

**Elisabeth Schussler**  
**Statement of Interest**  
**Faculty Senate President-Elect, 2021-2022**

**Statement**

I have been a faculty member in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology since 2009, working my way up from Assistant Professor to Full Professor over that time. I am currently serving my second term on Faculty Senate, and served as co-chair of the Budget, Finance and Planning Committee in 2019-2020 (I am on faculty development leave this spring). I have truly enjoyed my time as a Faculty Senator - I have found it critically informative for me as a faculty member to understand the institutional context within which we do our work. More than a source of information, however, is the potential for the Faculty Senate to innovate and transform. I think this is the most exciting and energizing part of what we do. Institutions are dynamic - leadership changes, policies change, priorities change - and faculty must not only stay informed, but be partners and leaders in these changes. Faculty, whether tenure track or nontenure track or adjunct, are critically important to the functioning of the university and our voices and perspectives need to be a constant presence to preserve the nature of our role in the modern institution. Faculty Senate is the organizational body for faculty voices, but the President's job is to raise and amplify those voices. In my research life, I study undergraduate student perspectives on the instructional practices of their course professors. My skill set is listening to student voice and finding patterns in their responses. I imagine bringing the same skills to bear as Faculty Senate President - listening to faculty perspectives and letting those voices be the guide for needed innovation and transformation. Although it is hard to predict what the needs of the institution will be in the future, certainly I can anticipate concerns related to institutional equity, diversity and inclusion, the new budget model, nontenure track faculty member equity, and the lingering effects of a pandemic that has magnified all of the former issues.

**Biography**

Elisabeth Schussler is a Professor in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department in the College of Arts and Sciences. She came to UT from Miami University in Ohio in 2009 to take the position of Director of Biology Teaching and Learning, an appointment she held until 2019. In this role she coordinated all aspects of the General Biology program which serves thousands of non-major and major students. While at UT she has earned several College and University teaching awards, served on the College Curriculum Committee, the Committee for Periodic Post-Tenure Performance Review, two strategic planning committees, the General Education Task Force, and the University Task Force for End of Course evaluations. Her research focuses on undergraduate student perception of the introductory teaching and learning environment, with a focus on instructional practices and student emotion (most recently, anxiety). She serves as a Monitoring Editor for *CBE Life Sciences Education* and has published over 40 research articles. She also coordinates a national network of faculty, staff, and students (BioTAP; Biology Teaching Assistant Project) to provide empirically-based teaching professional development to graduate students. She received her BS in Biology from Vanderbilt and her PhD in Plant Biology

from LSU. Before her appointment at Miami, she worked for seven years as an Instructor at LSU and as an informal science educator at two science centers.