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For Immediate Release – November 14, 2013

Dr. Brian Benzel honored for his partnership with the Washington Higher Education Facilities Authority

Spokane — Dr. Brian Benzel, retiring Vice President for Finance and Administration at Whitworth University, has been honored as a “Proud Partner” by the Washington Higher Education Facilities Authority.

Dr. Benzel has played a key role in partnering with the Authority to provide affordable financing for Whitworth, which in turn resulted in significant savings being passed on to the college’s students.

"It was a delight to share our progress and the facilities we’ve created with the incredible support and assistance of the Authority," said Benzel.

Dr. Benzel will be retiring from the University in December to pursue other opportunities. He has been an active partner with the Authority since he began his career at Whitworth University in 2007 and has overseen numerous campus capital improvements, including the construction of East Hall, Westminster Hall, Robinson Science Hall and the University Recreation Center, as well as additions and renovations to the Johnston Science Center and the Hixson Union Building.

Prior to his tenure at Whitworth University, Dr. Benzel served as Superintendent of Spokane Public Schools, the second largest school district in the state. He held a number of senior financial and policy leadership roles before then, including chief operating officer of Seattle Public Schools, president of the Northwest Region for Voyager Expanded Learning, superintendent of Edmonds School District, superintendent of Mead School District and business manager for Mead School District. In 1993, he was named Washington Superintendent of the Year.

Benzel holds a Ph.D in educational leadership from Gonzaga University, a Master of Public Administration from the University of Washington, and a Bachelor of Arts in business from Washington State University. He has been an adjunct faculty member at Gonzaga, Harvard, Seattle Pacific and Whitworth, where he taught school finance in the 1980s.

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Since 1983, the **Washington Higher Education Facilities Authority** (www.whefa.org) has helped the state’s private, nonprofit colleges access more than \$2.5 billion in tax-exempt financing for projects such as student housing, academic and administrative buildings, sports and music facilities, and computer systems. WHEFA’s ability to obtain lower interest rates through the sale of tax-exempt bonds has saved Authority borrowers millions of dollars—a savings ultimately passed on to students in the form of lower tuition. The Authority receives no regular state funding for its operations and accomplishes its work without taxpayer funding of any kind.