



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: Immediately

DATE: September 14, 2022

CONTACT: Josh Gerstman: (206) 592-3705, Jgerstman@highline.edu

Raechel Dawson: (206) 592-3393, Rdawson@highline.edu (after 9/20)

Jesse Johnson Joins Highline College Board of Trustees

State Rep., Past Federal Way City Councilmember Holds Values Rooted in Equity

DES MOINES, Wash. — Gov. Jay Inslee recently appointed Jesse Johnson to the Highline College Board of Trustees.

Johnson will be the fourth new trustee since Dr. John R. Mosby became Highline President in July, 2018. He fills former Board of Trustee member Dan Altmayer’s position.

“Jesse Johnson is a proven community leader with experience as an elected official at the state and local levels and a passion for education,” Highline College President John Mosby said. “He grew up in Federal Way and has served the community in many capacities. He’s keenly aware of the educational needs and interests of community members and the demands in the local workforce. He is joining our Board of Trustees at a critical time as Highline launches our new strategic plan and focuses on building enrollment.”

Johnson is completing a term as state representative for the 30th Legislative District. In this elected position, he passed a number of key policies around youth workforce planning and development, mental health access and juvenile justice reform. He also brought first ever funding to create a pre-apprenticeship program in construction and general contracting at his alma mater Federal Way High School and helped support the building of Maritime High School in Highline Public Schools.

Johnson previously served as Federal Way City Council Member, when at age 27, he was the youngest official elected in the city’s history. In Federal Way, he started a youth internship program called ‘Emerging Leaders’ and led efforts to pass an ‘apprenticeship utilization’ ordinance that mandates apprentices to be given job opportunities on city capital projects. Johnson has shared in his published biography that his values are rooted in equity, inclusion and social justice and he has a passion for education and youth development.

“In the various elected positions I’ve held, I’ve worked to help students look for the right path to a well-paying job and working families struggling with high costs,” Johnson said. “I am ecstatic about the opportunity to join Highline’s Board of Trustees. I feel our values and vision are aligned and together with the college community. We can increase and expand opportunities for students and families in our community.”

Johnson credits his strong work ethic and desire to continue to improve opportunities for the next generation to his upbringing, and the influence of being the son of a U.S. Navy veteran and a residential and commercial painter.

Johnson is a graduate of the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Arts in political science and a Master of Education. He is a proud graduate of Federal Way High School and has also served as a Federal Way Youth Action Team board member, Young Life board member and is active with New Beginnings Christian Fellowship. He has worked in public education in both the Seattle and Highline Public Schools as a high school college and career counselor, re-engagement specialist and in human resources. Jesse lives in Federal Way with his wife, a current medical student, and their young son.

“As we enter into a new era in higher education, I am so excited to join the Highline College team and help lead us to be one of the premiere public higher education institutions in the region. The strength of community is when it is in the hands of all its members and I plan to bring that community-centered lens to the work.”

###

Attachment: Photo of Jesse Johnson

Founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County, Highline College annually serves more than 16,500 students. With over 70 percent students of color, Highline is the most diverse higher education institution in the state. The college offers a wide range of academic transfer, professional-technical education, basic skills and applied bachelor’s degree programs. Alumni include former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, Cal Poly Humboldt President Tom Jackson, Jr. and former Washington state poet laureate Sam Green.