

University Honors College
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To Whom It May Concern:

As the Director of the Urban Honors College at Portland State University, I found that the College faced several exciting challenges. We've grown 260% over the last 3 years--now serving about 600 students per year and involving many new faculty from around the campus. I wanted to find new ways to serve our students by making sure that a higher percentage of them complete their degrees with University Honors and produce high quality work. Likewise, I wanted to make sure that new faculty thesis advisors understand our mission and are able to guide, direct, and assess our students' projects productively.

As part of our strategy to tackle these challenges, the College brought on Dr. Daveena Tauber in a consulting capacity. I had been impressed with Dr. Tauber's work with graduate students through the Graduate Studies Office at my campus and felt that her expertise would be applicable to our students at the undergraduate level.

The value of Dr. Tauber's work with the Honors College is both tangible and intangible. Much of the value of consulting comes from the opportunity to do what Dr. Tauber calls "co-thinking." Dr. Tauber has an impressive ability to pose clarifying questions, share relevant examples, and come up with creative strategies. For example, she introduced the idea to create an online manual for all thesis advisors that would provide crucial information, dates, links to forms, and best practices. In addition to producing this manual, she created a detailed assignment and assessment rubric for the honors thesis proposal, which will communicate expectations to students and help unify the standards by which advisors assess the readiness of thesis projects to move forward. She helped us think strategically about how to lay out a 30 week curriculum that builds in instruction and structure at the right times to ensure that students stay on track to completion.

Not only did Dr. Tauber produce important products that will continue to serve our students, she helped us understand how to think through the challenges we face. Dr. Tauber's consulting approach is collaborative and constructive. Her goal is to leverage existing resources wherever possible to support faculty and students in doing their best work. Over the three terms that we contracted with Dr. Tauber, we found that her combination of relaxed manner and unimpeachable professionalism made her delightful to work with. I have recommended her services to colleagues without reservation and am pleased to furnish this commendation.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Fallon, PhD
Professor of Humanities and International Studies
Urban Honors College