

Newsletter

Spring 2026

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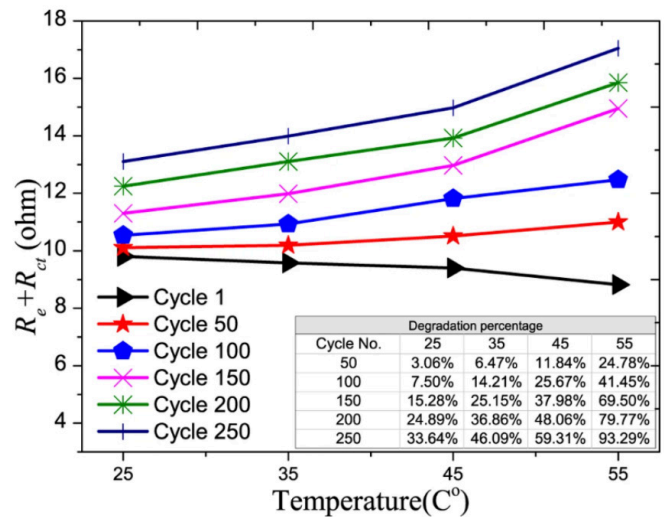
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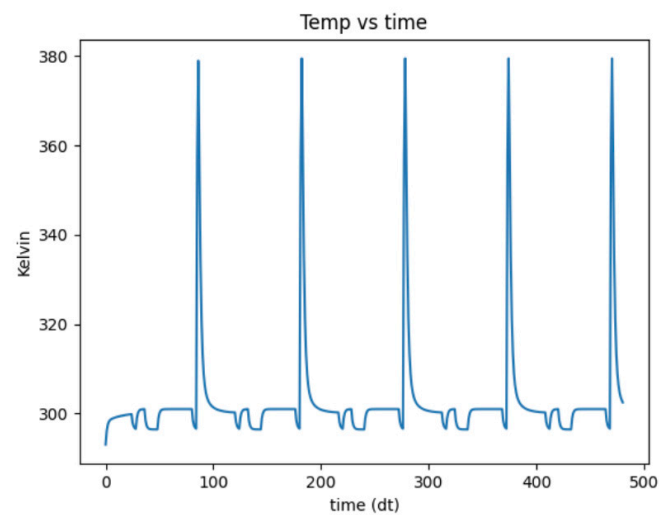
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Thank You!



How do temperature and use affect your phone's battery? Cal Poly Humboldt students modeled these effects in the 2026 Mathematical Contest in Modeling. Read about all contest participants on pages 4-5.



Model results from the MCM submission by Jonathan Juarez, Chase Loughmiller, and Devon Walker.

From the Department Chair

A Note From the Department Chair - Tyler Evans



It has been an exciting year for our department! This spring marks our first newsletter under our new name: the Department of Mathematics & Data Science. The change reflects both our history and our direction, as our new data science program continues to grow and create new opportunities for students.

That momentum is evident throughout this issue. Our students have been busy competing, presenting, and traveling—from the Putnam Exam and Mathematical Contest in Modeling to DataFest and conferences across the country. We have also expanded hands-on and career-focused opportunities through events like the Day of Data Science and the Tech Partnership Summit, helping students connect their work to the world beyond the classroom.

At the same time, the sense of community that defines Humboldt mathematics remains strong. We celebrate the career of Dr. Dale Oliver, whose 35 years of service have shaped generations of students and colleagues.

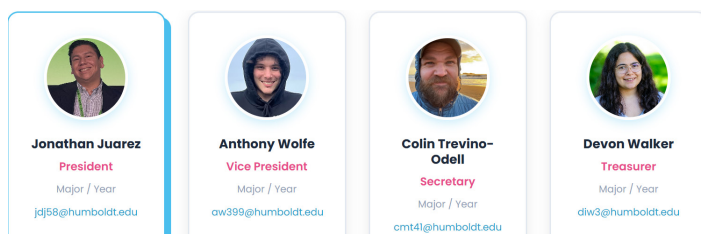
We hope you enjoy this issue and the many stories it contains. As always, we are grateful to our alumni and supporters who help make these experiences possible.

Student Clubs

Data Science Club - Jonathan Juarez

The Data Science Club at Cal Poly Humboldt continues to grow as an active and welcoming community for students interested in working with data. Open to students of all majors, the club provides opportunities to explore data science concepts, build practical skills, and connect with others who share an interest in data-driven problem solving.

This year, the club has been especially active, hosting a series of workshops and discussions on topics ranging from asking effective questions and working with messy, real-world data to using tools such as GitHub and exploring decision-making under uncertainty. Events like Pi Day and upcoming workshops in geospatial data further highlight the club's wide-ranging interests.



The club is led by **Jonathan Juarez** (President), **Anthony Wolfe** (Vice President), **Collin Trevino-Odell** (Secretary), and **Devon Walker** (Treasurer).

