

GRADUATE STUDIES NEWS

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*Articles by Carson Medley
CSU, Chico Thesis Editor*

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Office of Graduate Studies
California State University, Chico
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929-0875
Student Services Center 460
Phone: 530-898-6880
Fax: 530-898-3342
www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies

Advisory: This issue of the Graduate Studies newsletter is largely dedicated to the Camp Fire. In celebrating many current and former graduate students, while also honoring their experiences as survivors, we know their stories may be upsetting to some readers.



The street of graduate student Jonathon Phillips, featured in this issue.



◀ Gary McMahon in his office at the Chico Student Success Center, Student Services Center, Room 360.

The Chico Student Success Center (CSSC) serves and supports first generation, low income and traditionally under-represented learners, from outreach to graduation, with personalized attention to their academic goals and individual journey.

The CSSC partners with high schools and after-school programs throughout California.

By providing of a safe learning community, the CSSC staff supports students so that they can thrive.

To learn more about the CSSC go to <https://www.csuchico.edu/cssc/>.

“Graduate school was the first time I experienced helping traditional college students. I started to better understand the undergraduate experience...”

GARY McMAHON: YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN

What is your position on campus? How long have you been doing this?

I'm the director of the Chico Student Success Center. I've been doing this for more than 20 years.

What did you earn your master's degree in here at Chico State?

I earned my Master of Science in Accountancy from the College of Business.

How did graduate school at Chico State prepare you for your current leadership role?

In many ways. First, I began to view issues, concepts, opportunities, and challenges in a systemic manner. I started putting the pieces together. Graduate school demanded that I read more critically and thoughtfully—a habit I continue today. The professors at Chico State were and continue to be so accessible outside the classroom. I was

inspired by many of the conversations I had with faculty.

Do you have any fond memories of graduate school? Any classes that blew your mind and/or changed the way you view the world?

My undergraduate degree was in communications, so I had to take many undergraduate business courses as prerequisites for my graduate degree. At first, I thought, "Wow, this is going to be tough. My peers are the age of my oldest child." But it ended up being great. Graduate school was the first time I experienced helping traditional college students. I started to better understand the undergraduate experience and certainly became more aware of their

experience than when I first attended college. I soon found myself as a graduate assistant, only a couple years later, teaching the same courses I had taken as an undergraduate. I also loved the challenges in graduate school. In my discipline, I was constantly faced with two opposing solutions to financial needs and problems. Accounting in its purest form was a logical, consistent, and balanced solution. Taxes were just the opposite. I enjoyed the combination, though, of blending art and science. I was totally engaged.

It seems like you've taken an unorthodox career path.

Well, I remember one day toward the end of the first semester in graduate school, the professor went around the room asking each student what their plans were upon graduation. This class was comprised of mostly MBA students. Keep in mind that was during a time when graduates were getting generous job offers that included stock options. Every student said they wanted to enter or return to a corporate environment to cash in on their graduate school investment. When the professor asked me, I said I was thinking about returning to the public sector, perhaps a county position, where I could help improve services to those who needed it most. The classroom turned silent. I was an outlier.

Fast forward. You have now become a ubiquitous figure on our campus as the leader of the Chico Student Success Center (CSSC). What drives you?

I strongly believe that participation in higher education, although not the only way, is a very good approach to improving the lives of individuals and their society. I was not successful in college right after high school. I went out and worked many jobs to provide for my young and growing family. I did whatever I could do to put food on the

"I believe in the power to do good at this University. Chico State changed my life."

table. Sadly, I was watching the clock at every one of these jobs. I was not mentally or emotionally engaged. I was bored and physically drained. I

remember breaking down once in a warehouse where I was working. I began crying and kept saying to myself, "Is this what I'll be doing for the rest of my life?" So, when I had an opportunity to return to college, you better believe I was serious about my academics.

Weren't you the first in your family to attend college?

That's right. I was the first. My wife also went to college and our three children went to college. We all graduated from Chico State. So, I believe in the power to do good at this University. Chico State changed my life. Chico State changed all the lives in my family.

Is it true that you send handwritten postcards to every student who applies to your program?

That's true. On average, the CSSC receives about 2,000 applications from seniors attending our partnering high schools. But higher education is not

"...higher education is not about numbers—it's about individuals and their experiences."

about numbers—it's about individuals and their experiences. The so-called numbers are comprised of all these individual lives. A handwritten note acknowledges the importance of that young individual. He or she took the time to apply to our school. They chose a college preparatory curriculum. And many of these students are courageous enough to consider attending college 500 miles away from their home. Even if they don't decide to come to Chico State, their success affects all of us.

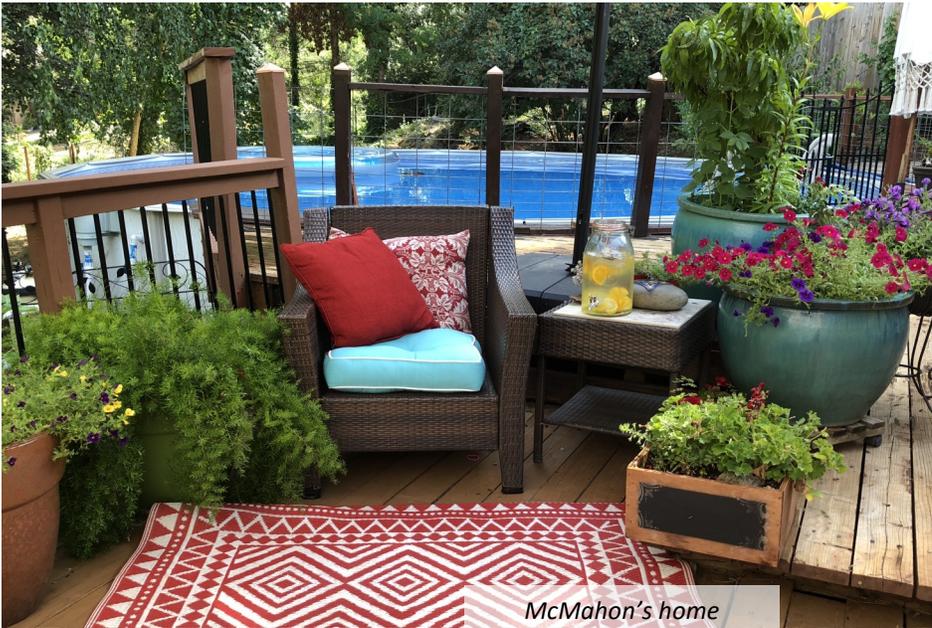
You lost your house in the Camp Fire. Can you tell me what you were doing the day and the night before?

I went out to feed the chickens before getting ready to head down the hill to work that morning. I looked around and my first thought was, "What a beautiful sunrise." Then I thought, "Looks kind of foggy, though." I had my morning, pre-caffeinated brain on. Then it dawned on me. That wasn't fog. That was smoke from a fire. I got online and saw that the fire was a 45-minute car ride from our house. I wasn't too concerned.

The wind was crazy, though, and soon I started hearing in the distance what I thought was thunder. What I heard was the beginning of endless explosions.



One final Christmas in Paradise with McMahon's grandchildren.



