



Washington Research
F O U N D A T I O N

WRF's Luciana Simoncini to retire at end of 2014; Beth Etscheid named new director of research commercialization

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Luciana Simoncini, director of research commercialization at Washington Research Foundation (WRF), has announced that she will retire at the end of the year. Beth Etscheid, WRF's current director of licensing, will transfer to the position over the coming months.

Dr. Simoncini has led WRF's gift program since joining the Foundation in 2004. As WRF's licensing and venture capital returns have grown, organizations including the University of Washington (UW), Washington State University (WSU), Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the Institute for Systems Biology have increasingly benefited. WRF has contributed more than \$42 million in gifts, excluding its licensing activity, to not-for-profit research institutions in the state. In addition to this total is WRF's recent \$31.2 million pledge for programs at UW's eScience Institute, Institute for Protein Design, Institute of Neuroengineering and Clean Energy Institute. WRF gifts support faculty recruitment, undergraduate research, and gap funding for professors and students attempting to form companies that use their discoveries to serve unmet public needs.

"I'm proud of the impact WRF has made in academia and the local startup industry," said Dr. Simoncini. "We've adapted our gift program to meet the changing needs of the community, and I am frequently told that WRF support has allowed important research to move forward when it would have otherwise halted due to a lack of alternative sources of funding. The gap funds we have backed at UW, WSU, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Benaroya Research Institute and Pacific Northwest Diabetes Research Institute are good examples of how we have helped the public to benefit from research that has the potential to cure diseases and solve other key problems. Beth's expertise and experience will allow WRF to continue serving the research community to help it increase its impact on society."

Dr. Etscheid earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Smith College and a Ph.D. in pharmacology and cell physiology from the University of Chicago. She became director of licensing in 1997, three years after she joined WRF following postdoctoral fellowships at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the University of Washington. Over the past 17 years, Dr. Etscheid has executed WRF's ongoing program of licensing and enforcement, which has to date returned over \$417 million to UW alone. She is active in the biotech and licensing communities through board and advisory commitments including Women in Bio, Licensing Executives Society and the Association of University Technology Managers.

Dr. Etscheid said, "Leading our licensing program has been enormously rewarding, and I've had the privilege of managing a number of extraordinary technologies resulting from local research. Dr. Benjamin Hall's yeast discovery at UW and collaboration on the development of the hepatitis B vaccine, for instance, has had an enormous impact on human health worldwide. I'm delighted to transition to my new role and work with Washington state's top talent to support the development of technologies and programs that have significant value."

Ron Howell, chief executive officer at WRF, said, "Working with Luciana has been a sincere pleasure. We will all miss her contributions to our strategy and management of our many programs. She has numerous and deep relationships with so many researchers and those personal links will have to be reestablished. We will also miss her vibrant energy and collegial nature. But Luciana has given us enough time to make the best transition possible. Beth Etscheid is equally talented and has a very similar and impressive scientific background herself. I believe that between the two of them the transition will be smooth and new ideas are bound to emerge from Beth's leadership."

About Washington Research Foundation:

Washington Research Foundation (WRF) was founded 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 organizations in the nation and has returned more than \$463 million to the state's research institutions through gifts and licensing disbursements. For more information, visit www.wrfseattle.org.

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