

Jill W. Varnes' Statement

During my close to 30 years as a faculty member at the University of Florida I have had many opportunities to serve the university. As a graduate of the University being able to return as a member of the faculty and participate in the process of educating future generations while helping new scholars to more fully develop their areas of research has been a personally rewarding experience. Over these years I have held both faculty and administrative positions including Interim Dean in the College of Health and Human Performance and Chair of the most recent Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on College's reaffirmation of accreditation. In addition to being a Senator, I have served on many university committees and task forces including the Curriculum Committee, the Constitution/Bylaws Committee, Faculty Compensation Committee, the Presidential Task Force on Shared Governance and, most recently, the Task Force on the UF Undergraduate Experience.

These are challenging times for our university and for our state; none of the economic forecasters are suggesting an end to the economic downturn in the near future. Therefore, it is likely that the university will continue to be asked to do more with less state support. As the representative body of the University it is our responsibility to be the voice of our colleagues in bringing their concerns forward for broader discussions. It is also our responsibility to educate ourselves and our colleagues related to the central issues impacting our ability to continue to effectively meet the mission of the university - teaching, research and service. Inherent in our responsibilities is the need to maintain a positive and close working relationship with university administration to keep focused on what we can accomplish rather than on what we may not. By continuing to encourage broad based communication and by strengthening the usefulness of the Senate Councils and Committees we are more likely to ensure that the faculty perspective is taken into consideration prior to policy making decisions being finalized.

I believe my years as a member of the faculty as well as the extensive and varied experiences in governance on our campus provide me the necessary perspective that would enable me to be an effective Chair of the Faculty Senate and I would welcome the opportunity to serve the university in this manner. Thank you for your consideration.