McMahon's home
(above) a few days before
and (below) after the fire.



pillow is really nice. What a blessing.” The next day we found out that we lost it all. I will always deeply regret losing our family keepsakes and photos, but with that comes the realization of what a blessed life I have lived. The very fact that I miss those things is evidence of how fortunate of a person I have been. I now find myself asking questions like, “How many shoes does a guy need? You can only wear one pair at a time.” I don’t want “things” just to be distracted. I also have gotten over the social discomfort of telling someone “I love you,” because it’s true—you just don’t know it until the thought of losing them. You’d be surprised at how many people you actually love, even the ones that drive you nuts sometimes. I certainly do deal with sadness, but it is mixed with gratitude. I miss Paradise. I miss the lifestyle, the pace of life. I am extremely sad about the loss of life.

I heard that after you evacuated, and as your house was most likely burning down, you showed up at a local church and started helping.

I knew I couldn’t feel sorry for myself for very long. I went down to a Red Cross shelter and asked if they would take me on as a volunteer. I would describe the experience as standing at the very intersection of Disaster Avenue and Loving and Kindness Street. Survivors were shell-shocked, and the public flocked in—no, they charged in—to help. Over the past few years, watching the national news and all, I had become cynical about human nature. But as I told

Did you leave right away?

I stayed too long. I thought the fire would be put out before it reached Paradise. I was wrong. This fire didn’t have a typical fire line. It jumped all over town, wherever the wind blew it. I tried to leave town at 10:15 a.m. I was stuck in traffic for 40 minutes. I went maybe 400 yards in that time. I turned around and went back home. I got a hose and started putting out spot fires, but things went bad fast. Now I had to find a safe place. Eventually, I went down to Billie Park where they had some hoses and a metal-roofed gazebo. I was there with about 20 other people and watched as the fire

burned all around us. Dense, black smoke and no sunlight and explosions everywhere. What a hellish experience. I saw a fire truck coming toward us. I figured if the fire trucks could get in, I could get out. I made a run for my truck. I got out of town somewhere between 2 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Did your life change after the fire?

I remember getting in bed two days after the fire and thinking, “Hey, this

“The next day we found out that we lost it all... ..but with that [loss] comes the realization of what a blessed life I have lived.”

a friend, that cynicism was like a sandcastle on a beach. All the love, the generosity, and kindness of complete strangers were like waves that eventually washed the sandcastle back out to sea.

Serving others was what I needed to do, but those with whom I was serving also served me with examples of their courage.



Home sweet home.

I remember one volunteer in particular. She lived in Glenn County and was wearing a wool cap, which covered up the results of her cancer treatment. She was a young woman who gladly got down on her knees and scrubbed and sanitized the shelter showers with me. There is an unmeasurable amount of love, courage, and selflessness all around us. It is when we get shaken out of our routines that we get to witness it. There were so many Chico State students, alumni, staff, teachers, and administrators volunteering all over town and all over the region.

Mark Twain said to not “let schooling interfere with your education.” What can we all learn—or have you learned—from the Camp Fire? Has this been part of your education?

I have encouraged polite and reluctant people to visit Paradise, drive by our house, see what wild fire destruction can really look like, and then realize how fortunate we all are that the fire did not get into Bidwell Park and the interior of Chico. Beyond the story of Paradise, this could be any community’s story. Chances are there will be another fire story somewhere next fire season. I wish that upon no one. We can’t ignore that we have all the components necessary here for an even bigger fire. This is not a political problem. Thoughtful, considerate, intelligent people from all political affiliations are needed and available to help reduce this threat. No doubt many of these people have graduated from our own school.

“We lost our routines. We lost our town. We lost our community. What we do have are our stories.”

Graduate school is filled with many obstacles, hopefully none as challenging and deadly as the Camp Fire. Nevertheless, many of our graduate students were affected by this fire. Do you have any advice or words of encouragement for them?

First of all, this fire is a very public event with very personal impacts. Everybody has been affected. The actual participants living in the fire zone have their own personal stories, but so do the non-participants who had to sit, worrying, watching, wanting to help

but not knowing what to do. They experienced their own kind of trauma. Looking out their office windows, as the smoke plume moved above Chico, the entire community was traumatized. So many people have told me they felt helpless; that is also emotionally traumatic. Advice? I don’t have any. Each person finds themselves in their own unique situation, although the components are similar. You lost your home, your possessions, but so many others lost their jobs or large portions of their jobs. We lost our doctors, our nurses, our hospital. We lost our teachers, counselors, schools. We lost our routines. We lost our town. We lost our community. What we do have are our stories. I am a big believer in the need for stories in our lives. We need to keep telling these stories, stories of Paradise, and we need to write new stories about Paradise.

“I never understood the impact my life, through my job, had on others.”

The Chico Student Success Center is about building partnerships and honest relationships. You have dedicated your life to giving and a creating a sense of belonging. In your time of need, did Chico State and the community give back to you?

I was against the idea at first, but my family, friends, students, alumni, and coworkers refused to take “no” for an answer. Immediately, meals were prepared for me and my family (my daughter and her family lost everything, too.) Clothing, financial donations, anything and everything, my community just kept showing up in person, through the mail, through social media, and through their thoughts and prayers.

Yes, giving and receiving are very important in knowing you belong to and in a community. Previously, I concentrated on giving. I was strong, I

gave. But I was missing the bigger lesson. My ego was involved in the giving. In the receiving, I had to recognize some important lessons about giving and

receiving. I am still a student of those lessons, and in that way, I am still very much a student at Chico State.

What is the big personal take away from this tragedy?

I never understood the impact my life, through my job, had on others. In a very real way, my decision to attend graduate school created the path I am on today. I had no idea at the time that my career, my life, I guess you would say my love, would have been set in motion by filling out that graduate school application. To



Butte Strong wind chime at the new McMahon home in Orland.

some degree, I have stopped planning my life out like I did before November 8, 2018. I had a big plan in mind. Now, I try to prepare to a certain degree, but it's more like kayaking down a river you've never been on before. There will be calm waters, and there will be severe rapids. I am just happy to be going on the ride.

And where are you living now?

We are out in Orland.

You are also a musician. Have you written any songs about the Camp Fire?

I haven't been able to write any new songs since the fire. For the first 45 days or so, nightmares were constant. I also lost all my instruments and recording equipment and that special place I used to write and record in. I've only cried once during this, which is not a good thing, but it was when I was volunteering at the shelter and through the dense smoke I saw my friends and colleagues Kaitlyn and Darnell carrying a new guitar to give me. Whenever I do write a new song, the first one won't be about a fire. Nope. It will be a story about love, kindness, and courage. 🐶

“Now, it's...like kayaking down a river you've never been on before.”



McMahon playing his new guitar.

Chico State continues to be involved in Camp Fire recovery. ▼

[Wildcats Rise Fire Recovery Fund](#) still open to receive donations in support of students, faculty, and staff impacted by the Camp Fire.

[Wildcats Rise Camp Fire Emotional Support](#) group counseling sessions continue on campus this fall, and [Life Matters](#) employee assistance program provides up to three one-on-one counseling sessions to Chico State employees and anyone living with them.

[Camp Fire Oral History Project](#) begins Phase 2 in spring 2020 gathering stories of healing and recovery.

[Wildcats Rise Community Liaison](#) Megan Kurtz represents Chico State on the board of the Camp Fire Long Term Recovery Group.

[Teaching the Camp Fire](#) provides a variety of additional resources.

How long were you a graduate coordinator?

I think I started in 2010. My last student, Ursula Parker, graduated last year.

What are some of your greatest memories working with graduate students?

I really enjoyed the opportunity to teach graduate seminars, and the conversations with students over various ideas in research. In 2008, I was teaching a graduate seminar, and I led a field trip for the students to visit areas of the Butte Creek Ecological Preserve to talk about fire effects in riparian areas following the Humboldt Fire, which happened a few months prior. We had to wade across the creek, and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to see the area responding to the fire; vegetation was regenerating vigorously, and we could see animal tracks including a mountain lion. I'm a field person, so I tend to remember opportunities to take students to new places or share places beyond the usual locations.

