services) to provide mental health services to children, families, or adults.

Student Spotlight | College of Natural Resources & Sciences

Carolyn Delevich



Her work, study, and research

Carolyn is a third-year graduate student in the Dept. of Biological Sciences, with a research emphasis in ecology and mycology (study of fungi). Her research includes the tropical areas of Cameroon in Central Africa and Guyana on the North Atlantic coast of South Africa. The tropics (areas 23 degrees north and south of the equator) are known to have a high species diversity. Her tree species of interest tend to be highly dominant, comprising at least 60% of all trees in the forest and may be only one of a few species present. These are called monodominant, or single-species dominant, stands. Carolyn suspects her study species may be so dominant because they associate with fungi on their roots, forming a mutualism relationship whereby the fungi get food from the trees and the trees get soil resources from the fungi. This is known as ectomycorrhizal symbiosis and allows trees to out-compete and dominate forests. In particular, Carolyn studies the seedlings of these tree species which would be more susceptible to the fungi at this life stage. Her goals are "answer how: (i) identity of fungal mutualists on seedlings roots (e.g. how many fungal species, which particular fungal species, etc.), (ii) and the coverage of roots by these fungi, may affect seedling survival, and ultimately, the dominance of these tropical tree species."

What led her here?

Carolyn classifies herself as a tropical ecologist who adapted to the role of a mycologist. Before coming to HSU, she had been living and working in the tropics between her time in undergrad and the start of her master's. She spent time in Panama working for the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, followed by a year in Gabon working on a field project for a professor at Duke University. "After all this time working, living, and studying in the tropics, particularly in ecology, I knew that I wanted to continue to do this type of work but in a setting where I was formulating and carrying out my own research." Limited resources in Gabon showed her that this would be an arduous line of work indeed, but with hope she managed to get a hold of Terry Henkel, who is now her current advisor. She admired his hardcore tropical research and managed to reach out when he had received a grant from the National Science Foundation to start work in Cameroon.

Finding a professor willing to accept Master's students and provide field seasons was one of Carolyn's biggest challenges. Advice she had to give is "take the process of finding the right path slowly... Internships are not glamorous (you will not make money), but you have to be ready and willing to give a lot to get a lot out of your work as a field biologist. I highly encourage people to take their time, try different internships, and test where their passion lies before they jump into more school." On your journey to a Ph.D., Carolyn believes patience and experience are essential for maintaining confidence.

Impact of her work

Carolyn is hoping that the results of her research will show how important the early formation of this mutualism between seedlings and their root fungi is on survival rates. Additionally, provide explanations for single-species dominant stands, piecing together this puzzle of tropical ecology.

Honorable Alum | College of Natural Resources & Sciences

Mahayla Slackerelli

Her work, study, and research

Mahayla Slackerelli graduated HSU in 2017 with a masters in Science: Environmental Systems, specifically the Energy Technology and Policy option. From there, she got to apply her skills at Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA). In May of 2017, Redwood Coast Energy Authority RCEA launched the Community Choice Energy (CCE) program and took over the generation portion of electricity service, in turn buying power for Humboldt County. As a local government agency, RCEA prioritizes buying more local renewable energy on behalf of their customers. As Account Services Manager, she takes care of her customers. Mahayla explains that "I design programs and steer customers to programs to help them reach their energy goals, whether it be energy efficiency, saving money or more renewables." Her thesis work looked at different mechanisms for facilitating more solar energy in Humboldt County and focused on local energy procurement issues specific to RCEA to support their goal of more local renewable energy projects. At her position at RCEA, she was able to design a Feed-In Tariff (FIT) for Humboldt County. FIT's provide a set price for medium scale renewable energy projects in the local area. The design for the FIT is on the RCEA Board of Director's agenda this month for approval. This version of the FIT includes market adjusting pricing, she suspects that the dynamic pricing should allow the program to remain competitive after the initial launch period.

What led her here?

In 2013 she was searching for the next step in her career, so she went to as many talks and presentations at HSU as possible. She went to a presentation by Beckie Menten, who is actually an alumna of HSU's Environmental Systems graduate program, and spoke about Marin Clean Energy (MCE); the first Community Choice Energy program in California. Mahayla realized, "I was enthralled by the principles of local control for energy that would reflect the community's values. Humboldt County has such a strong environmental ethos I knew that if we had a similar program community values of environmental stewardship would be a high priority." While in school, Mahayla's thesis advisor Kevin Fingerman, introduced her to some staff members at RCEA. From there, they took her to meet some potential solar developers looking at sites, that would be in line with her thesis work. She adds that she is very grateful for that opportunity. From there, RCEA was ramping up to launch the CCE program during her first semester of grad school. She was then appointed to the City of Arcata's Energy Committee where she could learn more about the CCE program's launch process.

Impact of her work

Mahayla's work with the CCE program helps to make Humboldt County's energy system more renewable and cheaper than with PG&E. Her FIT project will stimulate local economic growth through new renewable energy projects, in turn contributing to making Humboldt County more resilient and less reliant on outside energy sources. Mahayla concludes, "While the fate of the California energy system is uncertain, it is likely that it will be less corporate and more reflective of community values and I am proud to be a part of that."

Patricia O. McConkey Outstanding Graduate Student Awards

The Office of Graduate Studies is pleased to announce the recipients of the Patricia O. McConkey and Graduation with Distinction Award for excellent performance in the 2018-2019 Academic Year. This award recognizes distinguished scholarly achievement at the master's degree level. These awards are given to outstanding graduating graduate students at Humboldt State who have been nominated by their department for excellence in their field and research. The recipients will graduate with distinction and will be recognized as such in the Spring 2019 Commencement ceremony. The 2018-2019 McConkey Award recipients and their respective disciplines are:

Molly Hilgenberg -- MSW Social Work

Grant Skoglund -- MA Applied Anthropology

Samantha Silver -- MA Sociology

Alexis Bernal -- MS Natural Resources: Forestry, Watershed and Wildland Sciences option

Angel Lomeli -- MS Kinesiology

Alexandria Jaurique -- MA Psychology: Academic Research

Catherine Boers – MA English

Kristian Salgado -- Environment and Community MA in Social Science