

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*

KEY WEBSITES

Banner Web: This site, also sometimes called just *Banner* or the *Web Information System*, is a hub for all sorts of information including course registration, student course reports data, academic advisee information, financial accounting, employee and payroll information, annual report templates, and more. Log on at bannerweb.wpi.edu.

Helpdesk: The Computing and Communications Center (CCC) has a Helpdesk service that is generally highly praised on campus. For any computer-related question or problem, you can check for information on their website www.wpi.edu/+Helpdesk, send an inquiry to helpdesk@wpi.edu, or call x5888.

Also, please note key shortcuts on the uppermost part of the WPI Home Page as they are referenced frequently:



Academic Honesty Policy

The Faculty Guide to Academic Integrity at WPI is a great resource and is online at www.wpi.edu/offices/policies/facultyguide.html. If you are ever unsure about how to address a possible case of academic dishonesty, Dean of Students **Philip Clay** (pclay@wpi.edu, x5201, see photo) is an excellent source of information and advice.



Blackboard (myWPI) sites

To request a myWPI (Blackboard) site, from the home page of myWPI (my.wpi.edu), click on “Request a Site” or go directly to www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/HowTo/MyWPI/course.html. The Academic Technology Center (ATC) holds myWPI training sessions regularly; watch your email for announcements. If you ever need immediate help, send questions to myhelp@wpi.edu; you’ll generally get assistance within 24 hours.

Calendars

Click on *Calendars* on the uppermost toolbar on WPI’s home page. If you need an academic calendar for next year before it’s posted, try checking with **Chuck Kornik** in the Registrar’s Office (cjkornik@wpi.edu, x5457).

**If you have an important question during your first months at WPI that isn’t answered in this document, please contact cdemetry@wpi.edu so that we can add it in the future.*

Catalogs

Hard copies of the undergraduate and graduate catalogs are distributed by department offices in the spring of each year. Talk to an administrative assistant to see if hard copies are still available; online versions are always available at wpi.edu/academics/catalogs.html. These catalogs contain course descriptions, degree requirements, and academic policies.

Class Lists

To find the names of students in your courses, log on to Banner and go to *Faculty Services*, then *Course Information Menu*. *Detailed Class List* includes photos which are great for learning students' names.

Class Email Addresses

You can send a group email or select individual recipients via myWPI (Blackboard) course sites. Student email addresses are also listed in Banner, and there is an "Email Class" option at the bottom of the *Class List* listing in Banner class lists. A final option is to create a mailing list or "alias" (such as ES2001C09@wpi.edu) at the following site: wpi.edu/Academics/CCC/Services/Email/maillinglist.html.

Class Scheduling Requests

The course scheduling process begins in B-term for the following academic year. Each department has its own process for handling requests and scheduling courses, so just be attuned for messages that invite you to make requests. Or ask an administrative assistant about the process in your department.

Classroom Reservations

Classroom assignments are made as part of the annual course scheduling process. To find your classroom assignment, check the course schedules at wpi.edu/offices/registrar/schedules.html. If you need to schedule a classroom for something like a help session, you can use the campus scheduling website, <https://scheduling.wpi.edu>, or contact **Chuck Kornik** in the Registrar's Office (cjkornik@wpi.edu), x5457.

Classroom Technology & Software

Contact the Academic Technology Center's Teaching with Technology Collaboratory staff at atc-ttc@wpi.edu if you have questions about how to use the technology in your classroom, or if you would like some particular software to be installed. This group also has a great website filled with ideas and how-to's: wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/.

Computer Problems

If you have a problem with the computer or LCD projector in your classroom, call the Academic Technology Center (x5220, atc@wpi.edu). If you have a problem with your office computer, contact the Computing and Communications Center (CCC) Helpdesk at helpdesk@wpi.edu or x5888.

Copies

Different departments have different traditions and processes for making copies of documents for courses so check with an administrative assistant in your department. Many WPI classrooms are now paperless, with electronic documents posted on myWPI so students may choose to print on their own.

Copyright & Fair Use

WPI has a website dedicated to information on copyright law and fair use guidelines, for content creators and for instructors and students who wish to use copyrighted content in their courses and projects: wpi.edu/offices/policies/copyright.html. There are many gray areas, so if/when you have questions, contact **Lynne Riley** (lriley@wpi.edu, x5468, see photo) or other research librarians in Gordon Library for advice.



Course Evaluation Forms

Course evaluation forms, or “student course reports”, are sent to all instructors by the Provost’s Office typically about two weeks before the end of the term. All instructors are expected to distribute these forms in class on a day of their choosing. (Administering on the same day as an exam is NOT recommended.) The packet of forms includes instructions for distribution and return of forms.

Course Evaluation Results

You will receive an electronic summary of the quantitative results by email from the Registrar’s Office, and the original forms (with students’ written responses to open-ended questions) will be returned to you by campus mail. Historical data for all instructors and school-wide averages for particular questions can be found on Banner: click on *WPI Student Course Reports* in the *Faculty Services* listing.