What are some of the greatest benefits of working with graduate students?

There are many benefits of working with graduate students. Among them are keeping up to date with research and intellectual stimulation. I also liked having teaching assistants to mentor and use as a sounding board for different teaching ideas.

Where were you when you first heard about the Camp Fire?

I was at home getting my kids ready for school. My wife called to say she could see a plume of smoke to the east. I immediately checked my sources to learn the fire had started 30 minutes prior and was reported as 10 acres. At that time, I was seeing a large plume of smoke through the trees to the east, and it reminded me of the 2008 Humboldt Fire (part of the Butte Lightning Complex). I knew it was going to be a big one.

What went through your head?

Knowing the wind direction, I knew where the fire would spread fastest. As the plume grew darker and expanded, I thought about places that might be in the path. As I drove past the entrance to the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, I thought about a place I sometimes visit with classes to talk about fire history. The site has historical photos Albert Weislander took in the 1930s as part of the Vegetation Type Mapping Project. I hiked to the photo point and captured some photos of the vegetation as it was that day, and of the plume of smoke looming in the distance. I wanted to be able to add to the photo history of this site. The thought hadn't entirely processed in my mind by that

"I hiked to the photo point and captured some photos of the vegetation as it was that day, and of the plume of smoke looming in the distance."



**DON HANKINS:
THE PROFESSOR
WHO PLAYS WITH
FIRE**

Don Hankins, professor, Department of Geography and Planning, graduate coordinator, and field director, Butte Creek Ecological Preserve

point, but I was aware that Doe Mill Ridge was in alignment with the winds. As I continued down Highway 32, I saw the flames on Sawmill Peak with large area ignitions and spotting on Paradise Ridge. I pulled off the road to watch. I was stunned by what I was seeing. I knew the fire was causing devastation in its path. I thought about the people on the ridge and thought about where the fire would continue to go. From where I stood, I was in the downwind alignment of the fire. I decided to cancel classes and head home to prepare my neighborhood for possible evacuation, which was mandatory later that evening.

Fire fascinates you. What were you feeling during all of this?

Yes, I've been interested in fire since I was a kid. I haven't had much interest in studying wildfires (although I have), but more about cultural fires and prescribed fires, which are quite different. Through the cultural lens, when I saw the Camp Fire, I was reflecting on indigenous fire stories. In those stories, fires



Albert Weislander's photo, circa 1930s, of the Vegetation Type Mapping Project.



Hankins' photo of the Vegetation Type Mapping Project taken the morning of November 8, 2018.



Hankins' photo of the Vegetation Type Mapping Project showing the plume from the Camp Fire. The area of orange is approximately where the Buzztail community on Doe Mill Ridge would be ablaze later that day. The area of Doe Mill Ridge within the Vegetation Type Mapping Project scene did not burn during the Camp Fire.

consumed the world before people learned to use fire as a tool. I thought, "We're living the first fire stories again, because modern society has not continued the use of fire as Indigenous practitioners would have." The Tubbs Fire, Thomas Fire, Carr Fire, etc., are all reminders of this.

Did you know a fire like the Camp Fire was not a matter of if but when?

Yes. Fire is a necessary part of the landscape. We cannot regulate it out of existence. There are

some hurdles that need to be crossed in terms of capacity for tribes, public entities, and individuals to get the right fires back into the right places.

Is this the last of the great fires that will come our way?

I think we could make change to minimize such fires, but the scale of what is needed to be done will take some time to achieve—unless nature does it for us, and we step in to guide it afterward.

How do you think the Camp Fire will affect future graduate students and our community? Will there be a new demand for this kind of research?

Undoubtedly, the fire has affected graduate students in many ways. Those within the fire footprint may be trying to move forward with their lives, dealing with various traumas from

"Fire is a necessary part of the landscape. We cannot regulate it out of existence. [We need] to get the right fires back into the right places."

survival to loss. Certainly, the fire provides a lot of opportunities for students to do research or projects around the fire from ecological, social, and many other viewpoints. There are opportunities to contribute to the knowledge and lessons learned. For the community, there is a good bit of research that has been done on communities, including within Butte County following the 2008 fires, that gives us a good sense of what we might expect. There are also certain novel things unfolding around the fire, including the ecological impacts from urban contaminants in the landscape to habitat conversion from too frequent of fires in some areas. All these things provide opportunities for continued or new research. I think there is an opportunity for all disciplines to engage, but it shouldn't be because of this fire, but the many fires and other disasters that have and will continue to impact the region.

How do you see our graduate students contributing to the North State in this field?

Graduate students will contribute not only through research and projects, but also in the career paths they will enter. That's one great thing about our graduate student alumni—they are in positions to bring change at agencies, non-governmental entities, etc. We should, though, be cautious about jumping into areas where research has already

"...graduate student alumni...are in positions to bring change at agencies, non-governmental entities, etc."



Hankins, center, in the field with his students.

Jason Halley (University Photographer)

opportunistic way, and it includes the changes that come to communities through the aftermath. Some great things have come from communities impacted by Australia's Black Saturday Fires in 2009 (e.g., better preparedness programming, youth engagement, community art, fire-adapted reconstruction). These are the sorts of things I think we will see locally. Meanwhile, we must address what future vegetation communities might look like given the changing environmental conditions. A lot of the trees that succumbed in Paradise were species that in many ways were on the fringe of their climate tolerance. Here I see oaks being a logical shift.

been done. A lot of fire research has been done in this area already (pre and post-Camp Fire), and there are other communities in areas that have burned. If there is something new or novel, then I think it is a good opportunity to contribute.

Our culture now has a pre and post-9/11 mentality. Will we have a pre and post-Camp Fire mentality?

I don't see this happening at the scale of 9/11, but certainly there is a hypersensitivity I've seen around fire and smoke. Specifically, I recall several times during the rainy season when rural residents were burning [yard debris], and I'd see threads in social media or get accounts of others chastising the entity doing the burn. Fire is a part of the landscape, and we all need to learn to live with it. To me this means accepting fire when it is seasonally appropriate.

Tell me about pyrogeography.

This is a deep subject, but, in short, it is the study of fire inclusive of ecology, paleo-ecology, cultures, and social science. Many global ecosystems are fire-prone. In those fire-prone regions, people have often stewarded the landscape with fire (e.g., indigenous communities burning). The point of the pyrogeography class is to explore how we as a society can be better stewards by informing others about fire.

Does the North State have a chance to turn this tragedy into a learning opportunity, similar to New Orleans after Katrina?

Yes, there is certainly something positive that can come from the fire. This includes research innovation, but not in an

"...better preparedness programming, youth engagement, community art, fire-adapted reconstruction... These are the sorts of things I think we will see locally."

Tell me more about your vision for establishing Chico State as an educational center and creating a specialized major for thinking about our landscape and the ecological and social impacts? Do you see graduate students contributing to this?

The idea of creating this learning opportunity stems back to my early days as field director for the CSU, Chico Ecological Reserves. Our students tend to benefit from applied experiences. The reserves provide a great learning environment for such applied experiences. What we hope to create is a framework where students from broad disciplinary backgrounds can fulfill their graduate requirements, research, and projects while working and learning on the reserves and surrounding areas. The goal is to provide impactful experiences that are truly interdisciplinary, and to give student the tools to be well-

rounded leaders and land managers in the future.

