On October 31, 2015, Dr. Fee Busby, Professor of Wildland Resources, delivered the 40th Annual Honors Last Lecture to an audience of more than 200 people in the Caine Performance Hall. The Last Lecture is a long-standing Honors tradition that gives Honors students the opportunity to recognize one professor whose outstanding mentorship of undergraduates has changed students’ lives both in and outside the classroom. Dr. Busby’s lecture, “Make a Difference: It’s Our Only Hope,” urged faculty, students, and community members to make the most of every opportunity and challenge that crosses their paths.

Brianne Palmer, an Honors senior in Wildland Resources, nominated Dr. Busby and then introduced him at the event. She described Dr. Busby’s impact on her education, and she encouraged all students to express their gratitude to professors who change their lives. When she graduates and leaves Logan this year, Brianne said that “one of the hardest goodbyes will be to the man who changed everything, who encouraged me to be involved, to be a leader, and to get up in front of an audience and speak. I will be saying goodbye to a friend.”

Dr. Busby’s lecture was inspired by his Quinney College of Natural Resources first-year orientation course, which encourages students to think about the good they can do in a world with a rapidly growing population. He posed this problem to everyone at the Last Lecture, encouraging students, faculty, and community members from all disciplines to consider how they, personally, might help shape the future in positive ways.

Dr. Busby also discussed the “three Cs,” qualities that shape a successful life’s journey: commitment, competence, and confidence. He focused in particular on the difficulty of gaining confidence when the risk of failure is great. Tying failure to the metaphor of falling, he observed that the “thing about falling is when we get up we are further on the journey than before the fall.” As a mentor, Dr. Busby helps students to build confidence so they can use the other two Cs – commitment and competence – to make a difference.

The University Honors Program is proud to recognize Dr. Busby and all other professors who make a difference in students’ lives at Utah State University.