Course Reserves

If you would like to place books, documents, or other resources on reserve for your students at the Gordon Library, stop by the library or contact Access Services Librarian **Debbie Bockus** (dbockus@wpi.edu, x5230).

Course Syllabus

A course syllabus is an expectation in WPI academic culture, but instructors are given considerable leeway and there is quite a bit of variation as to level of detail and format. See the *Syllabus Checklist* document for more information, or contact **Chrys Demetry**, Director of the Morgan Teaching & Learning Center (cdemetry@wpi.edu, x5707, see photo).



Course Withdrawal

Unlike many other universities, WPI does not have a formal withdrawal process for undergraduate courses. Students can make course changes (add or drop) without penalty just through the 4th day of the undergraduate term. On days 5-10, add/drops are permitted only with instructor approval and with payment of a late fee. No add/drops are allowed after day 10. Students may stop participating in a course after that point, and there is no mechanism like withdrawal. Many will not contact you to explain that they are dropping the course or why. The appropriate grade for this type of student is NR (No Record).

The course change/withdrawal process is somewhat different and more traditional for graduate courses. For details, see wpi.edu/offices/registrar/course-change.html.

Exam Scheduling Policy

Instructors are asked to schedule exams during regularly scheduled class periods. If you feel strongly about scheduling an exam for a longer period of time outside of the regular class schedule, WPI policy is that the exam must take place in the evening. Furthermore, the date and time must be announced and published during the first week of class.

Instructors are asked to be sensitive to problems associated with allowing students to stay late to complete an exam. The next class using the room may not be able to start on time, and they may have an exam as well. (It's safe to assume that the next instructor will be annoyed if the room isn't vacated by 5 minutes before the hour.) Furthermore, not all students in your class may have equal opportunity to take advantage of the extra time if they have another class to go to in the next hour.

Expense Reports

To be reimbursed for reimbursable expenses related to your job (talk to your department head if unsure), complete and submit the "WPI Expense Report" form found on the Accounting website: wpi.edu/offices/acc/facultystaff.html. Note that original receipts must be submitted, including an itemized receipt for meals (i.e., not just the credit card slip).

Faculty Handbook

A link to the complete Faculty Handbook can be found on the Faculty Governance page: wpi.edu/Campus/Faculty/.

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of students' education records. Education records may include grades, grade reports, progress reports, transcripts, handwritten notes, computer records, e-mails, audio and video recordings among other items.

It is important to note that WPI gives parents of financially dependent students full access to their dependents' educational records. Access includes parents' receiving copies of their dependents' grade reports each semester from the Office of the Registrar. WPI assumes that its undergraduate students are financially dependent on their parents unless the student informs us otherwise. If the student is financially independent, the student must notify the Registrar of his or her independent financial status by using the Financially Independent Student form available in the Registrar's Office.

Please visit these two sites for more complete information: wpi.edu/Admin/OAA/Handbook/rules.html and www.wpi.edu/offices/policies/ferpa.html. If you have questions, please contact the campus FERPA officer Heather L. Jackson, University Registrar (hjackson@wpi.edu, x5211).

A consequence of FERPA is that graded work must be returned to students in a manner that protects the privacy of those grades. Therefore, for example, homework with the grade shown on the front cannot be left in a box in the hallway for students to pick up.

Grade Standards

All of WPI's grading options and standards are presented in the Undergraduate Catalog: wpi.edu/academics/catalogs/ugrad.html. Instructors have substantial leeway in deciding how to assign grades in courses. The faculty-approved guidelines for project grades are published in the catalog.

Grade Submission

Course and project grades are submitted electronically on Banner. After logging in, go to *Faculty Services*, then *Course Information Menu*, then *Final Grade Entry*. Grading deadlines come up more quickly than at many other universities. For example, if the term ends on a Thursday, final grades are likely to be due by 5pm on the following Tuesday. The Registrar, Provost, or Dean of Undergraduate Studies usually sends a reminder each term about the grading deadline.

Grade Appeals

WPI undergraduate and graduate students have the right to appeal a course or project grade on grounds of arbitrariness, prejudice, and/or error. Challenge of an instructor's grading standard is not sufficient grounds for appeal. The details of the grade appeal procedure are described in the *Policies and Procedure* section of the undergraduate catalog and the *Grading System and Academic Standards* section of the graduate catalog.

Grants Application Process

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) website is a treasure trove: proposal toolkits, key forms, budget templates, funding opportunities, and more: wpi.edu/Admin/OSP/. Your first point of contact Director **Franc Lemire** (flemire@wpi.edu, x5811, see photo).



Holidays and Religious Observances

WPI holidays are shown on the academic calendar (see "Calendars"). You may wish to avoid scheduling exam dates on major religious holidays; these dates can be found at wpi.edu/offices/ih/religious_holidays.html. Following is a link to a 7-year calendar of holy days and festivals: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar.

WPI has a policy on **Student Absence Due to Religious Beliefs**, in accordance with Massachusetts state law: "Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or denominational educational or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work requirement which he/she may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees or any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any students because of his/her availing himself/ herself of the provisions of this section."