The Data Science Club meets Fridays from 3–4pm in Theatre Arts 114. All students are welcome to attend.

Math Club – Aaron Ramirez

The Math Club at Cal Poly Humboldt continues to be a welcoming community for students who share an interest in mathematics. This year, the club has held regular weekly meetings with a consistent group of 8–10 students, providing a space to work on interesting problems, share ideas, and connect with others who enjoy math.

Throughout the year, the club has hosted visits from faculty members. Professor Kamila Larripa led an introduction to the strategy game Set, and Professor Brad Ballinger visited to recruit volunteers for the Redwood Empire Mathematics Tournament. In another meeting, Department Chair Tyler Evans demonstrated John Conway's rational tangle rope "trick," showing how two seemingly tangled ropes can be untangled through a sequence of arithmetic based moves.

The club has also been active beyond its weekly meetings. During Humboldt's Giving Day, members helped raise over \$800 to support club activities, and plans are underway to design and sell Math Club t-shirts.

Led by **Aaron Ramirez** (President) and **Sela Raisl** (Treasurer), the club is open to students of all backgrounds and experience levels. Whether you're a math major or simply enjoy puzzles and problem solving, everyone is encouraged to join.

The club meets on Mondays from 6-7pm in BSS 302, and all are welcome!

Scholarships & Prizes

Scholarships & Prizes - Tyler Evans

Each spring, the Cal Poly Humboldt Mathematics & Data Science Department celebrates student achievement at its annual Scholarship and Awards Reception.

The department's most prestigious award, the Harry S. Kieval Mathematics Scholarship (\$5000), was presented to **Sela Raisl**, recognizing the department's most outstanding senior-to-be mathematics major.

Several additional major scholarships support students at different stages of their academic journeys. The Travis Jepsen Memorial Mathematics Scholarship (\$3000) was awarded to **Greg Johnson**, **Megan Pratt**, and **Anthony Wolfe**, and the Michael Tucker Mathematics Scholarship (\$3000) was awarded to **Kenji Hatchimonji**.

Both of these scholarships honor former students whose lives ended too soon. The Jepsen Scholarship commemorates Travis Jepsen, a Humboldt mathematics student remembered for his enthusiasm and promise, while the Tucker Scholarship honors Arcata native Michael Tucker, whose roots in the department trace back to his father, Roy Tucker, a longtime Humboldt mathematics professor.

The Latika Patel Scholarship (\$1000) was awarded to **Aaron Ramirez**, and **Chase Loughmiller** received the Robert S. Chambers Scholarship (\$1000).

Jade Serenbetz, a first-year mathematics major, received the Dr. Elmo Moore Memorial Mathematics Scholarship (\$1000), honoring longtime Humboldt mathematics professor Elmo Moore. The Orval M. Klose Mathematics Scholarship (\$500) was awarded to **Django Everta**.

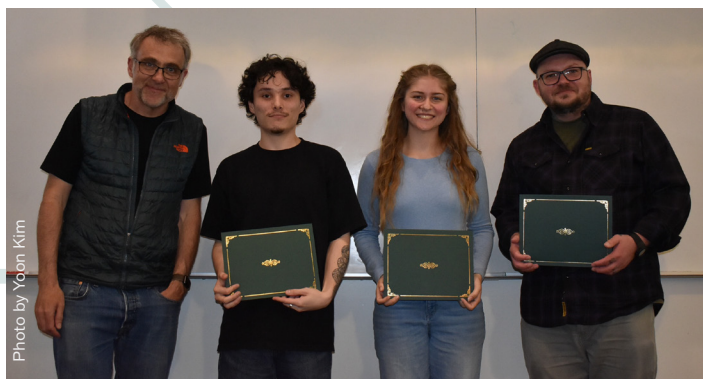
Additional awards recognize achievement across the curriculum. The Joseph J. and Esther F. Flashman Mathematics Awards were presented to **Ariana Berwanger-Shasky** and **Braeden Wells**, honoring their commitment to a strong liberal arts foundation.

The vdu Prizes, awarded for outstanding performance in first-year calculus courses, were presented to **Liam Hodgson**, **Caden Nicholson**, **Megan Pratt**, **Brandon Ramirez-Garcia**, and **Cheyenne Ty**. Named for the integration by parts formula, these prizes are supported by Emeritus Professor of Mathematics Dr. Visutdhi Upatisringa.

The department is deeply grateful to the donors whose generosity sustains these scholarships and supports the continued success of Humboldt mathematics and data science students.



Sela Raisl (right) receives the 2025 Harry S. Kieval Scholarship.



2025 Jepsen Scholarship recipients Anthony Wolfe (left), Megan Pratt (center), and Greg Johnson (right).



Mathematics and Data Science students and faculty mingle in BSS 312 before the 2025 award ceremony.



