

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT

FALL 2025

NEWSLETTER



GRADUATE
STUDIES

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Student Spotlight³



Kai Walton

Biological Science M.S.



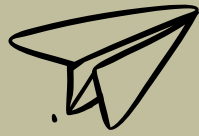
After completing his undergraduate studies in Oregon, Kai Walton chose Cal Poly Humboldt for its natural beauty, proximity to home, and, most importantly, the opportunity to work with his mentor, Dr. Allison Bronson. Kai emphasizes the value of choosing an advisor over a specific project—a lesson passed down from his undergrad mentors.

Kai's passion for marine biology began in high school while volunteering at the Aquarium of the Pacific. Originally interested in aquarium husbandry, his focus shifted to research in college, where a course in fish biology sparked a deep interest in ichthyology. Now, his thesis involves a year-long survey of larval fish in Humboldt Bay, comparing current populations with historical data from 1969–70 and 2015–16. He appreciates the support and diversity of the Biological Sciences department, noting opportunities in lab, field, and teaching work. His advice to future grad students? "Know why you're going to grad school. Take time off if you need to figure it out—don't just go because you're unsure of what's next."

Fun Fact: Kai is an N3-level Japanese speaker, has lived at sea for four weeks on research cruises, and recently served as vice president of an academic society.



Student Spotlight⁴



Kaleigh Tusso Applied English M.A.



Kaleigh Tusso has called Humboldt home since 2017, earning her Teaching Credential from Cal Poly Humboldt before teaching in local classrooms. Now, she balances graduate studies with running her own professional organizing business, Declutter Organize Breathe, and serving as the Admin Coordinator for the Redwood Writing Project. Returning to Cal Poly Humboldt for her M.A. was an easy choice—it was the only school she considered.

With a background in Creative Writing, Kaleigh is combining her passion for storytelling with her work as an organizer. Her research explores the emotional healing that can come from sharing personal stories about belongings during the decluttering process. Though early in her research, she hopes her work will support both her clients and the wider community. She describes the Applied English program as dynamic and community-focused, offering opportunities for growth and meaningful dialogue. Her advice to new graduate students:

"Pursue your goals, take it one day at a time, and don't be afraid to use the resources available to you."

Fun Fact: Kaleigh's business was recently featured by CalOSBA! You can check out the article [here](#) or visit her website: kaleighhopetuso.com



Alumni Spotlight

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Carrie Tully Environment & Community M.A.

Carrie Tully (M.A. Environment & Community, '21) has called Humboldt home for years, drawn to the area's deep sense of place and community. She chose Cal Poly Humboldt (then HSU) specifically for the Environment & Community program, which aligned perfectly with her passion for social and environmental justice.

Today, Carrie wears many hats in the community. She serves as the Director of Fundraising & Engagement for the Civil Liberties Defense Center, the Legal Observer Coordinator for Humboldt County, and is a co-founding student and steering committee member for the Rou Dalagurr Food Sovereignty Lab & Traditional Ecological Knowledges Workspace. She also gives back to local education as a Charter Council member for Fuente Nueva Charter School. During her time in the E&C program, Carrie was challenged to deeply examine her connections, commitments, and responsibilities—an experience she describes as “unsettling but necessary” for personal and collective growth toward justice. Her thesis focused on LandBack efforts in partnership with the Wiyot Tribe, working toward the return of 884 acres in Goukdi'n (Jacoby Creek Forest). Her advice to current and future graduate students: “Keep going. The best thesis is a finished thesis.”

Fun Fact: Carrie shares her home with her 10-year-old daughter, two playful dogs, two cuddly cats, ten fish, and eighteen silly ducks!

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Faculty Spotlight ⁶



Pam Bowers

Professor and Director of MSW



Dr. Pam Bowers joined Cal Poly Humboldt with a vision: to be part of a university where teaching is centered and social work is deeply valued. After several years at the University of Alaska Anchorage, she was drawn to Humboldt's commitment to Indigenous, rural, and community-based education—values that mirror her own. "Humboldt has proven to be all of these things," she shares, "and it has also been a wonderful place to raise my children."

As Director of the Department of Social Work, Dr. Bowers plays an integral role in welcoming new students, supporting current ones, and fostering community collaboration. From reading admissions files to advising students and representing social work across campus, she brings both heart and strategy to her work. Her research centers on resilience and equity for marginalized communities, including LGBTQ2S+ youth and rural populations. She uses story-based and community-engaged methods like Photovoice to elevate lived experiences and influence policy and practice. Her innovative projects include gamified simulations that help students understand critical issues like the Indian Child Welfare Act and Indigenous sovereignty.

