

Susan M. Coliton named interim president and CEO of Washington Research Foundation

WRF director and grants committee chair will lead the foundation during its search for a full-time CEO

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[Research Foundation](#) (WRF) director

and grants committee chair Susan M.

Coliton has been named as the

foundation's interim president and CEO. Coliton was selected by WRF's board to lead the

organization during its search for a full-time successor to [Ron Howell, who retired in April](#)

following 29 years as CEO. Jeff Eby will remain as WRF's acting CEO until his own retirement at the end of June, with Coliton assuming her new role on July 1.



“

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Susan M. Coliton, interim president and CEO

Coliton is a senior consultant with Seattle's [Luma Consulting](#), which partners with philanthropic organizations to help them deepen their impact. A focus of her practice is providing interim leadership services to nonprofits experiencing transitions. She recently served as interim president and CEO of ArtsFund, a Seattle-based nonprofit that supports and advocates for the cultural sector in the Puget Sound region.

During 15 years as vice president of philanthropic programs at the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation (PGAFF),

Coliton directed large-scale grant-making programs that included local, national and international funding for scientific discovery, conservation and communities. She led the development of several of PGAFF's science and education initiatives and served as a founding director of the Allen Institute for Brain Science.

Earlier roles include director of the west coast office of Nonprofit Finance Fund and serving as a National Endowment for the Arts grant-making specialist. Coliton has chaired the Washington State Arts Commission and Philanthropy Northwest's board of directors, and has served on the governing and advisory boards of Americans for the Arts, Capitol Hill Housing, Earshot Jazz, the

Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington Press, KEXP and Seattle Seahawks Charitable Foundation.

Coliton joined the WRF board in 2016, chairing the foundation's strategic planning committee during a comprehensive evaluation of its grant-making and investment programs that accelerate innovations—primarily in the life sciences—at nonprofit research institutions in Washington state. She is chair of WRF's grants committee, which provides scientific and strategic guidance for the largest of WRF's awards among its roughly \$10 million in annual disbursements. To date, WRF has given more than \$115 million in grants and invested in 112 startups focused on delivering local innovations to the public.

"Board members are often a logical choice as interim CEO due to their existing knowledge of the organization and proven leadership," said Brooks Simpson, chair of WRF's board of directors. "However, it typically does not include expertise in that exact space. In Sue's case, the alignment could not be stronger, with a career in philanthropic management and the personal oversight of nearly \$1 billion in grants administered."

"I am thrilled to be taking on this new role at WRF and to be given the opportunity to build on the powerful achievements of Ron Howell and WRF's skilled staff," said Coliton. "WRF's impact of transforming new ideas into tangible solutions is deep and far reaching in our state. Its underlying purpose of providing public benefit to our community, and beyond, has guided my own career and I look forward to further advancing its work. "

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 founded in 1981 to assist universities and other nonprofit research institutions in Washington with the commercialization and licensing of their technologies. WRF is 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 \$115 million in grants to the state's research institutions to date.

WRF Capital, the Foundation's venture investment arm, has backed 112 local startups since 1994. Returns from these investments support grant-making activities at WRF.

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

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