Student Contests

Two Humboldt teams approached the problem in very different ways.

Jonathan Juarez, Chase Loughmiller, and Devon Walker took a physics-driven approach rooted in the electrochemistry of lithium-ion batteries. Their model examined how battery capacity degrades across charging cycles and how elevated temperatures accelerate aging. They tested their model against benchmark data from the smartphone



Photo by Kellie Brown

Modeling contestants (left to right) Jonathan Juarez, Devon Walker and Chase Loughmiller collaborate in BSS 312.

testing site GSMarena, evaluating how activities such as gaming, video streaming, and web browsing affect power consumption.

Dennis Allen, Jacob Lewis, and Anthony Wolfe focused instead on patterns of everyday phone use. Their model incorporated daily usage cycles, with activity peaking during the day and declining overnight, and included features such as automatic low-power mode when battery levels fall below a threshold.

Despite their different approaches, both teams reached similar recommendations: reduce screen brightness, limit background apps, and avoid charging batteries to full capacity whenever possible.

The Mathematical Contest in Modeling challenges students to apply mathematics, computing, and critical thinking to open-ended problems where assumptions must be carefully justified and models must balance realism with practicality. Humboldt's teams demonstrated not only strong technical skills but also creativity in approaching the same problem from very different angles.

Mu Alpha Theta Contest

The spring 2026 Mu Alpha Theta contest was held on Saturday, April 18. Co-directed by Professors Walden Freedman and Peter Goetz, the contest once again brought students together to tackle a range of challenging



Photo by Kellie Brown

Students (left to right) Anthony Wolfe, Dennis Allen and Jacob Lewis work out a detail of their model at the whiteboard during the 2026 MCM.

problems across different areas of mathematics. Dr. Goetz also served as proctor for the exam.

Seven students participated this year: **Indigo Crutchfield, Juniper Figen, Iain Fox, Kenji Hatchimonji, Gregory Johnson, Adelinea Nissen, and Jeremiah Ty.**

As in previous years, the contest provided an opportunity for students to test their problem-solving skills in a focused and collaborative environment. First place (\$200) was awarded to **Kenji Hatchimonji**, followed by **Juniper Figen** (\$100) in second and **Indigo Crutchfield** (\$50) in third. Congratulations to all participants!

Data Fest

Cal Poly Humboldt sent a team of four students to participate in DataFest, held April 11-12 at CSU Chico. This fast-paced competition challenges teams to analyze a large, complex dataset over the course of a weekend and present their findings to a panel of judges.

Representing Humboldt were **Katy Adcox, Dean Calahan, Jonathan Juarez, and Devon Walker.** Over the two-day event, teams worked intensively to clean data, develop insights, and communicate their results under a tight deadline.

For the Humboldt team, the experience was both challenging and rewarding. Working from early morning into the night, they collaborated closely to develop their analysis and presentation. They also had the opportunity to observe how other teams approached the problem and to reflect on their own process. The team made a deliberate choice to rely on the skills they had developed in their

continued on page 13...



Student Conference Travel

Supporting Student Growth Beyond the Classroom – Tyler Evans

Thanks to the generosity of our alumni and supporters, students in the Mathematics & Data Science Department are able to participate in conferences and professional meetings that extend their learning beyond the classroom. These experiences give students the opportunity to present their work, connect with the broader mathematical community, and begin to see themselves as future professionals in the field.

California Mathematics Council Conference (Asilomar)



Three students—**Sophia Bauer**, **Alexis Garcia**, and **Adelinea Nissen**—attended the California Mathematics Council conference at Asilomar, a long-running statewide gathering of mathematics educators held on the Monterey Peninsula.

The conference brings together hundreds of teachers and mathematics leaders for workshops and sessions focused on teaching practices, equity, and innovation in mathematics education.

Students appreciated the opportunity to engage with educators from across California and to explore new ideas in mathematics instruction. For Alexis Garcia, a highlight was meeting one of her favorite mathematics YouTube content creators in person.

Experiences like this are especially important as the department continues to strengthen its commitment to teacher preparation. By connecting students with practicing educators and current classroom practices, conferences like CMC help future teachers see how mathematics is taught, adapted, and communicated in real settings. These opportunities play a key role in preparing students to become effective and thoughtful mathematics educators.



Humboldt Mathematics student Adelinea Nissen in the main presentation hall at the 2025 CMC Far North conference.

The trip was supported by the generosity of Emeritus Faculty Stuart Moskowitz and the Mathematics and Science Teacher Initiative (MSTI), with logistics coordinated by Professor Brad Ballinger.



Cal Poly Humboldt Mathematics students (left to right) Sela Raisl, Xitlalli Mendoza, Sophia Bauer, Samantha Gleason, and Mack Kona pose for a photo at the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Wisdom in Mathematics in January 2026.

Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Wisdom in Mathematics

Five students—**Sophia Bauer**, **Samantha Gleason**, **Mack Kona**, **Xitlalli Mendoza**, and **Sela Raisl**—attended the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Mathematics (NCUWM), a national conference that brings together undergraduate women from across the country to explore opportunities in mathematics and build connections with peers, graduate programs, and professionals.

Through research talks, panel discussions, and networking events, students were exposed to a wide range of academic and career pathways in mathematics. Mack Kona and Sela Raisl presented a poster at the conference, sharing their work with peers and faculty from across the country.

For Xitlalli Mendoza, the experience was particularly impactful: attending the conference helped her begin to see graduate study as a real and attainable goal. Experiences like NCUWM play an important role in helping students envision their future in mathematics, whether in graduate school, industry, or education.

Student Conference Travel



Photo by Xitlali Mendoza

Student poster session at the 2026 NCUWM.

As the department continues to strengthen its focus on career preparation and advanced study, opportunities like this are essential. By connecting students with the broader mathematical community, they help build confidence, expand possibilities, and prepare students for the next steps in their academic and professional journeys.

Support from generous departmental donors made this trip possible, with additional funding provided by Professor Kamila Larripa's NSF grant, which supported Mack Kona and Sela Raisl.

MAA Golden Section Meeting (Santa Clara)

Nine students—**Aaron Ramirez, Andrew Hicks, Anthony Wolfe, Indigo Crutchfield, Jacob Lewis, Sela Raisl, Kimberly Sayles, Mack Kona, and Maeghan Williams**—traveled to Santa Clara University to attend the MAA Golden Section meeting. The trip required a six-hour drive each way in a single day, but students were rewarded with engaging talks and a poster session, including presentations on “phantom symmetry” by Frank Farris (Santa Clara) and moduli spaces of Riemann surfaces by Hannah Larson (UC Berkeley).

All Humboldt Mathematics and Data Science majors are members of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) through the department's institutional membership. As the premier professional organization focused on

undergraduate mathematics, the MAA plays a central role in connecting students with the broader mathematical community. Attending sectional meetings like this one gives students valuable opportunities to engage with current mathematics, explore career pathways, and begin building professional networks.

The smaller size of the Golden Section meeting allowed for meaningful interaction with speakers and attendees, including the opportunity to meet Sheldon Axler, author of a widely used linear algebra textbook. For many students, this was a particularly exciting moment, as Axler is the author of their MATH 344 textbook. Mack Kona, Sela Raisl, and Anthony Wolfe also presented a poster during the session, sharing their work with participants from across the region.



Photo by Tyler Evans

Cal Poly Humboldt Mathematics and Data Science students at the 2026 MAA Golden Section Meeting, held March 7 at Santa Clara University. Pictured (back, left to right): Andrew Hicks, Anthony Wolfe, Indigo Crutchfield, Aaron Ramirez, Mack Kona, and Jacob Lewis; (front, left to right): Sela Raisl, Kimberly Sayles, and Maeghan Williams

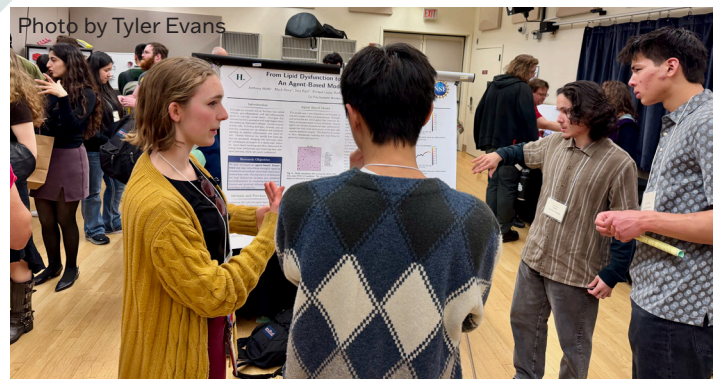


Photo by Tyler Evans

Cal Poly Humboldt students Sela Raisl (left) and Anthony Wolfe (second from right) discuss their agent-based model with two conference attendees during the MAA Golden Section poster session at Santa Clara University.

Day of Data Science!

Day of Data Science – Kamila Larripa

In May 2025, the department hosted its first Day of Data Science, organized by Dr. Bethany Johnson and Dr. Kamila Larripa. The event brought together students, faculty, and community members—including local high school students—for a full day of hands-on learning, exploration, and connection centered around data science.

The morning featured three interactive coding workshops on topics such as using GeoPandas and Google Earth Engine to explore questions in climate justice. Workshops were led by Dr. Rosanna Overholser, Dr. Rachel Torres, and data science major and Data Science Club president Martin Mendoza-Ceja, giving participants the opportunity to build skills while engaging with meaningful real-world problems.

