



# Highlights & Impact

2021–2025



# About the Council

The President's Advisory Council provides a vital community voice in shaping the strategic direction of College of the Redwoods, helping the institution remain responsive and adaptable to evolving educational and workforce needs. Council members are respected leaders from industry, business, and the broader community who contribute professional expertise and informed perspectives drawn from their diverse backgrounds. United by a shared commitment to strengthening higher education, members support the advancement of workforce skills, civic engagement, and community well-being.

Comprised of accomplished individuals from both the public and private sectors, the President's Advisory Council reflects the richness and diversity of the communities College of the Redwoods serves. This breadth of experience enables the Council to offer thoughtful guidance on the college's most significant opportunities and challenges.



# Statement from the President



The President's Advisory Council has been an invaluable partner in advancing the mission and long-term vision of College of the Redwoods. Over the past four years, I have deeply appreciated the Council's willingness to engage openly, think strategically, and bring a wide range of voices to our planning and decision-making processes.

The Council's strength lies in its diverse membership and commitment — industry partners working with faculty and administrators to bring practical insight and honest feedback to our conversations. Their guidance has helped fuel enrollment growth and keep us on track with our strategic goals. They have shaped our academic offerings to better reflect community needs — supporting the expansion of accounting, welding, and healthcare programs — and strengthened hands-on learning experiences that prepare

students for real-world jobs. The Council has also supported students directly through mentoring, life skills development, and participation in the Career Speakers Series. During tumultuous times, their partnership has been instrumental in helping us maintain stable institutional funding. This collaboration continues to make our decision-making more informed, balanced, and responsive to the region we serve.

I am especially grateful for the Council's contributions to major initiatives, including enrollment strategies, workforce development partnerships, the recent bond measure, efforts to expand opportunity in Del Norte County, and programs that strengthen student mentorship and career connections. Their engagement has helped us think more creatively, act more intentionally, and stay focused on the work that matters most.

I want to thank the Co-Chairs, Laura Olson and Dan Phillips, and all Council members for their dedication and support. Our partnership embodies what makes College of the Redwoods strong: shared purpose, collective expertise, and a belief in the power of education to transform lives. I look forward to continuing this important work together as we build a vibrant, student-centered future for CR.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Keith P. Flamer".

Dr. Keith Flamer  
President, College of the Redwoods



# Message from the Co-Chairs of the President's Advisory Council

We are pleased to share this summary of the purpose and work of the President's Advisory Council over the past four years. Throughout this time, our focus has been supporting the college's mission and ensuring our recommendations reflect the needs of students, employees, employers, and the broader community.

The Council brings together industry leaders and CR faculty, staff, and administrators to offer diverse perspectives on key initiatives and priorities. Our goal is to provide the President with thoughtful guidance that strengthens institutional effectiveness, advances student success, and upholds the college's mission and values.

In the past four years the Council has deepened its understanding of the College, built stronger connections with faculty and staff, and contributed to major initiatives. These include enrollment strategies, the successful bond measure I to improve facilities in Eureka and Del Norte, expanded representation for the Del Norte campus, and the creation of a center, Start Up Humboldt, focused on innovation and entrepreneurship. We've also supported students through career panels, men-

torship, and internship activities. The collaborative spirit within the Council continues to make our discussions more informed and impactful.

We are grateful for the dedication and expertise of all Council members. Their commitment has helped ensure the Council remains a meaningful forum for engagement and alignment. We also extend our appreciation to President Flamer for leadership that consistently inspires progress at College of the Redwoods.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the college's direction and the work still ahead. The Council will continue serving as a bridge between institutional vision and community and workforce needs, supporting a strong, student-centered College of the Redwoods now and into the future.

With appreciation,

*Laura Olson*

*Dan Phillips*

Co-Chairs, President's Advisory Council  
College of the Redwoods



## COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS

### Dan Phillips

Retired Chief Technology Officer, Hulu,  
and Co-Founder, Lost Coast Ventures

### Laura Olson

Executive Director, Patricia D. and  
William B. Smullin Foundation

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Chris Albright

General Manager,  
O & M Industries

### Rex Bohn

Humboldt County  
Supervisor, First District

### Onaleece Colegrove

Executive Director,  
Hoopa Tribal Education  
Association

### Joe Davis

Tribal Chair, Hoopa Valley Tribe

### Pam Dressler

President and Managing  
Director, Cypress Grove

### Ken Hamik

Former Executive, Pacific Gas  
& Electric; Principal, Humboldt  
Green and The Ganjery