The grief and trauma from the Camp Fire will never go away. But are there any positive outcomes hidden beneath the charred rubble?

Ecologically, an opportunity exists within the fire-footprint to maintain the regenerating vegetation in a way that includes fire and makes it more resilient. Not all vegetation communities need frequent fire, but grasslands, oak woodlands, and conifer forests in this region historically experienced frequent fires set by indigenous peoples to maintain them. Given that people will continue to live in these areas, the



“The goal is to provide impactful experiences ... and to give students the tools to be well-rounded leaders and land managers in the future.”

Jason Halley (University Photographer)

Hankins, on the grounds of the Butte Creek Ecological Reserve.

focus needs to be on being fire adapted. What that means is fire will be present, but infrastructure needs to be built in a way that it can persist through fire. People living in these areas need to have that mindset. If that is achieved, then I think that would be a positive outcome following this disaster.

You are a renowned expert in the field of prescribed burning, working with indigenous populations on burning projects in Australia. You’ve also written numerous grants for burns on public lands. What are you working on now as a result of the Camp Fire?

I work with indigenous communities in Australia and North America, with a focus on restoration of fire for biodiversity and cultural outcomes. I continue to do this work, as there is a lot to consider as the broader society grapples with putting fire on the landscape. If it is not done right, there is a lot at stake. That’s why having an eye on indigenous processes and biodiversity outcomes are important to follow. Personally, I did not jump into any research immediately following the fire. As we move to put more fire in the landscape, I will study those areas (as

“What we hope to create is a framework where students from broad disciplinary backgrounds can fulfill their graduate requirements, research, and projects while working and learning on the reserves and surrounding areas.”

appropriate) to inform stewardship. Within this, I’m interested to better document carbon storage as part of the outcomes. I have plans to continue ongoing work with collaborators to follow-up on research we did following the 2008 fires. I am also interested in the population of MacNab cypress in Magalia and how it recovers. On the social side, I’ve got some ideas related to health and well-being, policy and regulation, and insurance. I’ve got my work cut out for me.

Do you have any advice for graduate students wanting to do what you do?

Currently, there are several students I know studying various fire-related topics. As I’ve mentioned above, the opportunities to engage in fire-related studies are across all disciplines. Due to this breadth, it is easy to want to study everything. Keep a journal of those ideas you might have, but choose a

simple study or project that is implementable in a reasonable timeframe. Have a plan to complete your work in that timeframe. There will be plenty of opportunity to revisit some of the other areas of interest later. ♡

Lynn Abbiati, Chico State graduate studies alumna and research technician, Institutional Research, seen here with her paintings that adorn the Office of Graduate Studies wall.



LYNN ABBIATI: TURNING ASHES INTO ART

What is your position on campus? How long have you been doing this?

I am a research technician for Institutional Research. I've been doing this at Chico State for 11 years.

What did you earn your master's degree in?

I earned an MS in instructional design and technology from the College of Communication and Education.

How did graduate school here prepare you for your current leadership role?

It didn't prepare me as much to become a leader as it did to teach me how to work with others. Graduate school taught me

how to work within a team environment and how to transfer these skills to the work setting.

Do you have any fond memories of graduate school? Any classes that blew your mind or changed the way you view the world?

From day one in my graduate program, we were constantly bringing in and processing real-world experience from the professional work environment. This was an experience missing from my BA in psychology program. We were always bringing in people from the outside to talk about their professional experiences. I learned how you can take real-life experiences and apply those experiences to what you're learning in school. I'm not great at tests. I excel when it comes

to group projects and writing reports. I really miss the relationships I had with my classmates. Throughout my program, all my professors focused on the role of technology and how technology is growing, most specifically how intellectual property will grow and be the primary tool for business. I am seeing that now as I turn my art into a business. I am currently working on creating a website that will hold digital files for all my artwork, with a link to my Etsy shop for purchase of original and print art, as well as digital female empowerment art. I learned these with creative implementation tool skills in graduate school.

“I started running around the house and grabbing the things I wanted the most.”

I know that you lost your house in the Camp Fire. Can you tell me about that day?

I was at my friend’s my house the night before. We were watching a TV show written by Chico State alum Matt Olmstead who wrote the *Chicago Med*, *Chicago Fire*, and *Chicago P.D.* series. After the show was over, I went home and relaxed. I got into bed at around 11 p.m. I woke up for work at 6:30 a.m. I got a phone call. My friend asked if I had looked outside. So I did and thought it was raining. He told me it wasn’t rain but coming from a fire. He called again 15 minutes later and told me the Feather River Hospital was gone. I ran around uncertain of what to do, since I had just gotten out of the shower. I dressed and put my makeup on. I called my neighbor and told her to get ready. The fire had already taken the hospital and it was headed this way.

I started running around the house and grabbing the things I wanted the most. A significant portion of family photographs and estate documents were in the house. I grabbed my mother’s wedding dress and her jewelry. I thought about watering the roof. I got up on the ladder and quickly realized this was a terrible idea. My dog was looking at me like I had lost my mind. She knew something was up and followed me all over the house. She wanted to make sure she was not left behind. I thought about putting all my art portfolio and sketch books in the car but I didn’t. Later, when I realized we lost everything, this was very hard on my heart. It hurts my heart deeply and has taken me months to reconcile within myself. But on the morning of the fire, I put together a suitcase with random stuff. I took pictures of everything. I got my neighbor out, and another lady near my friend’s house. She wouldn’t leave and kept telling me she’d be fine, saying she’d been through this before and nothing happened. Halfway down the hill, my neighborhood was gone. It took three days before we found out that my friend’s neighbor got out alive.

The house had been my parent’s house. Once they passed, I kept living there with the intent to buy it. I had just moved everything into it from my grandmother’s estate. When I lost the house, we lost three generations of family heirlooms. I lost

30 years of sketch books. Thankfully, most of my recent art was still on the wall at Beatniks. But I lost all our baby pictures. I lost all my artwork from over the years. I still remember the very first piece of art I drew. It was on a piece of typing paper— a dog from a book about dogs. Gone. Just a memory now. I had spent hours and days drawing that piece, working meticulously to get it right. Yes, the Camp Fire has changed everything. It has changed my entire trajectory of planning. My long-term plans are the next two weeks and today.

What has been the biggest challenge?

I have PTSD from events that happened before the fire. I have struggled with this forever, and now it’s gotten worse. I can’t sleep. For me, it’s coming to terms with my emotions. The grief is so deep and visceral. I love my house. My home. My



Abbiati’s family home (above) before and (below) after the fire.



neighbors. I love their homes. I love my neighborhood. I love my entire town and community. Words cannot describe this experience. Visceral is the best description. It’s something beyond emotions. I feel the loss in the deepest part of my organs, muscles, nervous system, and the core of my skeleton. The grief is so deep that my brain cannot comprehend the depth of the experience. There are days when the sadness is so deep, and no matter how many times I cry, it does not go away. I keep myself super busy, so that I can dodge feeling the magnitude of this experience and what it means to me. I don’t think it will be possible to rebuild Paradise. People

“The grief is so deep that my brain cannot comprehend...”

are focused on a better, more modern luxury community, but it won't be Paradise. Here's the reality: The Paradise we knew is gone.

"The quaint little town, the sleepy environment ... that place does not exist anymore."

will never be the same. There's a lot of people who won't be coming back. It's a hard reality. My Paradise was driving up the Skyway and visiting my neighbors. Playing with our dogs. Now there's benzene in the water from the melted pipes. Attempts to keep the asbestos at bay until the debris is removed has created a black mold problem that might cause catastrophic health issues. My biggest concern over the next five to ten years is the health issues from the Camp Fire aftermath that will arise in people living in Paradise and the surrounding areas.