Students then attended a career panel featuring professionals from public service, private industry, and higher education. Panelists included Sarah Jarvis (Lineage Logistics), Bill Hudspeth (California Department of Public Health), Uttam Bhat (Climate LLC), Mike Le (Cal Poly Humboldt), and Andrew Greaves (Amazon Web Services). The discussion offered valuable perspectives on career pathways in data science, especially for the department's first cohort of majors preparing to enter the workforce.



Computer Science major Tully Leonard presents during the Laptop Lightning Talks session.



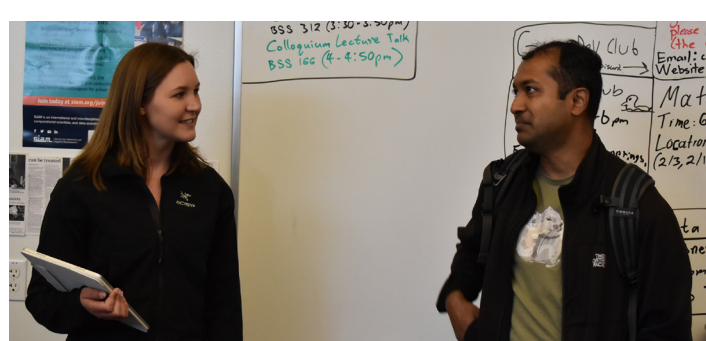
Data Science major Elio Piccagli preps his lightning talk while student participants look on.

The day concluded with “Laptop Lightning Talks,” where students shared short presentations of their data projects. Topics ranged from automating analysis of underwater reef survey data to housing trends in Humboldt County and climate-driven migration patterns in hawks. Together, the presentations reflected the event's broader theme of “Data for Good.”

The department is grateful to all who participated and to event sponsors—including the California Learning Lab, Amazon Web Services, and Institutional Research—for helping make the Day of Data Science a success.



Career panelists (left to right) Andrew Greaves (Amazon Web Services), Uttam Bhat (Climate LLC), Sarah Jarvis (Lineage Logistics), Mike Le (Cal Poly Humboldt), and Bill Hudspeth (California Department of Public Health) speak with students during the Day of Data Science.



Day of Data Science co-organizer Professor Bethany Johnson (left) speaks with Uttam Bhat (Climate LLC) during a break in the program.



Tech Partnership Summit

Building Pathways from Classroom to Career – Bori Mazzag

As part of the institution's growing focus on career preparation, mentoring, and internships, the Cal Poly Humboldt Department of Mathematics & Data Science partnered with the Department of Computer Science and hosted the first Tech Partnership Summit in October 2025. Held at the StartUp Humboldt hub in Arcata, the NSF-funded invite-only event brought together faculty, students, alumni, and regional industry partners for an evening focused on building meaningful connections between the classroom and the workforce.

The summit highlighted a central goal of the department's polytechnic transformation: ensuring that students not only develop strong technical foundations, but also gain access to professional networks and real-world opportunities.



Students, faculty, and industry partners engage in discussion during the Tech Partnership Summit at StartUp Humboldt.



Pictured (left to right) community partner presenter Pennie Lee, Cal Poly Humboldt Chief of Staff Bethany Gilden, Computer Science alumni Cheyenne Ty, Mathematics Professor Kamila Larripa, and Computer Science Department Chair Sherrene Bogle.

The evening began with a series of lightning talks showcasing student work and emerging partnerships. Presentations ranged from software engineering collaborations with community organizations to data science projects focused on climate impact and public health. Students shared their experiences moving from coursework to applied projects, while partners described new internship pathways and opportunities for collaboration.

A key theme throughout the event was partnership—how faculty, alumni, and industry professionals can work together to support student success. During the networking portion of the evening, participants gathered at themed tables to discuss concrete ways to engage with Humboldt programs. Conversations focused on mentoring students, sponsoring class projects, offering internships, and developing long-term collaborations.

The summit also highlighted the growing role of StartUp Humboldt as a regional hub for innovation and economic development. By bringing together students and local employers in a shared space, the event demonstrated how Humboldt is building stronger connections between academic programs and the North Coast's emerging technology ecosystem.

Perhaps most importantly, the Tech Partnership Summit made visible something that is often harder to see: the transition from student to professional. By connecting students directly with practitioners in their fields, the event helped demystify career pathways and showed students how their skills can translate into meaningful work.



Francis Lau discusses internship opportunities for Humboldt students at the Wing Group.



The department looks forward to continuing and expanding this effort, strengthening partnerships that support student success and creating new opportunities for internships, mentorship, and career development.



Dale Oliver Looks Back at ...

