

## Endnote: Conference Previews Contributions from *Perspectives on the State of Jefferson*



**Figure 1.** Jefferson scholars gather at the University of Oregon on the occasion of the forthcoming publication of this issue of *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*. Back row (left to right): Seth Crawford, Keith Scribner, Kerry McNamee, Chelsea Teale, Erik Kenas, Matthew Derrick, Peter Laufer, Christopher Weinstein, and Evan Wisheropp. Front row (left to right): Laura Hurwitz, Rebecca Batzel, Alexis Grant, Sara Matthews, Connor Mullinix, Becky Evans, Kari Norgaard, and Ed Madison (photograph by Nicole Ibarra).

Jefferson scholars convened at the University of Oregon in Eugene on May 30, 2014 for a conference on the theme *Perspectives of the State of Jefferson* (see Figure 1). Organized by UO's School of Journalism and Communication and Humboldt State University's Department of Geography, the conference featured presentations from authors representing seven of the articles appearing in this issue of *HJSR*, spurring lively discussion about issues confronting communities of southern Oregon and northern California. Conference participants agreed that the State of Jefferson constitutes a unique region and requires greater engagement from scholars,

artists, and others who care about and are interested in the place, lest its meaning be left primarily to secessionists to define.

During a working lunch and conference-closing roundtable discussion, conference participants identified a number of directions for future research on Jefferson, including continuing the task started in this issue of *HJSR*—outlining, exploring, and moving toward an enhanced understanding of what makes Jefferson a cohesive region. In particular, some of the topics identified for future research include:

- comparative research on secessionism
- economic strategies employed by communities of Jefferson for dealing with structural change
- race relations in the region (historical and contemporary)
- health issues impacting Jefferson communities
- how the region interacts with and is affected by globalization
- acute social issues in the region (e.g. drug abuse, crime, and violence)
- environmental problems in Jefferson (in particular those stemming from the legacy of resource extraction)
- artists' imaginations and interpretations of the region
- additional focus on Indigenous issues
- educational access and achievement in the region

The gathering inspired participants to continue research along these lines. “I haven't walked away from a conference feeling so energized in a long time,” said Seth Crawford, a sociologist at Oregon State University who grew up in Jefferson (southern Oregon). “Maybe it's nostalgia for home or just feeling like the concerns of a long-marginalized space were finally being heard, but I felt like there was strong concordance among the messages delivered—and, to me, it really resonated with the region's character.”

The conference concluded with a proposal to meet again in 2015, holding the second annual Jefferson Studies conference at Humboldt State University.

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