



Washington Research

F O U N D A T I O N

Beth Etscheid, Washington Research Foundation's Director of Grant Programs, Announces Retirement

Etscheid will help with recruitment of successor before retiring in June

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Beth Etscheid, Ph.D., the director of grant programs at Washington Research Foundation (WRF), has announced that she will retire at the end of June.

Etscheid has led the Foundation's [grant programs](#) since 2015 and has overseen more than \$50 million in philanthropic giving to support scientists and translational projects in Washington's top organizations. As grants director, she has led the expansion of the Foundation's programs over the past five years. A key addition is WRF's [postdoctoral fellowship](#) awards, introduced in 2017 to provide three years of funding for recent Ph.D. graduates working to address urgent public needs. Etscheid recently implemented a phased approach to WRF's technology development grants that enables researchers to apply for increasing levels of funding if milestones are met.

Etscheid joined WRF in 1994, becoming director of licensing three years later. She was responsible for the management and execution of WRF's [licensing program](#), which is among the most successful in the country and has earned more than \$445 million for the University of Washington (UW) and other nonprofit research institutions in the state.

Among the technologies under Etscheid's management was Dr. Benjamin Hall's Expression of Polypeptides in Yeast portfolio, one of the most valuable inventions to have come from an academic institution and estimated to have improved the health of more than a billion people worldwide. Co-developed at UW and Genentech, the technology is widely used in the production of lifesaving biologics including insulins and other diabetes drugs, and vaccines to prevent hepatitis B, human papillomavirus (HPV) and malaria.

Ron Howell, WRF's CEO, said, "Beth is a skilled negotiator whose diligence in licensing and grant-making has increased WRF's impact on translational research at the University of Washington, Washington State University, Fred Hutch and other research organizations across the state. She has provided strategic guidance for all our activities and carried out the hands-on hard work of identifying grant-making and licensing opportunities that might otherwise have been missed. She's an important ally for local researchers and their institutions."

Etscheid said, “I’ll miss the many excellent colleagues and friends I’ve worked with inside and outside of WRF in supporting this state’s outstanding research community. We have world-class scientists here in Washington who are making substantial contributions to solving local and global health and engineering challenges, and I’m proud to have championed their work.”

“Beth has been an exceptional colleague and friend. We’ll miss her, and WRF will feel her departure. You don’t replace someone like Beth overnight, but I’ll work closely with her over the coming months to search for her successor and enable a smooth transition,” said Howell.

Prior to joining WRF, Etscheid earned a bachelor’s in chemistry from Smith College and a Ph.D. in pharmacology and cell physiology from the University of Chicago. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center.

Etscheid said, “WRF’s grant programs are in a strong position, having been carefully curated over many years to support researchers in the life sciences and engineering who are addressing the world’s most pressing problems. Along with many partners across the state, WRF has been supporting the development and commercialization of high-impact technologies since its founding in 1981.”

Retirement will give Etscheid the chance to spend more time with her family and hobbies: traveling, gardening and reading.

About Washington Research Foundation:

Washington Research Foundation (WRF) supports research and scholarship in Washington state, with a focus on life sciences and enabling technologies.

WRF was formed in 1981 to assist universities and other nonprofit research institutions in Washington state with the commercialization and licensing of their technologies. WRF is recognized as one of the foremost technology transfer and grant-making organizations in the nation, having earned more than \$445 million in licensing revenue for the University of Washington and providing over \$100 million in grants to the state's research institutions to date.

WRF Capital, the Foundation’s venture investment arm, has funded 105 local startups since 1994. Returns support WRF’s grant-making activities.

For additional information, please visit www.wrfseattle.org.

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