

Meet Your Columbia REA Board of Directors



Doug Logan, PhD
Board Member, District 2
Dean of Engineering, WWU
(Retired)
Walla Walla, Wa

“When I was in College, I had two images in my head of the power business...one was a power plant belching bad stuff into the air, the other was a wall outlet. One was dirty, the other was boring.”

– Doug Logan, PhD

We’ve all heard the saying, “Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.” It might also be said that careers can be made when education meets opportunity. The latter version could be used to describe Columbia REA Board Director Doug Logan’s journey from engineering student at Walla Walla College in the early 1970s, to Dean of the Walla Walla University Engineering Department in the 2010s.

“I grew up in Sacramento, California. My first trip to Walla Walla was in 1969 to study engineering here at Walla Walla College. In 1973, the OPEC oil embargo hit while the Pacific Northwest was already experiencing a drought...there were real concerns about running out of electricity,” recalls Doug.

“In the midst of all that, Walla Walla College formed an energy conservation committee to see what could be done on campus to conserve energy. Then, in my second year of grad school I got involved in a research project involving energy, which led to an opportunity to go to Washington D.C. to work with a U.S. Senator on energy policy. for two years.”

“After another two years in graduate

school, I needed a job. I got a nice, glossy recruiting brochure from Pacific Gas & Electric in San Francisco. So I started working there part-time while I continued studying toward a PhD at Stanford. That took five more years, after which I went to work full-time at PG&E for another five years.” Doug adds humbly.

After two more career moves...one to Colorado and one to Norman, Oklahoma, Doug remembers receiving a phone call.

“Somebody on a search committee called me up and invited me back to my alma mater as Dean of the Engineering School. It took me 3 or 4 weeks to decide if I even wanted to be considered for the position. That was in 2008...34 years after I graduated from Walla Walla College.”



Doug Logan in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, with two engineers from the Saudi Electricity Corporation.

“We decided to make the move, and I retired as Dean in 2018. I’m just teaching one class this year.”

One guess as to what course he is teaching...?

“It’s called Electric Power Engineering... ENGR 430. Transmission and distribution planning, load flow analysis...the kind of stuff that will help prepare these kids to go right into the energy business should they



Dave Reller, Columbia REA Manager of Operations (left photo, far right), and Grant Glaus, Columbia REA Manager of Engineering (below, center) lead Doug Logan's Electric Power Engineering class through a tour of Columbia REA's Walla Walla Substation in January, 2020.

choose to go that route.”

It was very different circumstances that brought Doug in touch with Columbia REA, and the prospect of serving on the Board, for the first time.

“Back in 2009, somebody here at the University had heard that Columbia REA was seeking candidates for the Board. That person then came to me and asked if I would be interested. I lost that first election,” Doug laughs.

“As I was approaching retirement in 2018, I decided I would try it again. I am now in the middle of my first term as a Board Director. And looking back, it might have been a good thing that I lost that first election. I wouldn't have been able to give it the time it needs.”

“I may be the one on the Board with the most technical background to understand all that we talk about and deal with, but frankly, I still don't understand all of it completely just yet,” Doug says with confidence that someday soon he will.

“The learning curve is tremendous.”

One area where the learning curve will continue to arc upward, is the ongoing discussion around the power supply contract with Bonneville Power.

“That will be a biggie. The current contract is up in 2028, and there is already a lot of talk within the industry...various committees and agencies and energy companies are already in negotiation.



Because there are issues regarding cost structure and rate design, and other things, that need to be nailed down in the next 4 or 5 years...well before 2028.

These discussions will be framed within the context of mandated carbon-emission reductions, which puts Eastern Washington in a unique position with respect to much of the rest of the country.

“Our hydropower system not only provides energy. It provides balancing,” explains Doug.

“The dams allow for the ongoing proliferation and expansion of renewables because of the dams' ability to match variable generation and electricity demand. Cost-effective technology to replace the dams doesn't exist. People who want the dams removed want renewable energy to take their place. But the dams are what

has facilitated so much renewable energy development in the Pacific Northwest, because the dams act like a big battery that helps balance variable generation.”

While he does consider himself retired, Professor Logan wouldn't let on whether the 2028 Bonneville contract would be in place before or after he completely steps away from the classroom. Two things are certain, however: He is enjoying his time on the Board and would like to continue to serve for the foreseeable future.

“I've been on some other boards, but this is the first time I've been on a board that I had special expertise related to the business. I like our Board. I like our diversity...each member of the Board brings their own special perspectives.”