

SPONSOR PROFILE

JACQUELINE VAN HOOMISSEN, PH.D.

PROFESSOR, BIOLOGY – ACADEMIC ASSOCIATE DEAN



In a recent leadership assessment, Jacqueline Van Hoomissen didn't blink when "finding connections" came up as one of her top strengths. Very few things in her highly engaged work at University of Portland bring her more joy than connecting students and faculty to new possibilities.

At her core, Van Hoomissen is a biology professor. But her energy and creative spirit is kindled when she engages in building something new and finding connections. As the former department chair of biology and current associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, she has relished many opportunities in her 20 years on UP's faculty to serve as a transformative campus connector.

Van Hoomissen launched a community partnership that embedded college students into North Portland K-12 schools, hosted high school students in UP STEM labs, and co-founded UP's "Family Science Night." This work earned her the 2018 Oregon Academy of Sciences Outstanding Educator in Higher Education Award. She recently created an experiential health study abroad program for UP students, all while teaching neurobiology and assisting faculty and student colleagues in countless ways.

A 1997 UP graduate, Van Hoomissen is driven to be the kind of teacher — and connector — who inspired her own higher education dreams a quarter century ago. Coming to The Bluff from Banks, Ore., she fondly recalls UP professors and mentors opening doors she didn't know existed to enhance her college experience.

"University of Portland took the world view I had coming out of high school and completely expanded it," Van Hoomissen reflects. That's her mission today in her dual role as neuroscientist and academic leader.

"My message to students is this: Why not give yourself the freedom to think, 'Maybe I can do that,'" she says.

"Students learn they have the ability to change the way their brain functions. If there's something you want to change, if you want to try new things, your brain will respond to that."

"We want our students to remain curious and to share what they learn with people they know. That's what we do well at UP. We give students the ability to be creative, so they can go out and make the world better."