

## Participation in Public Policy Development

### General

Faculty in the College of Forestry have an obligation as both public servants and citizens to contribute their knowledge as part of the process of developing public policy about forests and related resources and forest products. The college encourages such participation. It is important that faculty participation be appropriately conducted, especially the acknowledgement of the role being played either as a representative of OSU or the College of Forestry, as an individual speaking personally, or as a member of a professional or scientific society.

The purpose of this administrative memo is to clearly identify policies and guidelines for faculty participation in the public policy development process. Following these policies and guidelines will help ensure legal protection for faculty members and the university and will help preserve and enhance the integrity of those involved.

### University Policy

University policy on public participation is contained in the OSU Faculty Handbook in the sections on academic freedom and outside activities.

*The university does not attempt to control the personal opinion, nor the public expression of that opinion, of any member of the faculty or staff of the institution. Indeed, the faculty and administration of Oregon State University feel a responsibility to protect the right of each employee to express his or her personal opinion, but in doing so, employees have an obligation to avoid any action which purports to commit the institution to a position on any issue without appropriate approval. (The college interprets this last phrase as meaning faculty must actively avoid actions which might logically be construed as institutional representation or approval).*

Further, in a statement of faculty responsibilities:

*The faculty of Oregon State University recognizes and accepts the special responsibilities incumbent on each of its members.*

*As a scholar in an academic discipline, each faculty member is expected to:*

- *Seek and state the truth as he or she sees it.*

- *Exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending and transmitting knowledge to diverse audiences on and off campus.*
- *Practice intellectual honesty.*

In some cases, participation by the faculty member may be at the request of another organization with financial remuneration. If so, the faculty member is required to:

- Use the Request for Approval of Outside Employment form, obtaining all required signatures and filing with the Office of Academic Affairs before the activity begins.
- Make it clear to the outside employer and others that he or she is acting in an individual capacity and does not speak, write or act in the name of the university or directly represent it.
- Not list his or her university telephone number or address in commercial listings or other public documents, the purpose of which is to draw attention to the individual's availability for compensatory service.
- Not use the university name, logo, stationary, or facilities.

### **College Policy and Guidelines**

In addition to the university policies stated above, the College of Forestry policies include the following:

- Faculty will keep their department head or comparable supervisor informed about their participation in policy-related activities including statements to, and work with, legislative bodies, boards, agencies, and statements in the public media. Our purpose here is not to restrict participation, but rather to help us all do our jobs more effectively by keeping everyone informed.
- Faculty will, when speaking, testifying or writing as a member of the university faculty, specifically note for the record that Oregon State University and the College of Forestry or Forest Research Laboratory do not take positions in public policy matters.

Some useful guidelines to keep in mind when participating in public policy activities include the following:

- Help your audience understand your role by stating it clearly. Are you providing scientific information as a representative of the college or FRL responding to an official request by a policy-maker or government body or are you participating as an individual expressing your personal or professional views and values?
- If you are expressing personal views and values or are appearing in a consultative capacity as a professional, either as an individual or part of a group, make sure you do not give the impression of representing the university by using OSU stationary or business cards. If you use your academic title and rank, make sure your audience that it is for identification purposes only, not as a representative of the college/FRL.
- If you are serving first as a representative of the college/FRL and wish to change roles and provide personal/professional opinion or views, preface your remarks with a statement that clearly indicates such a shift in role.
- When providing information to policy-makers, clearly identify what is known, what is unknown and what is contentious or uncertain. When synthesizing information or providing personal/professional judgment or opinion, let audiences know that you are doing so. Our purpose is to avoid misleading.
- Confine your scientific and professional participation to areas where you have qualifications and expertise.