But as I process all of this, I am still trying to find ways to move forward. It's positive for me to be back at work and happy. Giving joy to other people and the gifts of supplies keeps me going.

Where are you living now?

I now live in a 31-foot travel trailer in a business parking lot.



Abbiati's current home.

The quaint little town, the sleepy environment where you could say hello to your neighbors wherever and whenever you bumped into them—that place does not exist anymore. It



Abbiati's sunflower.

The trailer has two slide-outs, a shower that has less than 10 minutes of hot water, and no tub. I suffer from migraines and being able to stand under a hot shower or take long baths for an extended period of time helped deter or prevent my full-blown migraines from occurring. My yard is now a gravel parking lot. I don't know how long I'll be here. My neighbor tried to buy a house that was \$325,000. In one day, they were outbid by \$190,000. I was living in a two-bedroom, two-bath house on an acre. My dog had a huge fenced-in yard where she was the queen of her castle. She's so unhappy now. At my

house, she loved sitting out in the sun and sunbathing. But she, like all of us, is learning and adjusting.

Great art comes from tragedy and loss. Is this true in your case?

Well, I lost my space to create. I only recently secured a space, so I will let you know if I am able to get back in the game on this. I will say this: Art is emotional for me, so if I'm not in the right mental space, it's hard to get there and start creating.

You are a celebrated local artist. In fact, not long before the Camp Fire, you had an eight-week showing at Beatniks. Has the Camp Fire inspired your art?

I have stuff I'm working on that's in the draft stages. I'm living in a travel trailer in a busy business parking lot. I've set up a studio inside the trailer. My current art work is being photographed for my website. I am really focused on producing art with a positive nature rather than the calamity we all experienced. I realize I have a choice. I can either crash into the ashes or be a phoenix and rise above them.

"I realize I have a choice. I can either crash into the ashes or be a phoenix and rise above them."

I went on Facebook—families and friends helped me recoup so many art supplies that burned in the fire: scrapbooking paper, ribbons, paint, glitter (I love glitter), canvases, material, paper, pens, and an array of colored pencils. I put out a request on Facebook for people to go on a scavenger hunt, asking participants to clean out their creative spaces. I put this on the Adopt a Paradise family group on Facebook. (This is a group of

people that help Camp Fire survivors move forward by providing them with supplies or financial or emotional support.) I received 40 boxes worth of supplies. I kept what I needed and passed the rest around. I couldn't believe how

dream job. You might get lucky and find a job in your field, but if you don't, having a job in any field shows your marketability. Once you have that job, take the time to listen to your heart and figure out where you need to be. It's a new path.



Above: Abbiati's "Fairy Princess"
Right: "Artist Girl"



For staff, you know we're all in this together. The more we can support each other, the easier the healing will come. Unless you have been part of that community that lost everything in the fire, people won't understand...they can empathize but not sympathize.

What's next for you?

I'm working on completing the Certificate in Entrepreneurship. Trying to handle the stuff related to the fire. Working on new art. Getting my website and Etsy store up and running. I am also focused on continuing to expand my skills in my job at Chico State as a research technician II. 

"The more we can support each other, the easier the healing will come."

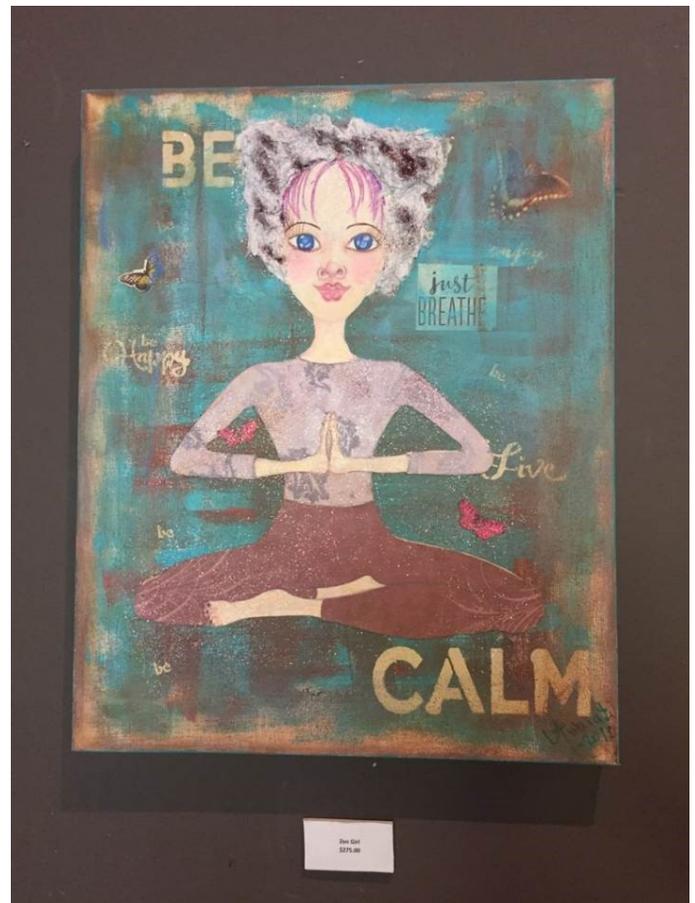
many other people lost their life's work and studio space. I have been working with my friends to help others. Just last semester, we helped a Butte College student and artist who lost her home and all her art supplies. We were able to supply her with brushes, canvases, and acrylic paints—enough to see her through the semester. Another mom from Inspire school said her son lost his sketchbook and pencils. I was able to put a packet together for her son.

"We survived. We are not victims. But we do have a lot to process in our survival."

I have also spent the last several months creating a workshop for women. The goal is help them plan for the future, set goals, and create a collage (a dream board, my version of a vision board). This collage is something they can look at regularly to help them move forward and remind them there is a future. We are all phoenixes. We survived. We are not victims. But we do have a lot to process in our survival. For many of us, it will take years to move forward. Others may never fully recover. Unless you lived in one of these towns or another town and lost everything to a fire, you just can't possibly know or understand what we are going through. Never in the existence of this country has an entire town been lost.

What advice do you have for current or future graduate students whom have been impacted by the fire? Or how to keep going and persevering with any obstacles they encounter.

For graduate students, when you are done with school, get a job, any job, start paying your bills, then start looking for your



Abbiati's "Zen Girl"

JONATHON PHILLIPS: THE RESILIENT PHILOSOPHER

“Outside the window I was greeted with a burning orange hellscape.”



Jonathon Phillips, graduate student in interdisciplinary studies. Background: 2nd and Walnut as Paradise burns.

What is your discipline?

Interdisciplinary studies. I am combining philosophy and English.

Can you tell me what you did the night before the fire?

I was up all night outlining and working on my thesis. That's what graduate students do. I didn't go to bed until around 4 a.m.

Can you describe to me the morning of the fire?

I was awakened that morning to loud popping sounds in the distance. My first impression was that the sounds were gunshots and somebody, likely out on Neal Road, where I lived, was firing a gun. The worry that a shooter was in the vicinity brought me out of my slumber and the next thing I realized is that there was no sunlight coming into the room. Was it still dark outside? Had I only been asleep for 20 minutes? I lay there thinking about those exploding sounds. The interval between the sounds was getting smaller and smaller. Loud pops that were a few minutes apart, then seconds, then they became like a string of firecrackers going off in rapid succession. Then the power in the house went off. I got out of bed and parted the curtains. Outside the window I was greeted with a burning orange hellscape. I could see charred chunks of tree bark on the grounds. My elderly mother lived in my basement. She came upstairs with a flashlight. We walked into the living room. I could see a beam of light from all the smoke in the dark house. I started thinking: Where's the fire? Smoke started pouring in. My first concern was to get my 3-year-old out.

