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## Graduate Studies Spring 2025 Newsletter

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# Dates & Deadlines

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## March

28th

### Fall 2025 Class Schedule Online

Fall 2025 [Class Schedule](#) available online by noon

## April

1st

### Spring 2025 Withdrawal (Serious/Compelling)

Last day to request permission to WITHDRAW from one, some or all courses. . Permission to withdraw and documentation of a serious and compelling reason are required.

3rd

### Spring 2025 Withdraw Prorated Refund

Last day to request permission to withdraw from Spring 2024 semester and be eligible for a prorated refund, less \$20 per course and a \$27 administrative charge.

14th

### Spring 2025 CR/NC Change Deadline

Last day to change one class to credit/no credit

## May

9th

### 2025 Regional Grad Slam Competition

Hosted by CSU San Bernardino

17th

### Spring 2025 Commencement

taking place in the Redwod Bowl

# Student Spotlight

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## Jasmine Ellman Kinesiology



Jasmine came to Cal Poly Humboldt to better support her Regional Center clients and continue to develop as an educator. She teaches adapted aquatics for regional center populations in the local community. She is in the Masters Program while also earning a secondary teaching credential in PE and an added authorization in adapted physical education, her main area of research. While she already has a multiple subjects teaching credential and has taught locally, there are many new fields to dive into. She did Adapted Aquatics during the Summer and is now supporting students via Humboldt Fit for the Spring. When asked what advice she'd give to new graduate students, Jasmine stated, "Lean on others for help! Professors, school resources, and friends are all wanting to see you succeed! Be vocal about your needs and up-front when facing any challenges".

Jasmine is a former foster youth and one of 14 biological siblings. She is a first generation high school graduate, college graduate, teacher, and masters level graduate in her family and hopes to achieve even more. "I am humbled for the opportunity to pursue Higher Education and to break generational cycles for my lineage."

Interested in Jasmine's research? Email her at [je102@humboldt.edu](mailto:je102@humboldt.edu)

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## **Zoe Ziegler**

### Natural Resources: Forest, Watershed, and Wildland

Zoe came to Cal Poly Humboldt because she wanted to work on a project in Northern California. She was inspired by her advisors' work. Before graduate school, Zoe worked at a local fruit and veggie farm and was on a path toward a career in sustainable agriculture. She found herself drawn to more wild spaces and looked for a way to spend more time in the woods. She is inspired by the long history of land stewardship on the north coast and she wants to help manage these local landscapes in the face of ongoing disturbances and a changing climate. She believes her degree will prepare her to play a more impactful role in encouraging positive change in how we manage our forests with future generations in mind. Zoe's research is focused on tree health and fuel conditions around powerline corridors in Northern California. She is interested in knowing how natural forest processes interplay with rural land management and how tree health and fuels vary across the highly diverse landscape of Northern California.

When asked about what advice she'd give to new graduate students, she said, "Everyone's experience in graduate school is so unique, and I think each person's experience changes over time. I'd say take things day by day (or minute by minute!), ask lots of questions, be ready to juggle a million things at once, build community with your cohort, and most of all, be nice to yourself. You can do it!"

**Interested in Zoe's research? Email her at [zjz9@humboldt.edu](mailto:zjz9@humboldt.edu)**

## Melitta Jackson

### Environment & Community



Melitta came to Cal Poly Humboldt because she is local to the area and wanted to remain close to home. She joined the Environment and Community Program because she had heard great things about it from faculty and students and it sounded like a fun experience. The Environment and Community program is an interdisciplinary Master of Arts in Social Sciences that focuses on the diverse relationships between environment and community using interdisciplinary perspectives. Her research is focused on an ethnobotanical and ecological look at Pacific Poison Oak, historically and presently.

When asked about what advice she'd give to new graduate students, Melitta said this, "If you have the opportunity, go for it. Talk to your cohort, talk to your advisor, talk to other professionals and pick their brains".

Melitta also works on campus in the library as the Resource Sharing Coordinator.