A Career Defined by Students – Tyler Evans



After 35 years of extraordinary service to Cal Poly Humboldt, Dr. Dale Oliver is retiring, leaving behind a legacy that spans the classroom, the department, the college, and the broader educational community. Over the course of his career, he has served as faculty member, department chair (of several

departments), associate dean, and dean, before returning to where he began—working directly with students.

For Oliver, the most enduring part of that career is simple: the relationships he built with students. Over the years, those connections have extended far beyond the classroom, with former students stopping to say hello in grocery stores, restaurants, and around town. Many have gone on to become teachers themselves, often in the local community, extending his impact far beyond campus. In some cases, that influence now spans generations, with the children of former students finding their way to Humboldt.

His path to Humboldt began with a bit of chance. While finishing his Ph.D., he attended the Joint Mathematics Meetings as part of his job search. There, he found himself seated next to Humboldt's Rick Vrem, who was there interviewing candidates for a position and waiting for a candidate who never arrived. Oliver, meanwhile, was waiting for an interviewer who also did not show. The two struck up a conversation, and by the next day, Oliver had applied to Humboldt. The rest, as they say, is history.

What he found here at Humboldt was a place where he could pursue what mattered most: preparing future teachers and connecting the university to the broader K-12 community. Early in his career, he became involved with the Redwood Area Mathematics Project (RAMP), a long-standing effort to support and develop mathematics teachers through workshops, collaboration, and professional development. Programs like RAMP helped strengthen ties between the university and local schools while improving mathematics instruction across the region.

That work became a defining thread throughout his career. Over more than three decades, Oliver helped prepare hundreds of future teachers, many of whom remain in the region, shaping mathematics education in local schools and extending the reach of Humboldt's program in ways that are difficult to measure but easy to feel.



Professor Dale Oliver with Emeritus Professor Phyllis Chinn and former Humboldt State University President Alistair McCrone during a Redwood Area Mathematics Project event, c. 1992.

In his own teaching, Oliver emphasized two core ideas: engaging students actively in their learning and encouraging them to reflect on their own thinking. He viewed reflection as essential—not just for students, but for teachers as well—helping to drive continual growth and improvement in the classroom.

Some of his most important growth as a teacher came early in his career. After one of his first classes for future elementary school teachers, three students approached him and offered candid feedback about what was not working. That conversation—lasting nearly an hour—became a turning point. It helped him recognize the importance of being transparent about his teaching choices and of creating space for students to think, talk, and struggle productively.

Mentorship played a similarly central role. Rather than seeing it as a one-time interaction, Oliver approached mentorship as an ongoing relationship built over time—one grounded in respect, experience, and mutual learning. That perspective shaped not only his work with students, but also his influence on colleagues across the department and the university.

...Thirty-Five Years at Humboldt



Mathematics faculty (left to right) Mark Rizzardi, Jeff Haag, Dale Oliver, and Rick Vrem at the finish of a relay from Arcata to Willow Creek.

That same philosophy carried into his leadership. Whether serving as chair, associate dean, or dean, Oliver consistently approached decisions by asking how they would affect students and how best to support the faculty and staff who serve them. His leadership style—quiet, steady, and grounded in service—helped guide the university through periods of growth and transition, including the development of new programs and the broader polytechnic transformation.

Outside the classroom, Dale was also part of another long-standing tradition in the department: running. Humboldt's mathematics faculty shared a culture of lunchtime runs, and Oliver was an enthusiastic participant. Whether heading out for a quick run around the Arcata Marsh or joining colleagues for a relay race from Arcata to Willow Creek, he found in those miles the same sense of community that defined his work on campus. For many, those runs became an extension of the department itself—conversations about teaching, students, and life unfolding one step at a time.

In recognition of his extraordinary contributions, Dr. Oliver was awarded Cal Poly Humboldt's Outstanding Service Award in May 2025, a fitting honor for a career defined by dedication to students, colleagues, and the broader educational community. Over more than three decades,

his service has helped shape not only the Mathematics Department (now the Mathematics & Data Science Department), but also initiatives across the university that continue to influence its future direction.

As the department looks ahead, Oliver is both optimistic and reflective. With new faculty and evolving programs, he sees an exciting future shaped by fresh perspectives and new ideas. At the same time, he reflects on the importance of maintaining the sense of community that has long defined the department—something he remembers from years of shared conversations, collaboration, and, yes, faculty potlucks.

After three and a half decades, Oliver leaves behind not just an impressive record of service, but a community shaped by his commitment to thoughtful teaching, mentorship, and leadership through service. His influence will continue to be felt—in classrooms, in careers, and in the many students and colleagues who carry forward his example.



Dr. Dale Oliver (center) receives the Outstanding Service Award, pictured with Provost Jenn Capps (left) and Interim President Michael Spagna (right).

H.