What did you grab first?

My family of course. Then my backpack. I had just written a 35-page final paper for my thesis class. My professor had marked it up with suggestions. I made the joke to my wife: 'I should probably grab this in case the house burns down.' Other than toys for my son, that was it. We had no warning. When my wife woke up, we had calls from my brother. No texts. No one banged on the door. The scary part is Google Maps took a picture of Paradise at exactly the moment we were leaving. We had no idea that we were 700 yards away from the fire that had jumped the Skyway and was burning quickly toward us. It was sheer luck that got us out in time. There were no alarms. The entire system failed.

You didn't think you were in danger?

No. I had been evacuated in 2017 from the Honey Fire. Based on that experience, I figured we'd probably get evacuated. No big deal. I thought by leaving we were just getting ahead of it all. I heard the fire was six miles away. There's no way it would burn this far. Our plan was to go into Chico, get a hotel, then go and have a nice lunch. When we got to Neal Road, the orange that I had previously seen from my window was now pitch

black—black as midnight. Tons of traffic was barreling down Neal Road. Cars driving in opposite lanes. I couldn't figure out what in the world was wrong with these people. I had no idea what was going on. I lived just a few hundred feet from the place where Skyway and Neal Road come together. The flames, as I said before, had already jumped the Skyway. These people had seen the fire. We get halfway down Neal, just outside Paradise, and ran into massive traffic jams. Some guy was out directing traffic in front of his house. We were only a mile from my house. I could see a fire off to my right. Out my left window, the horizon was glowing, but on the right side I could see the flames just a short distance from the road. My wife and I had a frantic debate about where the fire was since it was supposed to be the glow to our left and not anywhere on the right-hand side of us. We were unaware that the fire had burned into a sort of crescent moon shape around and within the town of Paradise and we were right in the crescent, surrounded by the flames on all sides of us except for the front (roughly southward) side. Giant waves of fire were coming at us. You make peace with death. I was going to burn to death. I was fine with that. What I wasn't fine with was holding my son and telling him I love him as the flames took him.

"Giant waves of fire were coming at us. You make peace with death."

The fire was 30 or 40 yards off. Smoke filled the car. I could see the fire moving fast. My little boy was freaking out with the rest of us. I first saw flames and panicked. I swallowed it down. Didn't want to scare my son. I was keeping myself from hysteria. Kept saying, "Don't worry. We're moving." But I had no confidence we would make it. Mortal terror consumed me.

another day. It's like the bright beacon of God that Beowulf mentions when he sees the sun in the morning. I was safe. I would live at least one more day.

What was your life like the next day?

I spent that night looking at maps of the fire on my phone. I thought our house was saved. The areas that burned were marked in red, and those that didn't were marked in white. The red on the maps, though, was closing in more and more until it covered my property. I didn't know our house was gone for the



"It's like the bright beacon of God that Beowulf mentions when he sees the sun in the morning. I was safe. I would live at least one more day."

Photo Phillips took from bottom of the hill.



Phillips' son, safe and sound, second night after the fire.

What happened when you reached bottom of the hill?

It took two hours to get to Chico. I felt freedom and release. Looking back, I'm reminded of the philosopher Heidegger who talks about a concept he calls "ready to hand". You're not thinking about the frets when you play the guitar. You just play. Not really thinking about the act. When you walk, you don't think about putting one foot in front of the other. Only when you trip do you become present at hand. Same thing with the fire. Normally when I'm driving down the Skyway I don't think about the act of driving. But when you come out of a fire, your entire awareness is so enhanced. I felt free that I escaped death. I was breathing for

first 24 hours. I had the good fortune of living next door to a game warden who, because of his law enforcement status, could enter the wildfire zone the next day. He sent us pictures of our home in ruins. So many other people had to wait weeks to even get confirmation that their property had been destroyed. We stayed with my cousin. My entire family slept in a back room for a month. It was a madhouse. We couldn't find a place to live in or around Chico.

Was there anything significant that you lost?

Anything? I lost everything. No more pictures of me as a child. My mom owned the property. It was the only home my son knew. A nice house on an acre. My son still talks about the things



Phillips' house less than 24 hours after fleeing.

he lost, down to things like crayons. This is heart-wrenching as a parent. As the months went by, he realized more about what had really happened that day. I lost my laptop with all my graduate school work. I lost everything. I lost all my musical equipment (I play bass, sometimes professionally). I lost all my books, and a philosopher without books is a sad sight.

"I lost my laptop with all my graduate school work...all my musical equipment... all my books, and a philosopher without books is a sad sight."

Where did you go?

After a month of looking in Chico, we moved to Sacramento. There just wasn't anything around here. We couldn't even find housing in Willows or Red Bluff. It was either Redding or Sacramento.

How did you continue with graduate school?

That's the tricky part. I had a semester left and planned to graduate in the spring. Well, the fire destroyed that, too.

I still clung to that hope. I sent my graduate advisor an email that said, "I am undaunted and will continue on schedule." Hope is often deceitful, though, since putting my life back together was a more time-consuming task than I had anticipated. Most of my time, all the way into the early spring, I was focused on rebuilding and forging an existence and this naturally made

graduating on time and finishing my thesis impossible. I engaged in a distance learning semester. I ended up not graduating. The crazy thing is you don't know what you own until you don't own it anymore. You think you do, but you

"The crazy thing is you don't know what you own until you don't own it anymore. You think you do, but you don't know all that stuff or how important it is."

don't know all that stuff or how important it is. All the stuff packed away. All I had the day after the fire were the clothes on my back.

Any advice to our graduate students who might also have a similar challenge?

Maybe advice in general. If it's a disaster, such as a fire, don't go to local stores like Target and buy everything up and give it all to the Salvation Army. I say this because the people who are the victims



All that is left of Phillips' home.

go to these places to buy socks and razors. I went shopping for the essentials and there was nothing left. I couldn't even buy underwear. I wore the same clothes for a week. I couldn't shave. I had to go to Redding to buy clothes. Don't

buy all the bread to help people. You might end up starving the people who most need the bread. How is that for irony? Charity becoming a

detriment. So, the next time a disaster happens—one like the Camp Fire where everyone is sleeping out in the Walmart parking lot, don't buy the Walmart out. You don't think about what it is to own a second shirt, socks. All I owned was my backpack, hoodie, socks, shirt, shoes, and underwear. You lose the most ridiculous things you don't think about. I saw a guy in a Red Hot Chili Peppers shirt and thought: How cool, I own that shirt. And I was like: Not anymore. We had to rebuild and get set up. I was working off my phone for a month. I lost my ID.

Did you gain anything from this experience?

Yes, I gained a general sense of resilience as an individual and human being. When you've actually suffered, down but not out, the Butte Strong signs start to make sense. Then, after the loss comes a deeper realization. You are not what you lost. We lost everything except the things that matter most. I am not downplaying material wealth. When it comes down to it and everything in your life implodes, you realize you have a lot more in you and in your community than you ever know you have. Discomfort reinforces how strong you really are. You learn that you have a lot more strength than you ever knew. Sadly, this only comes from disasters. We don't realize our own inner strength. When the illusion burns away, we realize who we really are.

