



# Washington State Auditor's Office

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## Whistleblower Investigation Report Wenatchee Valley College

For the period December 1, 2013 through November 30, 2014

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## Washington State Auditor

June 22, 2015

Jim Richardson, President  
Wenatchee Valley College

### Report on Whistleblower Investigation

Attached is the official report on Whistleblower Case No. WB 15-016 at Wenatchee Valley College.

The State Auditor's Office received an assertion of improper governmental activity at the College. This assertion was submitted to us under the provisions of Chapter 42.40 of the Revised Code of Washington, the Whistleblower Act. We have investigated the assertion independently and objectively through interviews and by reviewing relevant documents. This report contains the result of our investigation.

Questions about this report should be directed to Whistleblower Manager Jim Brownell at (360) 725-5352.

Sincerely,

JAN M. JUTTE, CPA, CGFM

ACTING STATE AUDITOR

OLYMPIA, WA

cc: Reagan Bellamy, Human Resources Executive Director  
Governor Jay Inslee  
Kate Reynolds, Executive Director, Executive Ethics Board  
Justin Brackett, Investigator

# WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION REPORT

## Assertion and results

In November 2014 our Office received a complaint asserting a faculty member at Wenatchee Valley College (College) used state resources for personal use. Specifically, it was alleged the subject used a vacant office at the College to store personal artwork which he created and also used students to gather material for the artwork.

We found reasonable cause to believe an improper governmental action occurred.

## About the Investigation

We visited the College and found boxes containing artwork created by the subject. The subject said the artwork was a personal hobby unrelated to his duties at the College. He said he kept the artwork in the office because he occasionally gave pieces away as welcome gifts and tokens of appreciation.

The subject said he never used students to obtain material for his personal artwork. We were unable to obtain contact information for his students because the College was opposed to releasing this information based on its interpretation of law.

As part of the investigation, we also examined the subject's use of his College-issued computer and email from December 1, 2013 through November 30, 2014. We found 622 personal emails, 691 personal photographs, and 50 personal documents, of which 16 documents and 90 emails pertained to his employment outside of the College.

The subject said he regularly received personal emails from family members and used his College computer to back up his home computer.

We found the subject's use of state resources was more than de minimis.

## College's Plan of Resolution

*It is important to us that we appropriately and consistently adhere to all state laws and ethical standards regarding the use of state resources. WVC will take the appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary actions in regards to the improper governmental actions that were found to have occurred.*

## State Auditor's Office Concluding Remarks

We thank College officials and personnel for their assistance and cooperation during the investigation.

## WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION CRITERIA

We came to our determination in this investigation by evaluating the facts against the criteria below:

RCW 42.52.160 - Use of persons, money, or property for private gain.

(1) No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money, or property under the officer's or employee's official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee, or another.