Alumni Updates

Christopher Fiegel (B.A. 2010)

After earning my B.A. in Mathematics from Humboldt, I completed an M.S. in Biostatistics at Cal State East Bay and went on to build a career spanning data engineering, software engineering, and machine learning. Along the way, I've worked at Autodesk, Glassdoor, Disney, Procure, and I now serve as a Machine Learning Engineer at Skywalker Sound. In my current role, I work on audio transformation and SFTP-related systems, combining mathematical thinking with software and machine learning to solve real-world problems. Looking back, Humboldt's mathematics program gave me the analytical foundation and confidence to pursue a career that has continued to evolve across industries and cutting edge technologies.

Amanda Hemingway (B.A. 2018)

After graduating in spring 2018 in Mathematics, I went on to earn my Master's in Statistics from CSU Fullerton. With a solid foundation in pure math, I was able to transition

into statistics and develop the technical skills needed for practical applications. After working in several smaller organizations where I wasn't directly applying math but relied on the problem-solving skills gained through my BA and MS, I joined Kaiser Supply Chain in 2020 and have continued to grow there. I am currently an analyst on the demand planning team and had the opportunity to develop and launch a statistical model for stock settings, which is now rolling out with positive results. Having a math degree hasn't always meant directly applying math skills, but it has given me tools I use every day. On the personal side, I now have a two-year-old and love getting to engage with her as she learns and explores the world around her!



H.

Emeriti Updates

Martin Flashman

After spending fall and winters for many years in Tucson, I moved there permanently in 2023.

I am still active with math projects related to visualization with mapping diagrams and philosophy of Math including at the 2026 ArizMATYC/MAA Southwest Section Joint Conference, [Mapping Diagrams: Understanding Differential Equations, Integration, The Fundamental Theorem of Calculus, and Area!](#); the ArizMATYC Fall 2025 Conference, [Understanding Equations and Functions with Mapping Diagrams](#); MAA MathFest 2025 Invited Special Session on Philosophy of Mathematics, [Mathematical Paradoxes and the Evolution of Philosophical Commitments](#); and AMS 2025 JMM Special Session, [Complex Numbers and Functions in Algebra and Geometry](#) (video On YouTube). More on my web page: <https://flashman.neocities.org/>

I have also continued with my musical interests: chamber and orchestral music on the cello, open mics and gigs performing on guitar, and attending musical events of all kinds. Summers are open to travel away from the Arizona heat: summer, 2024, included a trip to Sydney, Australia, others to California and New England.

Tim Payer

I am in my ninth month of retirement and am adjusting to this new chapter of my life fairly easily. I thought I would miss the pressing deadlines and workloads, but it turns out I am quite content setting my own pace. I still keep

a connection to teaching by tutoring the son of a good friend in his final year of high school; once a week we work through familiar trigonometry and algebra problems and then share a meal. I have also been observing how teachers are adapting to the use of AI tools like ChatGPT—at Arcata High School, much of the work is now completed in class, which is quite a change from my teaching days.

At home, I have been tackling long-delayed projects and making plenty of trips to the dump. I also travel south about once a month to visit my mother, who is doing well at 88, and I expect those visits will become more frequent. In the coming months, I have trips planned to Lincoln City for a poker tournament and to Arizona to visit family. I am also playing plenty of chess and cribbage with friends, and while I still bike up Fickle Hill, I am learning to pace myself—and to allow time for recovery.

Lourdes Triana

This year I turn 80 and am pleased to say I am finally conversant in both Italian and sign language. I continue to play the piano and still enjoy working on mathematics in my spare time. I have been traveling to Spain to visit family, though I miss my relatives in Cuba now that travel there is no longer possible. I even made it to Marrakesh—just like the song! In the coming year, I plan to visit a good friend in Venice, spend time with my sister in Virginia, and travel to Kauai, where my niece works as a tour boat captain.

Emeriti Updates...

Rob Van Kirk

I'm up to much the same as last year, but I'm pleased to share that I received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual meeting of the Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries Society this March. The American Fisheries Society is the largest professional organization in North America devoted to fisheries science and management, and the Idaho Chapter is one of its largest, with annual meetings drawing 200–350 attendees. The award recognizes career contributions to both the profession and the Society. I was honored in particular for my work on groundwater–surface water interactions (using mathematical modeling!) and its implications for managing the Snake River to benefit both fisheries and agriculture. Over the years, I have served the Chapter as Secretary-Treasurer and in the four-year presidential rotation. I have also received the Chapter's R.L. Wallace Native Fish Conservation Award and the Outstanding Mentor Award. The year following my term as President, the Chapter was recognized as the national society's Outstanding Chapter. While this award is often given to those who are retired or nearing retirement, I don't plan to retire just yet!

Contests (from p. 5)

coursework, focusing on their own reasoning and understanding throughout the competition.

DataFest provided a valuable opportunity for students to apply their data science skills in a real-world setting while gaining experience in teamwork, problem solving, and communication.



