

2020 Interinstitutional Faculty Senate Candidate

John A. Edwards (at OSU since 1995), Professor of Psychology ~ Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts, 2017-present

FACULTY SENATE SERVICE: Liberal Arts Faculty Senator, 2014-16; Baccalaureate Core Review Committee, 2020; Faculty Senate Executive Committee, 2018, 2019; Distance Education Committee, 2010-12; and Advancement of Teaching Committee, 2005-07 (chair, 2006-07)

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS SERVICE: Web Design Team, 2019-20; Faculty Council, 2012-14; and Outstanding Senior Committee, 1999-02 (chair, 2001-02)

UNIVERSITY SERVICE: University Student Success Initiative Committee, 2019-present; University Curricular Excellence Committee, 2019-20 (co-chair); Graduate Tracking and Reporting Taskforce, 2019; Undergraduate Education Committee, 2018-present; OSU Faculty Representative, HB2998 Transfer Workgroup of the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Committee, 2017-18; University Data Governance Committee, 2017-18; OSU Gateway Planning Committee, 2017; Analytics Initiative Design Task Force, 2017; University Council on Student Engagement, 2016-18, 2006-08; U-Engage Course Selection Committee, 2016; Faculty Advisory Council, Division of Undergraduate Studies, 2015-18; Learning Innovation Grant Evaluation Team, 2015-17; OSU Equity & Inclusion Self-Study Team, 2011-13; Affirmative Action Search Advocate, 2009-present; and Institutional Review Board, 2005-14 (alternate status starting in 2012)

SEARCH COMMITTEES (*at the level of unit head and above*): School of Public Policy Director (chair); School of Language, Culture, and Society Director (chair), 2017; College of Liberal Arts Associate Dean, 2015-16; and School of Arts and Communication Director, 2014

Candidate Statement: I've been an OSU faculty member for over 20 years, ten as department head and two as an associate dean. I have experience with a wide range of the university's operations. I also have experience dealing with state-level educational groups, specifically concerning transfer student initiatives. The state is increasingly mandating actions that require coordinated responses by state universities. I believe IFS is ideally suited to help foster that coordination at the faculty level. My background allows me to speak for academic, research, and professional faculty with regard to both OSU's operations and culture, as well as state-level mechanics.

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 COVID-19 pandemic is creating extraordinary conditions for universities that the IFS can help universities to navigate. For instance, all of the state universities have been putting into place a variety of procedures regarding health protocols, teaching, technology, and so on. Shared knowledge regarding these procedures could be helpful to all, especially with regard to practices that seem to work, as well as unintended consequences. Administrators are, to some extent, having such conversations, but faculty-level (and Faculty Senate-level) contact can be equally, if not more, beneficial. I currently sit on multiple committees that deal with OSU COVID planning and, thus, am familiar with our local work.

The pandemic will also have long-term consequences for universities. The accompanying economic crisis is stretching the finances of both the state and our students. This affects us today, but will also continue to affect us, probably for years. State and federal governments' tax bases have been eroded, plus the various stimulus efforts will have multi-year financial consequences. Higher education funding is always a target during such times. In addition, college enrollment was on track to decline in the state prior to COVID, and we can expect

that to continue, with ramifications for our budget and our mission. IFS provides a forum for voicing our importance to the state.

In addition, students have found, and will continue to find, themselves unable to pay for college. Jobs they and their families counted on have vanished. OSU has done a lot of work trying to help students in need, but there are limits to our capacity for this. Once again, shared best practices across universities can help us all. In addition, it is important to highlight to the state the needs of the student population.

Aside from COVID, one of the biggest challenges facing Oregon universities concerns the statewide trend towards funneling students into community colleges for their first year or two. This, in part, is due to the fact that community colleges are cheaper than universities, but also because the state legislature has passed a series of measures designed to encourage students to do this. Some of these measures stipulate curricular coordination between universities and community colleges. Such coordination can be very difficult and can have all sorts of unintended consequences. In addition, there is a philosophical argument around the degree to which a common curriculum is beneficial, both for students and for the state. There is a risk that the community colleges are driving this discussion rather than the universities. The IFS should be central to any discussion of these sorts of initiatives. My work with the HB2998 group provided me with experience in navigating these issues at the state level. In addition, Student Services is at the center of my Associate Dean work, so I am quite aware of OSU efforts (and challenges) surrounding transfer students.

Transfer-related initiatives have steadily changed the composition of our student body to one that is increasingly composed of transfer students. These students have unique needs that we have done much work to address, but more work still is needed. This work inevitably requires a coordinated statewide effort.

I believe that faculty governance fundamentally entails faculty doing the hard work necessary to ensure the success and welfare of faculty, staff, and students, as well as helping to ensure that we are effective in our overall mission. The IFS gives Oregon faculty a forum to discuss issues of common relevance, and a vehicle for a common voice to the legislature and other state entities. I would be pleased to continue my service to students and faculty as an Interinstitutional Faculty Senator.