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About the Cabinet

Members



Paul Risser

Dr. Paul G. Risser is the chair and chief operating officer of the University of Oklahoma Research Cabinet and coordinates and facilitates research across the University's three campuses.

Previously Risser was the chief executive officer (Chancellor) for The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, a state system comprised of 25 state colleges and universities. Before assuming the Oklahoma Chancellor position, Risser was President of Oregon State University, where he led the university to record enrollment and impressive research growth over a seven-year span. His professional background also includes serving as President of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Research at the University of New Mexico; and Chief of the Illinois Natural History Survey.

Risser's professional background has roots in Oklahoma, where he served as faculty member from 1967-81 at the University of Oklahoma. He joined the OU faculty as assistant professor of botany and 10 years later was promoted to full professor and chair of OU's Department of Botany and Microbiology.

He has also held teaching positions at the University of New Mexico; Miami University and Oregon State University. He has served as Program Director of Ecosystem Studies for the National Science Foundation and as president of three professional organizations: the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the Ecological Society of America and the Association of Southwestern Naturalists.

Risser's academic and research success has lead him to serve in various leadership positions on international and national boards and committees, including the National Association of State Colleges and Universities, the National Academy of Sciences; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Kellogg Commission; World Forestry Institute; and the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History. Previously he was chair of the Board on Environmental Studies and Toxicology of the National Academy of Science. He also chairs the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Ecosystem Studies in New York and is a past Secretary-General of the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) in Paris, France.

Risser has a Ph.D. in botany and soils and a master's degree in botany from the University of Wisconsin and a bachelor's degree in biology from Grinnell College.

Among his distinguished national academic recognitions are the appointments as fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1985, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1994.

His primary research interests have included the study of the structure and function of grassland and forest

ecosystems; environmental planning and management; landscape ecology and global change. He has been the principal investigator or co-principal investigator on more than 50 grant or contract-funded projects.

His internationally renowned research has evolved into professional consulting relationships with more than 20 national organizations. Risser's research has been widely published (over 100 articles) in refereed journals and he has authored or co-authored six books.

Risser is a native of Oklahoma, born in Blackwell; he and his wife, Les, are the parents of six grown children.

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