Tell me about the book you are writing?

It's in its infancy right now, but it's a history of analytic philosophy from a historical materialist—or Marxist—point of view. Liberal society pushes this belief that all ideas enter a so-called marketplace of ideas on equal footing, and that the best ideas are the ones that

rise to the top while the worst fall by the wayside. In reality, the ideas that rise to the top are either those that come from the ruling echelons of society or those which do the best job of maintaining the status quo. Analytic

philosophy, the school that dominates most of the English-speaking world, is propped up by this same sort of deceitful narrative; it rose to the top because it was simply the best idea.

This is demonstrable

nonsense. The reality is that early analytic philosophers, particularly G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, used their political clout to run the British idealists, a rival school of philosophy at the time, out of Cambridge as well as to propagate their views and methodologies throughout Britain in the early 20th century. There was still a British empire at this point and being

“When it comes down to it and everything in your life implodes, you realize you have a lot more in you and in your community than you ever know you have.”

dominant in an imperial capital gave analytic philosophy a good jump-start on dominating the world. They say the sun never set on the British empire and the same goes for the ideas that it propagated through the iron fist of imperialism. There was no marketplace of ideas at work; there was only power and conformity to the mandates of power.

What's next for you?

I'm finishing my thesis and graduating this semester. I'm hopefully going to get into the faculty pools here at Chico State and Butte College, while also looking into PhD programs abroad. Most of the philosophy programs in the United States are analytic, and I work in a tradition that is not well-received in those quarters. Places like Belgium,

France, Italy, and the Netherlands tend to have more suitable programs for me, so nearly all of my applications are headed in that direction. After that, I'm going to teach philosophy and sleep for several years. 

▲ More information about the MA/MS in Interdisciplinary Studies can be found on the web <https://catalog.csuchico.edu/viewer/SPMJ/ISMANONEQL.html>.

Or contact the program Graduate Coordinator, Carson Medley, in the Office of Graduate Studies at 530.898.6880.

For links and information about all of our Graduate Programs (listed below) go to <https://www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies/about-us/programs-coordinators.shtm>.

- Agricultural Education**
- Anthropology**
- Art**
- Biological Sciences**
- Business Administration**
- Communication Sciences & Disorders**
- Communication Studies**
- Computer Science**
- Education**
- Electrical and Computer Engineering**
- English**
- Environmental Science**
- Geosciences**
- History**
- Interdisciplinary Studies**
- Kinesiology**
- Mathematics Education**
- Nursing**
- Nutritional Science**
- Political Science**
- Public Administration**
- Psychology**
- Social Science**
- Social Work**
- Teaching International Languages**

COLLEEN MILLIGAN:

FROM THE SANDBOX TO 60 MINUTES

Tell me about your calling to become a forensic anthropologist

My undergraduate majors were criminology and law studies and anthropology at Marquette University. I was interested in criminal behavior and skeletal biology. In my junior year, I was hired as a research assistant on a large historic skeletal project that would eventually be the basis of my dissertation. This project gave me a lot of experience with fragmentary skeletal remains. When I was looking at pursuing graduate studies after college, forensic anthropology seemed like the best way to combine criminology studies with skeletal studies. Forensic anthropology represents an area of study where you help in the identification and recovery of human remains in modern medicolegal investigations.

Were there any signs of your interest in becoming an anthropologist when you were a little girl?

I've liked archaeology since I was little. I used to bury toys in my sandbox so I could find them and dig them up. I would also collect archaeology books on events like the sinking of the Titanic and Britannic and the eruption of Pompeii.

Can you tell me about the Chico State Human Identification Lab? What is a day in the life of a forensic anthropologist like?

The Chico State Human ID Lab was established under Dr. Turhon Murad in 1972. Dr. P. Willey joined the faculty at Chico State in 1989. Dr. Eric Bartelink was added in 2006, myself in 2010, and Dr. Ashley Kendell joined the faculty in 2017. Our faculty include board-certifications in forensic anthropology and death investigations. We are one of the few labs in the country to have four practicing forensic anthropologists. Our professional work at Chico State includes both classroom teaching and forensic casework with law enforcement. A typical day on campus might include teaching a class, lab work on an assigned case, meetings with students, and meetings with officers or coroners. Most days it ends up being an even split. However, on days where we are asked to deploy a team to the field to assist in a recovery, we usually leave our lab

"I used to bury toys in my sandbox so I could find them and dig them up. I would also collect archaeology books on events like the sinking of the Titanic and Britannic and the eruption of Pompeii."



Colleen Milligan, professor and graduate coordinator, Department of Anthropology

early in the morning and return late at night. Our recovery teams include lab faculty, graduate students in our program, and undergraduate interns.

When you first got word of the Camp Fire that morning, had you already started thinking about the possible need for human remains identification? What went through your mind?

On the morning of the Camp Fire, I was at our house near Butte College. I watched the fire progress from Pulga to the eastern edge of Paradise before having to evacuate myself. By the time I made it to Chico, I knew our team would be needed because of the fire's speed. The day the fire started, Thursday, November 8, it was about figuring out the logistics of being evacuated. Friday, November 9, it was about figuring out logistics for deploying into the field with Butte County.



Milligan, center, working with students.

You were already an academic rock star before the Camp Fire: seven peer-reviewed publications in three-years; co-principal investigator for two federal grants totaling more than \$900,000; Outstanding Research Mentor Award; and many more accolades. However, now you have become an “accidental” academic celebrity—*PBS* and *60 Minutes*. How has your life changed since that fire? Did you ever imagine anything like this happening?

Honestly, life after the Camp Fire has changed quite a bit but not because of notoriety. Thankfully most of the media attention has been about our team in general rather than any individual. We're much happier in the background. It's busier in a different way than normal because we're involved in reconstructing training for law enforcement teams on mass fatality scenes. We've traveled across the state in the time since the fire giving presentations and workshops. Unlike a lot of other responders, our profession usually has a role to play in most mass fatality events around the world. It isn't a stretch to imagine being needed for an event like this, but it was unexpected to have to respond in our home community.

“It isn't a stretch to imagine being needed for an event like this, but it was unexpected to have to respond in our home community.”

Were you ready to hit the ground running? And when did you literally hit the ground running?

Since 2010, we have assisted in victim recovery and identification efforts for seven mass fatality events in California. This includes events like the San Bruno pipeline explosion, the Orland I-5 bus crash, and major northern California wildfires. So, yes, our team is always prepared to respond on short notice. Our first day in the field for the Camp Fire was Saturday, November 10, two days after the fire started.



Milligan, center, preparing her team.

Jason Halley (University Photographer)

On PBS you said: “What you are really trying to be mindful of is that as you move through these searches, you’re also moving through some of the most intimate parts of anybody’s life.” Can you tell me about one moment or discovery when it almost became impossible for you to not blur the rationality of your profession with the emotions of being human?

For most professionals in our field, these moments are rare. If they were frequent, this wouldn't be a profession that you should continue. You can be professional and still recognize the humanity of what you're doing. One instance that was hard to keep emotions out of the field was the I-5 bus crash outside of Orland. This was a bus full of high school students from Los Angeles hit head-on by a semitruck that passed over the highway median. Ten victims died in the crash and subsequent fire. We assisted in the identification process, which is normal, but we were also asked to process the luggage compartment of the bus for anything that survived the fire. This part included pulling apart burned luggage—not a normal procedure for our team. Documenting the luggage included finding luggage belonging to the victims. It was exceptionally hard to not be emotional while sorting out personal belongings.