### Laura Hurwitz

Deputy Director,  
Hoopa Tribal Education  
Association

### Peter Jackson

Vice President and General  
Manager, California Operations,  
Green Diamond  
Resource Company

### Mandy Marquez

Senior Commercial  
Lending Officer, Coast  
Central Credit Union

### Chris Mikkelsen

Executive Director, Humboldt  
Bay Harbor, Recreation and  
Conservation District

### Heidi Moore-Guynup

Director of Tribal and  
Government Affairs,  
Blue Lake Rancheria

### Sean O'Day

Chief Banking Officer,  
American Ag Credit

### Jim Ritter

Retired Director of Employer  
Partnerships, North Far North  
Regional Consortium

### William Row

Strong Workforce Program  
K-12 Pathway Coordinator,  
Humboldt County  
Office of Education

### Susan Seaman

Program Director,  
North Edge

### Jeremy Sorci

Vice President, Principal, Advisor,  
Premier Financial Group

### Tory Starr

Chief Executive Officer,  
Open Door Community  
Health Centers

### Terry Supahan

Executive Director,  
True North Organizing Network

### Cindy Vosberg

Executive Director, Crescent  
City – Del Norte County  
Chamber of Commerce

## COUNCIL SUPPORT

### Chris Gaines

Professor of Business, Faculty  
Representative to the Council

### Kerry Mayer

Representative to the President  
and Professor Emeritus

### Denise Vanden Bos

Council Support

# PAC Activities and Achievements, 2021–2025

The President’s Advisory Council plays a vital role in strengthening connections between College of the Redwoods and the communities we serve. Council members generously share their time, expertise, and insight to enrich the student experience and support the work of faculty and staff. The following highlights reflect the meaningful impact of their engagement over the past four years.

## 1. Strengthening Representation and Collaboration in Del Norte County

Recognizing the need for stronger representation from Del Norte County, Co-Chair Laura Olson convened local community leaders and CR Del Norte staff to discuss workforce needs, educational barriers, and opportunities for partnership. These early conversations laid the foundation for what began as the Del Norte Community Advisory Council and has evolved into the Del Norte Strategic Action Panel.

Today, this group includes roughly 20 committed community leaders working closely with the Del Norte campus to enhance dual-enrollment pathways, broaden course offerings, and support facility improvements that benefit local learners.





## 2. Expanding Career Exploration Opportunities

Beginning in 2023, the Council broadened its involvement by sponsoring Career Exploration Panels and visiting classes on both the Eureka and Del Norte campuses. Council members—alongside industry partners and local chamber

representatives—have shared insights on career readiness, employer expectations, and pathways in fields such as e-commerce, advanced business, and nursing, including the LVN program. These conversations help students envision and prepare for their futures in our region's workforce.

### 3. Supporting Students Through CR's Mentorship Program

The Council proudly sponsors CR's Mentorship Program, offering students individualized guidance as they clarify goals, explore career interests, and build confidence.

Council Co-Chair Laura Olson was deeply engaged during the program's launch year:

"I was really impressed with CR's Mentorship Program and was able to sit in on several sessions with the students to lend my support. I also got connected with a student who was interested in starting a nonprofit and learning about grant writ-

ing. I was able to share some insights, and I heard he graduated this year!" - Laura Olson, Executive Director, Patricia D. and William B. Smullin Foundation

This type of personal connection is at the heart of the Council's service.

### 4. Providing Workplace Tours and Real-World Exposure

Council members also open their workplaces to CR students, offering valuable exposure to professional environments. Council member Chris Mikkelsen described the impact of hosting a tour:

"What an opportunity for our field team to





*“This is precisely the outcome we would hope for.”*

– Chris Mikkelsen, Executive Director,  
Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation  
and Conservation District

host CR students on a workplace tour. Not only did staff and students connect on a professional level, but their career interests sparked a mentoring relationship, and, for the District, we have a fresh application for an upcoming position. This is precisely the outcome we would hope for.” – Chris Mikkelsen, Executive Director, Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District.

These experiences help students build connections and discover real opportunities close to home.

## **5. Offering Industry Insight to College Leadership**

The Council provides the President and his leadership team with timely industry perspectives related to workforce needs and emerging trends. Pete Jackson, Vice President and General Manager of Green Diamond California Operation, highlighted the value of this ongoing partnership:

“College of the Redwoods is a valuable partner in preparing the workforce of the future with practical skills imparted by educators who often



possess real-world experience. This experience is invaluable to a local employer like Green Diamond who seeks skilled, knowledgeable, and motivated applicants for jobs anywhere from wildlife and forestry to equipment operators and diesel mechanics. We currently employ several individuals within our Forestry and Sales departments that started in seasonal jobs while attending CR.” – Pete Jackson, Vice President, Green Diamond

This feedback helps CR remain aligned with the region’s economic and workforce landscape.

