THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY

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Director

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF

THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Initiated in 1966 as a grantee of the Higher Education Act of 1965 - Title I, Humboldt State University's Center for Community Development stands as California's only survivor of that heroic legislation's hundreds of millions of dollars that now operates, stable and unaltered, as a line item of the State's annual budget. Serving the State and Nation, primarily the 20,000 square mile coast-and-rivers region of northwest California, the Center's purpose is catalytically to assist people in community groups and sub-groups -- through a variety of communicative and educative processes -- to learn to re-assess and re-deploy their own and available skills, resources and other assets, thereby to achieve their immediate interest, further their long-range goals, and contribute, consequently, to the enrichment of their larger social, aesthetic, and economic environments.

To accomplish this purpose, Center personnel use their skills, first, to quickly gain trusted access to intended client groups; next, to establish mutual confidence and reciprocal communication with them (to get to see the world through clients' eyes); and then, of course, to apply appropriately professional insights toward assisting clients to achieve their intended (more accurately, their evolving) goals.

Finally -- perhaps most important -- the Center endeavors to disengage from client groups helpfully and constructively when its essential developmental support is no longer required. This is to ensure that scarce professional services aren't extended beyond their intended purposes -- thus to assure that the Center remains precisely a free-flowing conduit for the generation and nurturance of needed community functions which does not (possibly in pursuit of the false security of "overhead" monies) become choked by a proliferating plethora of administrative detail.

Working in this way since 1966, the Center has received a number of awards including the 1973 American College Testing Program - National University Extension Association Innovative Award in Continuing Education (Open Category). The several hundred projects completed during this time have yielded many
which are now accepted as integral productive components of their communities. Examples include: The Humboldt Recreation Program; The (popularly elective) Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation & Conservation District; a (Kettering Foundation) Domestic Policy Association/National Issues Forum; a Braille community signs and directories project; an agricultural development marketing project; the Humboldt Bay Brass Society; two Area Agencies for the Aging administering to the northern third of California; the Bishop Pike Foundation; the Northern California Health Systems Agency Project; The People's Republic of China - Humboldt Bay Cultural & Trade Exchange Project; the Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association; the N.A.S.A. Remote Sensing Technology Transfer Project; the Humboldt Marine Advisory Extension Service; and many others. An introductory undergraduate course and a graduate course in community development has been offered by the Center through Humboldt State's Department of Sociology; and since 1980 four Masters' and two Doctoral degrees have been awarded for dissertations completed in the Center.

Perhaps best known of the Center's projects is its American Indian Languages & Literature Program which is succinctly described in the words of the National University Continuing Education's Community Development Division 1980 Award for Innovations in Design and the Implementation of New Methods for Improving Community Development:

"One of the most innovative achievements of professional community development in the last decade, carried out in intimate co-operation with an historically deprived client community, has been Tom Parsons' construction of the American Indian Languages, Literature & Culture Program in The Center for Community Development of Humboldt State University. Seizing an unrecognized national treasure barely before its destruction, this Program adapted a nationally acknowledged easy orthography to precisely write Indian languages, schooled fluent native speakers in its use and propagation; thus salvaged classic tribal literature, published it in tribally compiled textbooks, catalogued its ethnobotany, displayed it authentically through coached drama; and institutionalized this nascent scholarly curriculum by prevailing upon the California Department of Education to credential the Program's most eminent Indian graduates for career service in public schools and colleges.

This project has contributed richly to a renaissance of American Indian culture in the United States; and, thus, to the nation's permanent cultural inheritance."
Because U.S. society previously had lacked agencies and institutions capable of accepting or continuing effective support for many of the most indigenous American Indian technological, musical or literary arts, that focus of program development necessarily has been the Center's most constantly demanding. Nevertheless, this constancy has resulted, beginning with the 1981-'82 academic year, in the nation's first bilingual American Indian languages and literature teacher preparation and credentialing degree program to be offered by a state university.