“...some of the biggest lessons from the Camp Fire have to do with the willingness of neighbors to help neighbors...”

What lessons can we learn from the Camp Fire?

I think some of the biggest lessons from the Camp Fire have to do with the willingness of neighbors to help neighbors in Concow, Magalia, and Paradise. For all the people lost in the fire, there are many more who made it to safety because of family, friends, neighbors, and random strangers.

Was the Camp Fire the first mass fatality for your students? I can't imagine any kind of simulated scene could prepare students for putting their theory into practice like this. How did you help them stay focused and emotionally balanced?

The Camp Fire was the first mass fatality event for some but not all of our students. We are fortunate to have an experienced team in both our students and our alumni who responded. Whether it's the first time or not, these events are always a shock. The widespread destruction around you is not something anyone gets used to seeing. We brief our teams on what to expect and make sure we give definitive tasks while in the field. Most of the time having a focused job means you're stable while working. Our students collectively have solid, natural personalities for this kind of work. However, debriefing after the event is a priority because that's the harder part.

Prior to the Camp Fire, the Department of Anthropology was already recognized as one of the best in the United States. Has the Camp Fire changed the reputation of the program?

I'm not sure it changed our reputation overall, but it certainly solidified our expertise with mass fire scenes. We will be giving a symposium on fire scene responses in February at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences annual conference. This will be the first formal introduction to our field of this type of work.



Milligan, featured on PBS, in the classroom.

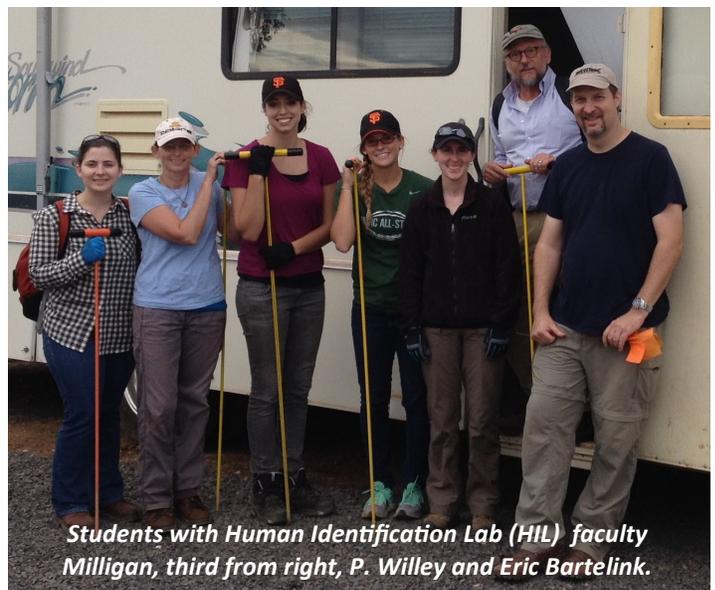
You were recently invited to speak at Chancellor’s Office about the importance of graduate education—the first one to ever do this. Can you tell us about that experience?

Speaking at the Board of Trustees meeting was a good experience overall, but also a nerve-wracking one. Being the first to talk about graduate education also carried the weight of wanting to leave an impact on the board so that they continued to ask questions about graduate education in the future. The goal was

to gain more time for graduate education than was assigned. The best part about speaking to the Board of Trustees was getting to partner with one of our

“For all the work that our lab does, we would not function without a graduate program.”

graduate students, Mallory Peters, for the presentation. For all the work that our lab does, we would not function without a graduate program. We mentor students as they become professionals in the field while they serve as team members helping to run a professional lab. We gain as much from our students as they hopefully gain from us. Graduate programs in that sense make every university stronger. 



Students with Human Identification Lab (HIL) faculty Milligan, third from right, P. Willey and Eric Bartelink.

GRADUATE STUDIES AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Biological Sciences

Dylan K. Stompe, Biology, was selected by California State University, Chico as an Outstanding Thesis Winner for 2018–2019: *Habitat-Specific Diet Analysis of Sacramento Pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus Grandis*) and Striped Bass (*Morone Saxatilis*) in the Sacramento River*. Dylan has begun a PhD program at University of California, Davis.

Jamison Sydnor won third place in the graduate division of the 2018 International Symbiosis Society Photo Contest for his fluorescence micrograph of the temperate anemone *Anthopleura elegantissima*. Jamie also presented a talk in May 2019 at the Yosemite Symbiosis Workshop in Wawona, California, entitled, “The bacterial community associated with the model sea anemone *Exaiptasia pallida*: Response to rising ocean temperatures.” Co-authors include K Dani, G Wolfe, and C Tran.

Drew Gilberti won honorable mention for his poster presentation at the California Botanical Society meeting in San Luis Obispo, California, in April 2019. His poster was entitled, “Natural history of *Disholcaspis eldoradensis*, a galling wasp of Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*): distribution, nectar, and interactions with ants.”

Karissa Cunningham, **Greyson Doolittle**, and **Drew Nielsen** each presented their thesis work at the joint meeting of the American Fisheries Society and the Wildlife Society in Reno, Nevada, in September 2019.

Constantin Raether presented a poster at the California Botanical Society meeting in San Luis Obispo, California, in April 2019. His poster was entitled, “Defense against herbivory by galling Cynipidae wasps in valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*): tests of two hypotheses in a large common garden experiment.”

Sheng-Hao (Mayson) Lin began a PhD program at Florida International University.

Courtney Silver began a PhD program at Ohio University.

Communication Studies

The Communication Sciences and Disorders (CMSD) program received full re-accreditation in the spring for eight years. CMSD also received a federally funded personnel training grant with Adaptive Physical Education (APE) entitled Training in Interdisciplinary Education and Research. Funding is for eight graduate students total. They currently have five, and APE has three.

English

Mary Gibaldi received a Young Scholars and Activists Fellowship at the 2019 meeting of the Working-Class Studies Association. She was also awarded a travel grant from the organization. She graduated with her master’s degree in spring 2019 and was presenting work she completed during the program.

History

Jeanette Adame, History, was selected by California State University, Chico as an Outstanding Thesis Winner for 2018–2019 *Citing Divine and Human Laws: Women of African Descent and the New Orleans Cabildo, 1769-1800*.

Kinesiology

Christoph Wyss (2016) is working as an assistant strength & conditioning coach for the Anaheim Ducks in the NHL: <https://www.nhl.com/ducks/team/christoph-wyss-bio>.

Nutrition

Mendez R, **Goto K**, **Song C**, **Giampaoli J**, **Karnik G**, **Wylie A**. Cultural Influence on Mindful Eating: Traditions and

Values as Experienced by Mexican-American and Non-Hispanic White Parents of Elementary-School Children. *Global Health Promotion* (in press).

Hart S, **Pierson S**, **Goto K**, **Giampaoli J**. (2018) Development and Validation of a Mindful Eating Questionnaire for Children. *Appetite* 2018;129:178-185.

Wylie A, **Pierson S**, **Goto K**, **Giampaoli J**. (2018) . Evaluation of a mindful eating intervention curriculum among elementary school children and their parents. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior (JNEB)*, 50 (2). 206-208. Received the JNEB’s 2019 Best Great Educational Material Award. 

Future Editions

If you have any ideas for future stories you would like us to consider, or any notable events in your life, please contact either Carson Medley (cmedley@csuchico.edu, 530-898-5392) or Dean Sharon Barrios (sbarrios@csuchico, 530-898-4473) directly. We would love to hear from alumni. Thank you for all that you do.