WPI School of Business
Coleman Fellows Profiles
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The Coleman Foundation Faculty Entrepreneurship Fellows Program was developed by the private, independent Coleman Foundation to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment education. Every year, grants are awarded to college and university faculty members across the country who are actively incorporating entrepreneurial concepts and activities into their teaching. WPI is proud to have a number of our faculty members recognized as Coleman Fellows for encouraging the spirit of entrepreneurship in our students.

Glenn Gaudette, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering
2010 Coleman Fellow

“A lot of students are interested in entrepreneurship,” says Glenn Gaudette, WPI associate professor of biomedical engineering and a 2010 Coleman Fellow, “but they’re not sure of all the aspects of it and the risk involved. Once they understand what entrepreneurship is and the things they can do with it, they’re more willing to take that step.”

Gaudette is a big believer in translational science – cross-disciplinary research motivated by the practical need to help people – an avenue of scientific research that readily lends itself to entrepreneurship. His own research involves myocardial regeneration – or simply put, ways to help the heart regrow tissue damaged by heart disease. Gaudette and his WPI research team are pioneering a new way to deliver stem cells grown from human bone marrow by infusing biodegradable sutures with those cells and sewing them right onto damaged heart tissue.

Practicing what he preaches, Gaudette is in the early stages of starting a company with colleague George Pins, another associate professor in the Biomedical Engineering Department. “We’ve got a couple of patent applications in for the biodegradable sutures and have developed a business plan using resources here at WPI, so we’re in the process of incorporating,” adds Gaudette.

Utilizing tools from the Coleman Foundation, Gaudette has introduced entrepreneurship components into his senior design course, enabling his students to incorporate entrepreneurial elements into their Major Qualifying Projects.

“We talk about how to define a problem and innovate for it,” says Gaudette. “I essentially say, ‘OK, if you were going to take your senior design project and start a company around it, what’s your business plan? Do you want to just license it out? Do you want to start an actual company? Do you want to grow that company? I have them give elevator pitches (short sales presentations designed to attract investors), which they all really enjoy. They get first-hand experience in how challenging this can be.”

While the Coleman Fellows program defines entrepreneurship in part “as self-employment through business ownership”, Gaudette believes the rewards go far beyond mere ownership, especially for biomedical students, who get to see the research they’ve worked so hard on actually help people and improve the lives of patients.

Gaudette stresses that entrepreneurship is the key to ensuring that research results get put to good use through commercialization. “Scientists like me would never be able to make enough product in the lab to help all the people out there who need it. Companies are needed to produce enough for the millions of patients who can benefit from the treatments and therapies we’re designing.”