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**CONTACT:** Dr. Patti Rosendahl: (206) 592-3200, [prosendahl@highline.edu](mailto:prosendahl@highline.edu)  
Kari Coglon Cantey: (206) 291-8622, [kcantey@highline.edu](mailto:kcantey@highline.edu)

### **Wagnitz Named Interim President at Highline College**

Longtime College Administrator Filling Vacancy Left by Bermingham's Retirement

DES MOINES, Wash. — While Highline College searches for a new president, a familiar name will fill the role. Dr. Jeff Wagnitz, who has been serving as acting president since December 2016, has been named interim president by the college's [Board of Trustees](#), effective Oct. 1, 2017.

The announcement came during the board's regularly scheduled Sept. 21 meeting.

The five-member board is seeking a replacement for [Dr. Jack Bermingham](#), who announced his retirement July 27 after serving more than a decade as president. Bermingham had been on leave from the college since December 2016 while recovering from open-heart surgery.

In a Sept. 27 email to college faculty and staff, Wagnitz said, "It is an honor to serve as CEO of the college that I've worked at — and have loved working at — for the past 16 years."

In his message, Wagnitz indicated that he would not be applying for the permanent presidency.

"My reasons ... are in no way a measure of the position's appeal," he said. "On the contrary, Highline College's vacancy will stand out as one of the most attractive presidential openings in the country this year.

"I support the Board's interest in a presidential recruitment that's as wide open, transparent, and fully objective as possible," he added.

After a permanent replacement for Bermingham is found, Wagnitz will return full time to his previous role as a vice president.

The timeline for the presidential search process has not been determined, but board members said their goal is to have a new leader in place no later than July 1, 2018.

Wagnitz has been an administrator at Highline since 2000. Since 2008, he has held the position of vice president for academic affairs, serving before that as dean of instruction.

His contributions to education and the community earned him the 2016 Award of Excellence in Leadership from the [CTC Leadership Development Association](#), a statewide professional development organization of Washington's community and technical colleges.

Wagnitz completed a doctorate in educational leadership at the University of Washington Tacoma.

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**Attachment:** Photo of Dr. Jeff Wagnitz

**Links within this release:**

- Highline College Board of Trustees: <https://www.highline.edu/about-us/board-of-trustees/>
- Dr. Jack Bermingham: <https://www.highline.edu/bermingham/>
- CTC Leadership Development Association: <https://ctcleads.org/>

*Founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County, Highline College annually serves approximately 17,000 students. With more than 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, entrepreneur Junki Yoshida and former Washington state poet laureate Sam Green.*