

MARIE E. McConnell
School of Environment and Natural Resources
Environmental Policy and Decision Making
- Policy and Governance
Pittsburgh, PA

When asked to identify some elements of her undergraduate education which provided Marie with fulfillment and satisfaction, she shared that in January 2019, she had the honor of moderating the lunchtime plenary panel during the annual Community

Engagement Conference. The panel discussed students' involvement across campus and highlighted different projects and initiatives as they pertained to community engagement. This event was attended by approximately 700 Extension professionals, OSU students and faculty, community partners, and sustainability professionals.

Another experience which provided pride for Marie was the opportunity to present at the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) International Conference in San Antonio, TX in 2017. Serving as the Sustainability Council Treasurer, she and the President at the time discussed the unique model of the Council, also using the "Time For Change Week" as a case study of successful collaboration between students and organizations on a college campus.

Marie was selected to receive the Lee Johnston Leadership Award, presented to undergraduate students who "demonstrated outstanding student leadership and involvement" in the School of Environment and Natural Resources.

Adding to Marie's sense of accomplishment in October 2017, Marie accepted the Green Collaborative Achievement Award on behalf of the Time For Change planning committee at the annual Summit on Sustainability. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission presents this award to "organizations who have achieved an effective effort or innovative collaboration in central Ohio. The honoree(s) will have demonstrated success in developing a specific initiative or entity that supports broad inclusion, diverse thoughts in the process and delivers tangible results addressing key challenges facing the region."

Marie's nominator shared that Marie has participated in two education abroad programs within CFAES and consistently assisted with recruitment efforts for SENR. In her first year, she traveled to Nicaragua, and between her second and third year, she participated in the first iteration of the Sustainable and Resilient Tanzanian Community education abroad program in 2017. Marie was open and honest about the learning experiences, challenges, and opportunities for growth the program provided her. Her honest communications regarding the value of experiential learning abroad was invaluable during recruitment.

After graduation, Marie plans on staying in Columbus to work in the public or non-profit sectors in the areas of climate mitigation, energy, and community development.

Marie chose to recognize Esther DeBusk as her mentor. Marie says, "I first met Esther DeBusk as a high school student visiting OSU. Since then, she has embodied everything I have come to love about SENR and CFAES; passion, empathy, and community. I worked with and learned from Esther in many different roles, as a Scholars Advisor, an Ambassadors' Coordinator, an all-around wonderful person to talk to, and really be heard. One of Esther's pieces of advice that has really stuck with me is: 'College is the best years of your life... yet'. I can't thank her enough for the role she has played in shaping these best last four years, and the way she has set me up to take advantage of the best years yet to come."