**Interested in Melitta's research? Email her at [mmj24@humboldt.edu](mailto:mmj24@humboldt.edu)**



## Sean Stewart Natural Resources

Sean works at Applied River Sciences in Arcata as a Revegetation Design Technician, where he gets to apply skills he learned from his previous career in the architecture/engineering industries to his new education. He designs the native riparian vegetation alliances that are installed during river and floodplain restoration projects. Currently, Sean is working on a project where he created population models for the rare and endangered herb, *Astragalus applegatei*. These models help to understand the life history of the plant, come up with conservation strategies for the few remaining populations, and predict the future of the species. Sean also assessed if translocation was a useful current conservation strategy for one population.

Sean and his wife love Saturday Night Live. In order to be in the audience, you have to enter a lottery. Last year they were selected after trying for several years!



## Mary Virnoche Graduate Coordinator & Professor



Mary Virnoche is a professor and Graduate Coordinator of department of Sociology. She joined the department is to work with undergraduate and graduate students, likes how small the class sizes are, and the focus on teaching with hand-on learning. “The campus was and is a gem on the amazing Redwood Coast. I was also looking for a community where our family could thrive. We were looking to escape the long commutes and traffic jams of big city urban life. Arcata, the campus, and the surrounding spaces became a rich environment for our family. Humboldt became home.”

Mary has always looked for creative way to make things work better and that what she does here for Cal Pol Humboldt. Early on she partnered with colleagues in Engineering, Computer Science, and Math on a National Science Foundation grant and other projects to support program development and support for diverse groups to students to succeed in STEM fields. Through this was able to draw on these experiences and together with an undergraduate student, Alexis Grant-Panting, developed major-based peer mentoring for students in the middle years of college. Their evaluation of that and a later iteration at the college level identified significant gains for first-generation and BIPOC students.

Alexis is now a doctoral candidate at Texas Woman's University! Mary have also been involved in governance and policy work across the years and learning through that work to apply an equity lens to policy development.

Mary is thrilled announce the Chancellor's Office approval and Fall 2025 launch of two new combined BA-MA programs: BA in SOC & MA in Public Sociology, and BA in CJS & MA in Sociology. The faculty is evaluating student academic eligibility for the first cohort beginning Fall 2025.





# Patricia McConkey 8

**Eileen Bell**

MSW

Portfolio

**Elizabeth Hershey**

MA Applied English

"Kindness eases change / love quiets fear": Mapping change and movement in Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower

**Amaro Hargreaves**

DL MSW

Portfolio

**Catriona (Catie) Barr**

MS Natural Resources

From the Ashes: Lessons in Community Recovery from 2020 Wildfires in Northern California and Southern Oregon

**Caleb Chen**

MA Public Sociology

An Exonimic Strain On the Bottleneck of Cannabis Genetics

**Rebeca Becdach**

MS Natural Resources

Jaguar Population Status and Conservation needs in Panama Revealed Using Spatial Density and Occupancy Models

**Camille Burns**

MA Psychology

The Menstrual Cycle, Dual-Hormone Hypothesis, and Competitio: Implications for Athletic Performace



## Faculty Scholars & Graduate Fellowship

The McCrone Award recognizes Humboldt's junior faculty, acknowledges their potential in their field of research, and encourages their continued achievement. In addition, the Alistair and Judith McCrone Graduate Fellowship Award is given to one Cal Poly Humboldt graduate student to support their research.



**Dr. Tawanda Gara** (Environmental Science & Management) - "Observing Natural Resources from Space"



**Dr. Debbie Gonzalez** (Social Work) - "Creating engaging classrooms: Through gamification, critical thinking and a sense of community"



**Dr. Kaitlin Reed** (Native American Studies) - "Settler Cannabis: From Gold Rush to Green Rush in Indigenous Northern California"



**Matias Solorzano** (Graduate Student, Psychology) - "Unapologetically Autistic: Academia and Me"

# March Events

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Pi Day  
March 14th  
Events across campus



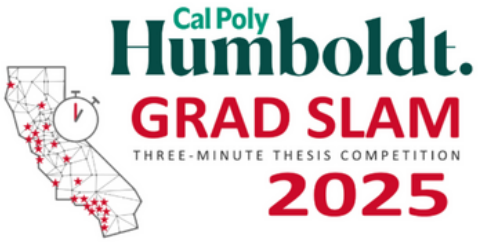
Spring Break  
March 17th-21st  
Campus Closed

