

# WASHINGTON STATE Academy of Sciences

## WSAS History and Purpose

The Washington State Academy of Sciences (WSAS) is an organization of outstanding Washington scientists dedicated to serving the state with scientific counsel. Formed as a working academy, not an honorary society, WSAS is modeled on the National Research Council. Its mission is two-fold: (a) to provide expert scientific and engineering analysis to inform public policy-making in Washington, and (b) to increase the role and visibility of science in the state.

WSAS was formed in response to authorizing legislation signed by Washington's governor in 2005. Its 12-member Founding Board of Directors was recommended to the governor by the presidents of Washington State University and the University of Washington and duly appointed by the governor.

In April, 2007, WSAS was constituted by the Secretary of State as a private, independent 501(c)(3). Its first officers were elected from the Founding Board. All members of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine who were living or working in Washington were invited to join the Washington Academy. 105 members of this group were inaugurated as the Founding Class at the organization's first annual meeting in November 2008.

WSAS start-up operations included developing processes for growing the Academy, electing new members, and structuring leadership succession; planning for sustained, independent funding; leasing an Olympia office; and initiating relationships with key executive agencies of the state government. Its most important early work is aimed at securing the kinds of commissioned studies that are WSAS's primary mission—definitive analyses of the best scientific knowledge available on sharply defined scientific questions. Negotiations have begun with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) to define the scope of a first commissioned study.

Robert Bates has been retained as interim executive director of WSAS to manage the PSP collaboration and to cultivate and coordinate additional studies with other agencies. Bates is Provost Emeritus of Washington State University. A research scientist and professor of biology for many years, he also represented WSU in the early stages of WSAS formation. Now, as executive director, he negotiates with the state's higher education research institutions and with state government to position the Academy to do the work for which it was constituted.

In all of its work, WSAS strives to establish and ensure its independence—from the state, from the universities, and from the agencies and departments that may be its future clients. Only with such independence can it provide the objective, transparently disinterested, and credible analysis on which its effective service to Washington depends.