

# New Ruckelshaus Center Director Named

By RJ Wolcott, WSU News & Media Relations, Chris Page, William D. Ruckelshaus Center



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The [William D. Ruckelshaus Center](#) — a joint program of Washington State University and the University of Washington that brings community leaders together to develop collaborative solutions to public policy problems — has found its next director.

Julia Carboni, an associate professor with Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, was selected to lead the Seattle-based center following a nationwide search. Carboni starts July 1.

“The work done by the Ruckelshaus Center is tremendously important for the impact it has in Washington, as well as its ability to serve as a model for other states and regions. I am thrilled for the opportunity to lead the Ruckelshaus Center — jointly supported by WSU and UW — and to partner with elected officials, public and private sector, and other key stakeholders to help expand its impact across the Pacific Northwest and beyond,” Carboni said.

The Ruckelshaus Center offers leaders of public, private, tribal, and non-profit organizations the ability to tap expertise in collaborative governance from WSU and UW (along with university researchers and

subject matter experts) to meet the needs of their communities and constituencies. Such projects include reducing toxic chemicals in the Spokane River, improving the state's K–12 governance structure, redesigning Washington's intellectual and developmental disabilities policy, and increasing resiliency of the communities and environment of the state's coastline, [among other efforts](#).

The Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President hosts the program at Washington State University in collaboration with UW's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Policy and Governance.

"It is vital that the next leader of the Ruckelshaus Center advances its core mission to help diverse groups find solutions to some of the most important challenges facing our state and region, and Dr. Carboni is the perfect person to be at the helm," Elizabeth Chilton, WSU provost and executive vice president, said.

Carboni joined the faculty at Syracuse's Maxwell School in 2016 as an assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration and International Affairs. In 2020, she was named research director of the school's Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration, and a year later was named chair of the school's Citizenship and Civic Engagement Program.

Carboni holds a Masters of Public Administration as well as a Ph.D. in management from the University of Arizona. She has served numerous non-profit and public service groups, including the Foodbank of Central New York, the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, and the University Network for Collaborative Governance.

As part of the nationwide search for the Center's next director, WSU laid out what it envisions as key opportunities and challenges ahead.

"Enhancing Ruckelshaus Center's visibility and impact, leveraging the full combined capacity of WSU and UW, facilitating cooperation across sectors, and diversifying the financial support the Center receives are among the priorities Dr. Carboni will be advancing as she assumes this role," Chilton said. "It's also important that the Center continues to foster meaningful connections across the state and foster our shared principals of diversity, equity, inclusion and access."

The Center takes its name from its founder William D. Ruckelshaus, an American politician whose legacy centered on his ability to bring disparate groups together to craft policy. Ruckelshaus was the first to serve as the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970. His expertise in navigating disagreements between political parties resonates to this day, with these principals serving as the guides for the Center that now bears his name.

WSU and UW opened the Center in October 2004 with commitments from the leaders of both universities, William D. Ruckelshaus, and soon-to-be Washington state Governor Christine Gregoire.