Dr. Bower's Advice to Graduate Students:

"Sit with complexity, practice humility, and build authentic relationships. Seek mentorship, collaborate generously, and let your values guide your work."





What is the
Patricia McConkey
Award?



The McConkey Award recipients
are selected by the faculty of
their graduate programs, in
recognition of excellence in their
fields.

below are
last years
recipients!



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2024-2025 Award winners!

**Camille Burns**

MA Psychology
The Menstrual Cycle,
Dual-Hormone
Hypothesis, and
Competition:
Implications for Athletic
Performance

**Amparo Hargreaves**

D.L M.S.W

**Eileen Bell**

M.S.W

**Elizabeth Hershey**

M.A. Applied English
Thesis: "Kindness eases
change / love quiets
fear": Mapping change
and movement in
Octavia Butler's Parable
of the Sower

**Caleb Chen**

MA Public Sociology
Thesis: An Exonimic
Strain On the Bottleneck
of Cannabis Genetics

**Rebeca Becdach**

M.S. Natural Resources
Thesis: Jaguar
Population Status and
Conservation needs in
Panama Revealed Using
Spatial Density and
Occupancy Models

**Catriona (Catie) Barr**

M.S. Natural Resources
Thesis: From the Ashes:
Lessons in Community
Recovery from 2020
Wildfires in Northern
California and Southern
Oregon



DEADLINES

OCTOBER

**10/24: The Spring 2026
Class Schedule
available**

**10/27: Last day to
withdraw and receive a
refund**

NOVEMBER



**11/03: Last day to
withdraw**

**11/10: Early
Registration for
Spring**



DECEMBER

**12/15: Final Thesis
Submission**

12/19: Commencement

SPRING DEADLINES

JANUARY

1/20: Spring Semester
classes begin

FEBRUARY

2/16: Deadline for
changing your preferred
name for Commencement
Program

MARCH

3/16: Spring Break

APRIL

4/13: Early Registration
for Fall 2026

MAY

5/11: Final Thesis
Deadline

5/16: 2026 Spring
Commencement

Events November 2025 11

Diwali: Festival of Lights

Friday, November 7, 2025 | 5:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Location: Jolly Giant Commons 113 –
Recreation Room

Celebrate Diwali with an evening of cultural performances, delicious food, and festive fun! Come together in the spirit of light, joy, and community.



20 Years of OLLI Celebration

The public and campus community are invited! Saturday, November 15 from 3–6 p.m. in the Kate Buchanan Room (2nd floor, Gutswurrak Student Activities Center, Cal Poly Humboldt).

Enjoy an afternoon of food, drinks, live music, and a look back at two decades of OLLI's growth and impact. Bring a friend and celebrate with the OLLI community!



Events December 2025 12



Dual Wrestling Match

Friday, December 5, 2025 | 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Location: Lumberjack Arena (Kinesiology & Athletics 247)

Cheer on the team at the Wrestling Dual Meet vs. Colorado State Pueblo!



Women's Rugby Game vs. Santa Clara

Saturday, December 6, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: College Creek Soccer Field

Come support the Cal Poly Humboldt Women's Rugby Team in their season opener against Santa Clara University!



Late Night Breakfast

Monday, December 15, 2025 | 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Location: Jolly Giant Commons (JGC) Enjoy free breakfast in the J Dining Hall (4th floor), plus karaoke and Make & Takes (including Build-a-Bear) in the Rec Room (1st floor)



Fall Commencement

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Friday December 19th

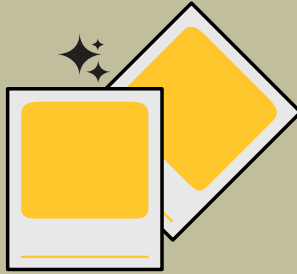
Flowers



Regalia



Photos



Congratulations Fall 2025 Graduates!



Resources

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[Grad Student Handbook](#)

[Cashiers Office](#)

[Humboldt Digital Commons](#)

[Dean of Students](#)

[Extended Education](#)

[Institutional Review Board](#)

[Oh Snap!](#)

[Information Technology Services](#)

[Student Disability Center](#)

[Chancellors Doctoral Incentive Program](#)

[Student Health Center](#)

[University Bookstore](#)

[Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Program](#)

[University Police Department](#)

[Academic Advising Center](#)

[IACUC](#)

[Financial Aid Office](#)

[Office of the Registrar](#)

[Career Development Center](#)