

Community Comment 1/7/2013
By Jon Sapper

I want to take my hat off to the leadership and staff at Humboldt State University for doing some tremendous work in support of children and K-12 students in our community. There are many universities throughout the country that practice the ivory tower mentality and rarely engage with their local communities. Not HSU! President Richmond, his leadership team and many faculty members have made it a priority to work with their K-12 colleagues in new and exciting ways. Let me give you some examples.

HSU students, through encouragement and class assignments are working in primary grade classrooms helping our youngest children learn how to read. And yes, President Richmond is volunteering to help in this area, as well.

HSU students are mentoring middle school and high school students in English and Math and students in the Business Department's Entrepreneurship Club are working with middle school students to promote creativity, innovation and the values and benefits of entrepreneurship.

And recently, over 500 8th graders from schools participating in the Decade of Difference community initiative to increase achievement, increase high school completion rates and increase continuing education rates were admitted as 8th graders to HSU. That's right, President Richmond personally handed each one of them a compact guaranteeing their admission to HSU four years from now, as long as they meet basic eligibility requirements. That's a big deal, especially since HSU just received over 13 thousand admission applications for next year. They only admit about 4 thousand.

HSU's Education Dept. has also taken a bold move to completely re-invent how teachers are trained. This innovative and exciting clinical approach is based on the latest research and HSU has stepped forward ahead of other universities in the state. This model will engage future teachers with local schools much earlier in their professional training, similar to how we train doctors and nurses in the medical professions.

HSU has also been promoting this work outside of our area. Several products developed by Humboldt County Office of Education staff involved with the Decade of Difference Initiative were showcased in a full day of meetings with senior Apple executives who traveled to our area a few weeks ago.

Time does not allow me to share the entire list, but these are just a few examples of the exemplary and groundbreaking work that HSU is doing in our local community. I applaud their leadership. I applaud their tenacity. And, I applaud their risk taking. HSU is truly making a difference for our young people today and our community tomorrow.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.