

REMARKS BY KASSY FISHER AND SARA HODGES
CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR SANDI MORGEN
November 29, 2016

Kassy: We've been given a few minutes on the agenda to share a bit about Sandi's legacy in the Graduate School.

As everyone here knows, Sandi was a force of nature. I recall likening her to a tornado spinning through our quiet little Graduate School office: powerful and awe-inspiring... and, at first, totally overwhelming. Eventually, though, she led a strategic planning effort through which our staff became a team that visibly valued critical self-examination, advocacy and, of course, new ideas.

In her five years in the Graduate School, Sandi launched a number of ideas and initiatives with a laser focus on exposing, promoting and leveraging the research and artistic expression of our graduate students. It was under Sandi's leadership that the Graduate Student Research Forum, the Three Minute Thesis competition, and the Public Impact Fellowship were created. All of these still exist today as ways that our students' work is shared and promoted for our campus and community to see first-hand. All of these sprung from Sandi's whirlwind energy and her ability to turn ideas into reality. The earliest of these was the Public Impact Fellowship.

In December 2008, less than three months after Sandi became associate dean, I joined her in Washington, DC the first time she participated in the Council of Graduate Schools annual conference. She took notes ceaselessly—reminding me it was the anthropologist in her—and we spent the flight back to Eugene poring over various handouts and notebook pages to hone in on ideas that we could put into action back on our campus.

By the time we landed, we had the bare-bones outline of what would become the Public Impact Fellowship, an award that would reward students whose work had the potential to significantly impact society *and* an award that had a plan-- built right into it-- for converting the award recipients into advocates for University of Oregon graduate education, students we could put in front of lawmakers, donors, and the community. And, in keeping with Sandi's whirlwind pace, we launched the award four months later and named our first two Public Impact Fellows in Spring 2009.

Sara: The Public Impact Graduate Fellowship, however, had no permanent funding source. Unlike many of the other Graduate School awards, there was no endowment fund to cover this award, and it has become increasingly hard to fund it – especially in a manner that Sandi had intended, that really gives graduate students some flexibility in making choices about how they spend their research time.

And so, we have proposed endowing a fund and changing the name of the award in Sandi's honor. It would be a fitting tribute to a woman who cared deeply about these things: research that makes a difference; graduate students' research; and mentoring and supporting others.

(Certainly Sandi cared about mentoring graduate students, but there are many of us in the room who benefitted from mentoring by Sandi long after our grad school days.)

We will need your help. The UO Development Office allows just one year for such funds to accumulate \$25,000 in donations. That amount would allow us to permanently endow the fund in Sandi's name.

However, an endowed fund of \$25,000 doesn't pay much interest, meaning we ultimately need to set our sights higher for the endowed fund to support a graduate student at the level Sandi initially envisioned for this award. (We're looking at more like \$150,000.) We think that's eventually possible but, remember, the first step is to get \$25,000 in a year, so that the fund is permanently endowed.

When talking about raising this money, Kassy and I both admitted that we often find ourselves in our jobs asking, WWSD? (What would Sandi do?) And this is no exception. We came up with three things:

1. We're going to ask all of you to contribute: Do it tonight or tomorrow, this week, before the end of the year. Take a post card, go to the [website](http://giving.uoregon.edu/morgen) (giving.uoregon.edu/morgen) and make a donation. Heck, write a check to the UO Foundation tonight, and put Sandi Morgen Public Impact Graduate Fellowship in the memo section – we'll make sure the development office puts it in the right place.

If everybody here today gave a little, we'd be on our way to reaching that critical first \$25,000.

2. Spread the word: Tell people in your networks, tell people who knew Sandi, tell people who care about the same things Sandi cared about, refer them to the website.

3. If you are here on campus, encourage graduate students to apply for the fellowship: The deadline is Feb 17, 2017. Instructions about how to apply are on the [Graduate School website](#).

By telling great graduate students they should apply, you'll be helping to build the profile of the award, which can in turn help bring attention to the fund. You'll also be helping graduate students, by leading them to a source of support for their work, and by communicating to them that their research matters.

We like to think it's what Sandi would have done.

Let's reinforce one of the things that Sandi built on this campus so that her ideals become a permanent part of the place and her legacy lives on in a very real way, by supporting the research of graduate students – the next generation of scholars who will change the world, like Sandi did.