



Stephanie Corigliano, Lecturer within Religious Studies, and her experiential workshop students in The Buddha Hall at Gomde California. Photo provided by Stephani Corigliano.

Letter from the Dean

By Kianna Znika

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*A current student when writing this article

Tucked away in the Redwood forest of Legget, CA lives Gomde California, a beautiful, remote retreat center dedicated to the teachings and practices of Tibetan Buddhism. Here, students of Cal Poly Humboldt's experiential religious studies workshop were welcomed to spend the weekend resting within their sacred grounds as they meditated and engaged in activities centered around loving-kindness.

Not many students outside of the Religious Studies program know about the program and classes such as this one. In fact, I only heard about it through a classmate of mine who shared similar interests in spirituality and herbalism. Like me, she heard about these classes through another friend. I am positive that more students would enroll in these experiences, if only they knew of their existence.

These experiential weekends are not intended to be a well-kept secret. For one unit of course credit, students can escape the chaos of everyday life and immerse themselves in different cultural teachings and activities. They can learn and grow with a community of like-minded individuals in a safer, loving environment, participating in open discussions about culture, the spiritual teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, and of course, the broader meanings and experiences of life.

I spent all Spring 2024 semester looking forward to my trip to Gomde. The time finally came on March 22, when I joined other students behind Founder's Hall with our overnight bags and backpacking gear in hand. A short bus ride later, we arrived at our destination, immediately thrilled by how stunning the grounds were. You could instantly feel the cleansing, healing energy of the land as you watched prayer flags dance in the wind and noticed mushrooms growing along the trails. Following these trails led us to The Buddha Hall, a sacred space dedicated to meditation and honoring The Buddha.

Most of our time was spent in Buddha Hall. It was a large, colorful space with statues, shrines, floor pillows, and large windows that enabled the flow of natural light. The setting was enhanced by the aromas of burning incense and hot tea. Upon entering Buddha Hall, we grabbed our tea and made our way to our seats, ready to engage in hours of meditation and learning about Tibetan Buddhism.

I was moved by the types of conversations we had throughout the weekend. From simply asking "What brought you here?" to more in-depth conversations about what life and spirituality means personally. "What is spirituality? What does that even

mean?" was a particularly interesting topic of conversation. It is here where we discussed ego, connecting with others, the meaning of love, and carried into more metaphysical theories about astral realms and afterlife. The flow of dialogue and ideas carried us into the dining room to gather around a large table for our plant-based meals. In that space of spiritual and dining communion, new friendships were born.

Our free time was spent getting to know one another as we explored the trails between the tall Redwood trees, took plunges in the nearby river, and spent hours before bedtime talking about our individual lives. Although we came from such different backgrounds, we all seemed to share a collective passion for nature, community, social justice and the healing power of love. Even now, months later, we exchange friendly smiles as we pass by each other around campus and the community.

I am very grateful to have enjoyed this experience. The experiential weekend left me feeling refreshed, uplifted and reconnected with the things that matter most to me. I hope more students within Cal Poly Humboldt take advantage of these opportunities presented by Religious Studies. These are the special opportunities that make your time in Humboldt so much more meaningful.

Giving to the Religious Studies Department

Help Religious Studies continue to offer enriching activities like this one, as well as general support to the department.

Donate at: <https://giving.humboldt.edu/religious-studies-department>

Featured Artist

Megan Atherton, Lecturer, Art + Film

"Sparks and Rainbows"

Caran D'Ache, Faber Castell Crayons, Gouache on canvas, 69" x 94"

A collaboration between Megan Atherton and Mason Atherton-Friend, 2020

[Visit Megan's Website](#)



San Francisco Alumni Event

Sunday November 24

Join us for a walking tour and alumni gathering in San Francisco! Led by the San Francisco Art Institute Legacy Foundation + Archive's Jeff Gunderson and Becky Alexander, the tour will feature Cal Poly Humboldt Art + Film professor Berit Potter as the guest expert.

Following the tour, there will be a Cal Poly Humboldt alumni gathering with food and drinks and a chance to talk further with fellow alumni and Berit Potter, hosted by CAHSS Dean Jeff Crane.

1:30pm: Walking tour starting in Union Square (approx 1.5 hours) [More info and registration](#)

3:30pm: Alumni gathering at Foley's (243 O'Farrell Street) [Register here](#)