Cesar Chavez Day  
Monday, March 31st  
Campus Closed



# April Events

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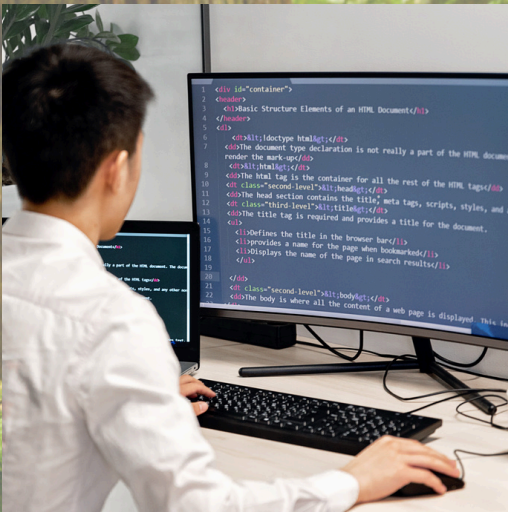


HSU Grad Slam  
Thursday, April 10, 2pm – 4pm  
Goodwin Forum (NHE 102)

Earth Day Celebration  
Tuesday, April 22, 11am – 2pm  
University Upper Quad, University Lower Quad



2025 CSU Student Research Competition  
Thursday, April 24, 8am – 10pm  
Gutswurrak Student Activities Center 225



Year with Frog & Toad  
Friday, April 25, 6:30 – 9:30pm  
Theatre Arts 101



# May Events

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
**GRAD SLAM**  
THREE-MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION  
**2025**

HOSTED BY

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SAN BERNARDINO

Regional Grad Slam  
Friday, May 9th  
hosted by CSU-San Bernardino  
Cheer on Cal Poly Humboldt via zoom



Late Night Breakfast  
Monday, May 12, 7 – 10pm  
Jolly Giant Commons 113

Commencement  
Saturday, May 17th, 1pm-3pm  
Lumberjack Arena

## ***What is it?***

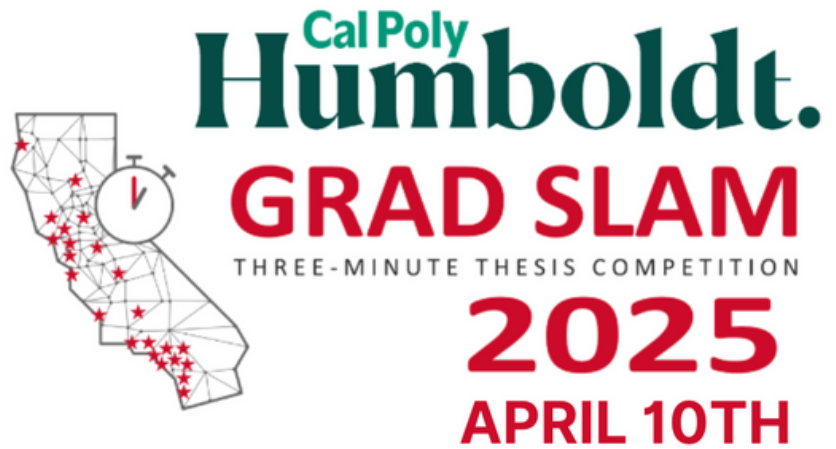
The Cal Poly Humboldt Grad Slam Competition celebrates the exciting research conducted by our graduate students. The competition supports your capacity to effectively explain your research in three minutes or less, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience. For some, it helps to develop an "elevator speech" for their research.

## ***Eligibility***

All active master's students who are conducting independent research are eligible to participate in Grad Slam competitions at all levels. Please keep in mind that entrants must be current graduate students at the time of the competition (i.e. enrolled in Spring 2025).

## **Ready to Get Started?**

Applications are open now until - March 21st



## ***Presentation Information***

Students have 3 minutes and one PowerPoint slide to present their thesis, project, or other creative work to a non-specialist audience. 3 winners (one from each college) will be selected as winners and get a cash prize. Winners will also have the chance to compete in the CSU-wide competition.



[Photos](#)

[Flowers](#)

[Regalia](#)



Spring 2025 Commencement will be held  
**Saturday May 17th**  
Lumberjack Arena

College of Professional Studies  
College of Natural Resources  
College of Arts Humanities and Social Science

**Congratulations Spring 2025 Graduates!**