Humboldt's 2026 DataFest team (left to right) Jonathan Juarez, Dean Callahan, Kady Adox and Devon Walker at CSU Chico.

CSU Research

CSU Student Research Competition

Five students—**Mack Kona**, **Jonathan Juarez**, **Enrique Lopez**, **Sela Raisl**, and **Anthony Wolfe**—were selected to represent Cal Poly Humboldt at the CSU Student Research Competition, held April 24–25, 2026 at San José State University. This prestigious, system-wide event brings together top undergraduate and graduate researchers from across the 23 CSU campuses to present their work before panels of faculty and industry judges. Selection is highly competitive, with each campus sending only a small number of projects chosen through a campus-level review process.

Kona, Lopez, Raisl, and Wolfe will present a team project on agent-based modeling, conducted under the supervision of Professor Kamila Larripa. Their work builds on the department's growing strength in mathematical biology, where students apply mathematical modeling to understand complex systems with real-world impact.

Jonathan Juarez, a data science and economics double major, will present an independent research project examining how increased wildfire and drought threaten forests in the Six Rivers National Forest. His work combines 75 years of CAL FIRE records with a decade of satellite data, revealing a notable rise in lightning-caused ignitions. Juarez is mentored by Dr. Rachel Torres and is also the recipient of this year's College of Natural Resources & Sciences Excellence in Academic Discipline Award, a highly selective honor.

Participation in the CSU Student Research Competition provides students with an opportunity to present their work in a professional setting, engage with researchers from across the CSU system, and gain valuable experience communicating their ideas to a broad audience.



Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Services Dr. Chrissy Holiday with Mack Kona (left) and Sela Raisl (right) at the 2026 Outstanding Student Awards.

President's Visit

Coding with President Carvajal – Ken Owens

Photo by Michael Dronkers



President Carvajal gets some coding tips from Humboldt student Andrew Gallimore.

Cal Poly Humboldt welcomed its ninth president, Dr. Richard Carvajal, in January 2026. In March, President Carvajal visited the Mathematics & Data Science Department to see Dr. Ken Owens' Supercomputer Club in action.

During his visit, students demonstrated the cluster they have built and maintained, along with the coding and systems work that supports it. After touring the hardware and hearing about the students' projects, the president got a hands-on introduction to their work.

Everyone works in the Supercomputer club, and there are no exceptions for visitors—President Carvajal was soon seated at a terminal and put to work writing code alongside the students. The visit offered a chance to showcase not only the technical skills being developed in the program, but also the collaborative, hands-on learning that defines the department's approach.



President Carvajal gets hands-on at the command line during his visit to the Supercomputer Club.

Photo Gallery



Commencement 2025



Thank You For Your Support!

Humboldt Mathematics & Data Science has a strong sense of community, and the many donors who help support our efforts are an important part of that community.

To ensure students continue receiving the highest-quality mathematics and data science education possible, we recommend three key areas where donors can make the greatest impact:

Learning by doing, which is critical in preparing students for their careers by taking education beyond the classroom where they can apply their learning in a real-world setting. Examples of learning by doing include presenting at conferences, participating in the MCM mathematical modeling contest and participating in DataFest.

Student internships and research, which are valuable experiences for students pursuing competitive jobs and post-graduate programs in the sciences. There are several ways in which donors can help, such as sponsoring the student salary for an internship, or covering research travel and expenses, .

Scholarships, which, based on need or a combination of other criteria, support students with financial resources to pursue their dreams.

With your support in these key areas, our students will have the experiences they need to learn, grow, and help create a more sustainable future for our planet.

Whether it is special learning opportunities like contests or conferences, access to new technologies, labs, or improved facilities, donors like you have the power to enrich the student experience at Cal Poly Humboldt.

To learn more about giving visit <https://www.humboldt.edu/mathematics/giving> or call (707) 826-5200.

Alumni - Drop Us A Line!



If you graduated with a mathematics or data science degree from Humboldt, we would love to hear from you! Send an email to math@humboldt.edu and let us know what you're up to. The newsletter has a column with updates from alumni, and we would love to include you! You can also submit an update online at https://now.humboldt.edu/node/add/alumni_updates. If you would like to be featured on our department website, you can submit your information at <https://www.humboldt.edu/new-alumni-profile>.



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Contributors: Brad Ballinger, Chris Dugaw, Tyler Evans, Walden Freedman, Peter Goetz, Bethany Johnson, Yoon Kim, Kamila Larripa, Dale Oliver, Rosanna Overholser, Ken Owens, and Mark Rizzardi

Photos by: Sophia Bauer, Kellie Brown, Michael Dronkers, Tyler Evans, Walden Freedman, Yoon Kim, Xitlalli Mendoza, and Adelinea Nissen

Layout and design by: Tyler Evans with special thanks to Yoon Kim