Carol Stabile
Wayne Westling Award 2015

I am so very honored to receive the Wayne Westling Award. In accepting this award, I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Faculty Senate, especially President Rob Kyr, and thank the members of the Senate Task Force to Address Sexual Violence and Survivor Support and all the many people who talked to us about their experiences over the past year.

I never had the opportunity to meet Professor Westling, but I have heard of his dedication to shared governance and his ability to bridge the gap between the classroom and the courtroom or, as those of us outside legal arenas might put it, between theory and practice. I am sure that Professor Westling would have been proud of the work of the Senate Task Force to Address Sexual Violence and Survivor Support on both these counts. I know I am.

The Task Force was unified in our shared concerns about the safety of our students and colleagues. Over the course of our meetings, we disagreed, compromised, struggled to be responsive to criticism, and collaborated on a series of recommendations. Throughout the process, and with the input and support of faculty, student, and staff survivors, we worked to communicate across layers of hurt, mistrust, and trauma. We worked with a deep awareness that race, sexuality, and economic status are not separate from problems of sexual violence, but deeply entwined with them. I think I speak for everyone when I say that we gained a new appreciation for the work that's being done by some wonderful new members of our community in sexual violence response, prevention, student conduct, and in the Ombuds Office.

The Task Force was shared governance at its best. It was a reminder of the collective knowledge and wisdom that staff, faculty, and students who are closest to these problems bring to solving them. For far too many years, sexual violence on college campuses has fed on the shame and the secrecy with which universities have enveloped it. The Senate and the Task Force worked this year to challenge the silence and solitude surrounding sexual violence at UO and we owe that collective them – and not the individual me – a debt of gratitude for their hard work.

As we continue to challenge rape culture on our campus and improve our ability to support survivors, I hope that we can facilitate more open dialogue about these issues. Shared governance and a renewed commitment to discussion, debate, understanding, transparency, accountability, and democracy remain the best strategies for helping UO educate and serve all students, staff and faculty. Members of the Senate Task Force and Standing Committee who are here today – could you please stand so I can share this honor with you?