

Cal Poly Humboldt H. Sociology

NEWS AND UPDATES
SPRING 2026

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Sociology faculty and students at the Pacific Sociological Association meeting in Long Beach

New Endowed Professorship in Cannabis Studies

Cal Poly Humboldt has received a landmark \$3 million commitment from the Campbell Foundation to establish the University's first fully funded endowed professorship. The funds are designated for the Cannabis Studies program. This represents the largest single cash gift in University history. The faculty search will begin in summer 2026 and all inquiries can be directed to the Search Committee Chair, Josh Meisel.



Stefanie Israel de Souza - McCrone Promising Faculty Scholar

Professor Stefanie Israel de Souza was awarded the 2026 McCrone Promising Faculty Scholars Award. Professor Israel de Souza joined the Department of Sociology in 2021 and is a political ethnographer of urban marginality. Her research critically engages with questions of uneven development, criminal governance, and state presence or absence in urban areas, particularly in Latin America and the Global South. Her scholarship has significant implications for policy, social justice, and the lives of marginalized communities.

3rd Annual Cannabis and Environmental Stewardship Symposium

The third annual Cannabis & Environmental Stewardship Symposium brought together experts throughout California to Cal Poly Humboldt in April 2026 to explore equitable and environmentally responsible practices in California's cannabis market – the nation's largest, valued at more than \$5 billion. This year's rich symposium program was organized by Professor Dan Mar along with Cannabis Studies student undergraduate assistants Alex Barber, Ellis Bilbo, Celeste Davis, Matthias Junker, and Jada Morrison, and combined BA/MA pathway graduate student Katy Lira.

Professor Dan Mar receives Campbell Foundation Grant

A \$1 million grant from the Campbell Foundation is funding a first-of-its-kind study aimed at helping cannabis farmers reduce costs, lower environmental impacts, and produce cleaner, more sustainable products. The study will also explore the historical and cultural dimensions of cannabis farming in Northern California by documenting farmers' knowledge and experiences in a region long associated with the crop.

Students Participate in the Time of Remembrance Program

In February, Professor Michihiro Sugata co-led with Professor Mike Atienza (CRGS) a field trip course to Sacramento. The 14 students enrolled participated in the North California "Time of Remembrance" program. The SOC 280 Carceral Geographies course students had a private listening session with five Japanese-American former incarcerated. The elders ranged in age from 90 to 102 and shared their experiences of imprisonment in "relocation centers" during WWII.



Students present research at PSA Meeting in Long Beach

Seven sociology students, including two undergraduates, were accompanied by Professors Josh Meisel, Jennifer Miles, James Ordner, & Mary Virnoche to the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA) conference in Long Beach in early April as part of the SOC 494 PSA Field Trip class. Student travel is supported by the Instructional Related Activities fee along with gifts to our department from generous donors. (Re)connecting with alumni is always a wonderful part of the meetings.



*Professors Josh Meisel and Mary Virnoche
with MA alum Leonard Henderson*



*MA alum and adjunct faculty
Torisha Khonach*

McConkey Award Winners

Elizabeth Silver and Lacy Mitchell were selected by the Sociology faculty to be the 2026 recipients of the Patricia O. McConkey Outstanding Graduate Student Award. The McConkey awardees are selected by the faculty recognizing graduating students who have achieved excellence in their field of study. Elizabeth is an Administrative Analyst working with the Educational Opportunity Program/Student Support Services and conducted a mixed methods evaluation of the STEM Summer Bridge Orientation program as a Practicing Sociology student. Beyond working full-time in the Humboldt County Public Defender's Office, Lacy's thesis as a Teaching Sociology student is entitled, "Decolonizing Restorative Justice: A Teaching Development Project."



(L-R) Josh Meisel, Michihiro Sugata, Lacy Mitchell, Elizabeth Silver, Mary Virnoche