*“College of the Redwoods is a valuable partner in preparing the workforce of the future.”*

– Pete Jackson Vice President, Green Diamond

## 6. Encouraging Internships and Workforce Training Partnerships

The Council also supports the Career Center and Adult and Community Education by encouraging local businesses to host interns and explore customized workforce training opportunities. Council member Jeremy Sorci shared the goals behind Premier Financial’s internship program:

“We started our internship program with a few goals in mind. First, we wanted to give local students, with intentions to stay local, the skills and knowledge necessary to compete with anyone else applying for jobs from outside our community. Second, if an intern decided not to stay local, that was okay, too. These students are still part of the home team. Our team! And we wanted to accomplish this by doing something fairly unique—a two-year internship. As impressive as a college degree is, we noticed a lot of employers (including Premier) prefer or require multiple years of experience to even get a chance for an interview. So, we found a way to make that possible. We also wanted to give our interns the skills we’d look for in our own employees. Not just technical skills, but experience with a culture of integrity, accountability, and excellence. We teach things like networking, relationship building, delegation, compliance, and professionalism. These subjects don’t always fit into a college curriculum. But they sure can set you apart from the competition on a resume and during an interview.” – Jeremy Sorci, CFP, AFIM, Vice President, Principal, Premier Financial

These partnerships help students gain meaningful experience while strengthening the local talent pipeline.



COLLEGE OF REDWOODS

# INTERSHIP FAIR

FALL 2023

**NOVEMBER 14, 11AM-2PM**  
EUREKA MAIN CAMPUS, IN THE LRC

Recruiting great talent involves a lot of effort. CR can help! Creating internship pathways for CR students can provide an ongoing low-cost pipeline for discovering new talent.

Meet and network with qualified students to promote mutually-beneficial internship opportunities within your organization.

**REGISTER TODAY!**




Contact the Career Center today for assistance with developing your internship job description(s).

**CR** COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS

CONTACT: 707.476.4308 or  
careercenter@redwoods.edu



## 7. Deepening Engagement with Faculty

The Council has also strengthened its connection with faculty on the main campus. Co-Chairs Laura Olson and Dan Phillips have met with the Academic Senate, welcomed Senate leaders to Council meetings, and presented at Fall Convocation. These efforts foster open communication about how Council activities can best support student learning and career success. One example of this deeper engagement is the Council's role in supporting StartUp Humboldt, a new innovation hub that connects students, faculty, and local entrepreneurs.



“What started 9 months ago like the small ripples of a pebble landing in Humboldt Bay,

StartUp Humboldt is now driving waves of momentum across the North Coast and beyond. At the heart of this movement is our Hub in Arcata, now bustling with daily activity fueled by the StartUp Humboldt competition in full swing. Throughout the fall, students, business leaders, and community members filled our space to take part in competition-sponsored events and collaborative gatherings. And this is only the beginning. As we head into 2026, those waves of innovation and commerce will continue to build as we move into the next phase of the competition, with the StartUp Humboldt Innovation Hub at the center of it all.” – Dan Phillips, Council Co-Chair, Co-Founder, Lost Coast Ventures.

## 8. Providing Program-Specific Industry Guidance

Program Advisory Committees offer targeted insight into workforce needs within specific disciplines, such as welding and construction. Council member Chris Albright, General Manager at O&M Industries, is among those who lend their expertise to help ensure that CR programs remain relevant, rigorous, and responsive to industry expectations:

“Working with CR has dramatically changed our business. Prior to CR, we struggled to get entry level employees, now we consistently turn applicants away. Additionally, this influx of qualified, motivated students has positively impacted

*“Working with CR has dramatically changed our business.”*

– Chris Albright, General Manager at O&M Industries

our culture. While the partnership has been extremely beneficial, it continues to be a learning experience. Being a part of the Executive Council is a big part of this education as it allows me to better understand the needs & concerns of CR which helps bridge the gap between business and higher education. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Flamer for allowing me to be a part of this group.” – Chris Albright, General Manager at O&M Industries.



## 9. Supporting the Passage of Bond Measure I

The successful passage of Bond Measure I required broad collaboration across the community. The Council's public support played an important role in building confidence and raising awareness about the need for critical facility upgrades on the main campus and the Del Norte campus. Measure I represents a major step forward for the future of College of the Redwoods.











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