

2019 Interinstitutional Faculty Senate Candidate

McKenzie Huber (at OSU since 2012), Professional Faculty, Academic Advisor
2012-present – College of Forestry

FACULTY SENATE SERVICE: Baccalaureate Core Committee, 2013-present (co-chair, 2019-present, 2016-17)

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY SERVICE: Ambassador Coordinator, 2016-18

UNIVERSITY SERVICE: Undergraduate Student Success Initiative sub-committee for Curricular Excellence, 2019-present; Baccalaureate Core Implementation and Leadership Workgroup, 2019; Academic Advising Technology Committee, 2017-present; Faculty Marshall at Graduation, 2015-16

Candidate Statement: The unique perspective I bring to IFS is my understanding of the trickle-up factors that have short- and long-term impacts on faculty, students and the health of our institutions. I have experience leading and working with teaching faculty as a Bacc Core Committee Co-Chair, assessing curriculum, creating policies and supporting academic units. I have direct experience working with a diverse population of students from multiple programs and backgrounds. I hold Faculty Senate, shared governance and collaborations with our state partners in the highest regard and strive to further the initiatives of my alma mater.

What critical issues for faculty at a state-wide level will be best addressed through IFS and how can you help move those issues forward?

The key foundational issues that universities and faculty members face at a state-wide level are decreases in enrollment, increases in tuition and student loan debt, inclusive and equitable educational opportunities and curricular alignment in support of the transfer student experience. I am in touch with the undergraduate and graduate student perspective having earned both my Bachelor of Science and Master of Education from OSU. I have been an Academic Advisor at OSU since 2012 in the Colleges of Business, Liberal Arts and Forestry and had graduate assistantships with the LSAMP Program and Disability Access Services. I have boots-on-the-ground experience working with students, and am aware of the daily demands and trials students go through to earn their education. At the same time, I have served as a departmental advisor, working in alignment with faculty and through my role on the Bacc Core Committee. I understand the competing demands on faculty and know how to support them.

Enrollment reports from universities around the state point to declines in enrollment at four-year institutions. This shift is, in part, due to the stabilizing economy, increase in tuition costs and the student loan debt crisis. This issue, coupled with the decline in state funding, has created budget problems and threatens the stability of faculty and staff positions at higher education institutions. IFS is critical in providing a voice to state legislature for higher education funding from the state.

Alternatively, some Oregon community colleges have seen enrollment increases because of initiatives like the Oregon Promise and lower tuition rates. Students are transferring to four-year institutions with community college credit and dual enrolling. Better transfer experiences can have a monumental impact on enrollment, retention and graduation rates. With legislature passing HB 2998, we

need to adapt and find ways to create inclusive and accessible pathways for transfer students. Great work has been done at OSU to create a transfer model and provide public facing articulation documents that aid in prospective transfer student pathways. There is work to be done at the state level to improve the transfer student experience, create access and welcome these students. Another priority of HB 2998 is to help minimize excess transfer credits, which can save students money and preserve their funds to take necessary courses at the university. As universities examine their general education and major curricula, it is important that collaborations with university and community college partners remains at the forefront of the discussion. This is something we are focused on within the Bacc Core Committee and a theme that will continue to drive the conversation.

Lastly, I support a diverse profile of students who study on the Corvallis campus and through Ecampus. My students are representative of the LGBTQ+ community, students of color, first-generation, parents, older than average non-traditional learners, work full and part time jobs, military affiliated or Veterans, facing issues like homelessness and hunger and come from low income backgrounds. Their experiences are diverse and I am continually impressed by the tenacity and bravery I see in their persistence every day. IFS has a responsibility to prioritize equity and inclusion at the state level with the legislature and across institutions. Recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds is critical and must be a goal. Likewise, our recruitment and retention efforts of students who may not have the same access to higher education as their peers is vital. I think it is critical to humanize the student and faculty/staff experience and their stories to the legislature as we think about the impacts low enrollment and poor retention has on our institutions.

I see these issues as a system of challenges at the statewide level and this is why collaboration via IFS and elsewhere, is necessary to improve higher education and provide those long-term benefits to our faculty and students that they deserve. I am deeply committed to applying my collective expertise to ensure the quality of higher education in Oregon.