

2023 Interinstitutional Faculty Senate Candidate

This is a three-year position beginning January 2024 and ending December 2026.

Roberta Riportella (at OSU since 2016), Professor ~ Health Management and Policy, Family and Community Health Extension Specialist – College of Health

FACULTY SENATE SERVICE: Health Faculty Senator, 2021-present

COLLEGE OF HEALTH: Promotion & Tenure, 2021-present (co-chair); Strategic Planning Team, 2017-18; and Dean's Administrative Team, 2016-21

EXTENSION SERVICE: 4-H Center Task Force, 2019-20 (chair), and Collaborative/Program Council, 2016-21

UNIVERSITY SERVICE: OSU Outreach and Engagement Council, 2016-21 (subcommittee on outreach scholarship)

CANDIDATE STATEMENT: I've been honored to represent my college as a senator since transitioning into the professoriate (2021) after serving five years as an associate dean and Extension program leader. I've held tenured positions at three public universities and administrative and instructor positions at an additional two. Service as a Wisconsin faculty senator informed my vision of strong shared governance. A fellowship with the Big Ten Academic Alliance Leadership Program exposed me to the vast array of opportunities and challenges facing public higher education. These experiences combined position me well to represent Oregon State University as an Interinstitutional Faculty Senate Senator.

What will be the critical issues for faculty, and how can you help move those issues forward?

The main functions of the IFS are to provide for cross-campus communication and to interface with state governmental bodies on behalf of faculty. There is no dearth of complex issues facing higher education today, and some of them will be decided for us at the legislative level. It behooves us to stay ahead of the curve and be ready to propose actions before they are imposed upon us. Faculty need a strong voice in this, and closer collaboration with the Provost's Council through the IFS seems an appropriate way to position our campuses most strongly, with faculty leading with solutions to ongoing dilemmas rather than reacting to bills proposed.

Issues of budgeting will likely remain front and center, and consideration of the various needs of the different campuses may be worthy of future discussion and input. Further, while we now have new General Education requirements because of the legislature, the issue of how transfer students are welcomed across campuses may not yet be resolved. Certainly, how campuses each meet the changing demographic of our student populations, and the challenges and opportunities posed by AI will be topics of importance in the coming years. As an Extension Specialist I am also keenly aware of the role of all of our universities, not solely our land grant, in meeting the 21st century needs of the people and communities in Oregon. How we organize to accomplish these mutual goals, and how state agencies and legislative bills, in particular, can help to enhance these roles should be considered. As importantly, as some of our campuses are reacting to the strong impact sports programs are having on their future viability, it seems possible that the state government agencies may at some point choose to weigh in. We should be prepared for such an eventuality.

Regardless of the issues, and they will likely change in our current political climate, it is the skills I bring as a collaborator and leader that I think may serve our senate particularly well in the discussions with Oregon's institutions of higher education.

Wearing different hats as a faculty member and as an administrator has allowed me to see burgeoning issues facing higher education from a variety of perspectives, and to understand the possibilities, as well as the challenges/constraints, faced by its leaders and faculty. I've worked at five public universities that represent three land grants, three medical schools, and two schools of public health, perhaps positioning me well to understand how our sister institutions may view a particular issue through a different lens. I'm guided in how I enter all conversations by values of transparency, fairness, collaboration and equity, skills that may serve well in a setting where the members come from their own sets of challenges. I have also demonstrated my commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through my research and efforts to promote these in my administrative roles. I see these as guiding principles for those conversations.

Additionally, I was invited to and completed the highly selective and intensive training of future university leaders provided by the Big Ten Academic Alliance. That experience involved meeting weekly with President/Provost level leaders at Wisconsin to discuss university concerns, as well as several multi-day retreats at other Big Ten campuses where we heard from the highest leaders at the institutional level and worked through issues in higher education being faced by those administrators.

I welcome the opportunity to put these skills into action representing our faculty and the Oregon State University community as an Interinstitutional Faculty Senate Senator.