

Community Comment
May 22, 2015
Sam Pennisi

~~Our graduating resource~~

We are so fortunate to have two institutions of higher education. Between them, they are responsible for much of our social, cultural, and environmental landscape. While any large institutions bring challenges to a rural and remote area, be they public or private, College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University are major assets for Arcata, Eureka, and all of Humboldt County and the North Coast.

These colleges bring opportunity for local people to further their training or education and seek a more satisfying and prosperous future. But these colleges are unique in their quality of teachers and programs. As an Alum of Humboldt, I am always amazed at how far nationally and across the world our reputation is held in high regard. This fact is a testament to the Administration, faculty, and students that have contributed to that high reputation. A University is known for its programs and the faculty that teach in them, but how well our students do in their respective fields of study and work is what seals the deal. And our students do well.

The University maintains a strong curriculum across the campus. But HSU has definite strengths. Our Natural Resource management majors rank among the best in the nation. The support core, biology and botany and general sciences are excellent in themselves. Music and fine arts, education, and social sciences are well respected and the common areas that are the general education core rank with any Cal State University. Since the 70's, the Environment Resources Engineering program has grown in stature. This area of Engineering represents a critical element in solving problems associated with our modern world. Water quality and air quality and waste water management are, and will continue to be the core issues we all face. We think sometimes that these are issues of developing countries, but look at the challenges we face with water right here in California. And climate change is real and we need the skills and knowledge to manage our way thru it.

Last Saturday was graduation at both CR and HSU. Some 1500 young people received their diplomas. This represents the end of 4 or 5 years of hard work. It should be acknowledged and celebrated. It's trite to say but these graduates are our future. They will take positions in business, education and government. They will join the military and the Peace Corps. They will find partners and have families. They will care for us as we age. They will manage our government and our environment. They will discover thru science new realities and concepts that better explain our world. They will continue to probe space, near and far. In other words, they will be us. Our future selves.

If you have had the opportunity to get to know some of the graduates, I think you would be pleased with what you see. I know we have a small population and a small number of positions that provide great career opportunities, but I hope many of these people choose

to stay here. There are jobs here and there are jobs to be created. We need their skills and their knowledge all over the globe as well as right here in Humboldt County.

My hardest congratulations go out to you. You have done well and you will do important things. My only question is how can we help.

Have a great memorial day - Remember why we celebrate

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.