Institutional Review Board

Federal mandate and WPI policy require that the WPI Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approve all applicable research involving human subjects that is performed under the auspices of WPI. Please visit this site for complete information: wpi.edu/offices/irb.html. When you have questions, contact the IRB Chair, Professor **Kent Rissmiller** (kjr@wpi.edu, x5019, see photo).



Intellectual Property Policy

WPI's policy can be found at wpi.edu/offices/policies/intell.html. For IP questions related to inventions and licensing, see also *Technology Transfer*.

Office Hours

WPI has no requirements for instructor office hours, but the culture is that some office hours are expected. They seem to vary from 2 hours/week to 5 hours/week, and "by appointment."

Ombudsperson

The Ombuds Office provides informal, confidential, and impartial complaint-handling services for students, staff, faculty, and administrators. For more information and contact information for current ombudsperson(s), see wpi.edu/offices/ombuds.html.

Policies & Compliance

For a complete list and detailed explanation of all of WPI's policies, see wpi.edu/offices/policies.html. **Mike Curley**, University Compliance Officer, is an excellent point of contact for all legal and policy-related questions (mjcurley@wpi.edu, x6919).

Project Advising

Ask your department head and other mentors for advice on when to get involved in MQP and IQP advising since it varies by department. The best way to learn about project advising is to be a co-advisor on a MQP and/or IQP before advising one alone for the first time.

Several Food for Thought seminars offered each year by the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center typically relate to project advising. Handouts from these sessions are archived on the Morgan Center myWPI site. Look for the link to the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center site in the *Organizations* listing on your myWPI home page; faculty are automatically enrolled in this site on a periodic basis. If the site does not appear in your listing, go to the *Community* tab and enter "Morgan" in the *Search* box in the upper left. The Morgan Teaching and Learning Center should appear in the search results; click on *Enroll*. From that point forward, the site should appear in your organizations listing.

The Interdisciplinary & Global Studies Division (IGSD) oversees the IQP; the IGSD Dean, **Rick Vaz** (vaz@wpi.edu, x5344, see photo), can help you learn more about IQPs and help you find a project to co-advise when you are ready. There are also project advising resources on the IGSD website: wpi.edu/academics/Depts/IGSD/Advisors/index.html. Many of these resources can be easily adapted to MQP advising.



Students with Academic Difficulties

Refer students to the Academic Resources Center unit within Academic Advising, which offers one-on-one academic success skills coaching and also coordinates tutoring services and help sessions for large first-year courses. The Center's website also contains study skills handouts and tips for academic success: wpi.edu/offices/arc/. If you are concerned about the academic progress of a student, contact the Academic Advising Office at x5381 or academic-advising@wpi.edu.

Students with Disabilities

If a student provides documentation from WPI's Office of Disability Services, instructors are required by federal law to provide accommodations. Students are told that they must do so early in the term. If a student tells you that s/he has a learning disability but does *not* provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services, then you are not obligated to provide accommodations. The documentation spells out exactly what accommodations are warranted, and provides assistance such as quiet test rooms with proctoring. **Aaron Ferguson** is the Director of Disability Support; contact him with questions at amf@wpi.edu or x4908.

Students in Emotional Distress

Refer students to the Student Development & Counseling Center (SDCC), also known as West Street House. This Center offers counseling services, stress management sessions, and a variety of other holistic student development programs. If you are concerned about a student who doesn't seem to be getting help, contact the Student Development & Counseling Center with the student's name (sdcc@wpi.edu; x5540); their staff will also attempt to reach out to that student. **Charlie Morse** (cmorse@wpi.edu, x5540, see photo) directs the SDCC; he and his staff are great sources of advice and feedback.



Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Graders

Each department has a different process for assigning TAs, graders, and senior tutors or Peer Learning Assistants (PLAs) to courses. If you feel you need more of this type of support, you'll need to negotiate with your department head. Graduate students with teaching assistantships are expected to work up to 20 hours per week supporting the course(s) to which they are assigned.

Technology Transfer

The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) functions to identify, evaluate, protect, classify, market, and license the intellectual property assets developed by WPI researchers, as well as significant users of WPI resources. More information can be found on the office's website (wpi.edu/offices/tto) or by contacting the Director, **Mike Manning** (mmanning@wpi.edu, x5834, see photo).



Textbook Orders

Most departments have an administrative assistant who coordinates book orders for department faculty. For questions about textbook costs and availability of digital or print coursepacks, contact the WPI Bookstore Textbook Manager, **Katelyn Merrill** at kmerrill@wpi.edu or x5247. The reading list for coursepacks should be supplied at least one term prior to the course offering. Students benefit from a longer lead time for textbook orders too, since the bookstore can find more used copies.

Tutoring Services

A variety of tutoring and academic success services are available to students in your courses. Information can be found on the Academic Resources Center website (part of Academic Advising): wpi.edu/offices/arc. Call the Academic Advising Office if your students need tutoring services that don't seem to be available. For writing tutors, see *Writing*.

Waitlists

Once a class enrollment limit is reached, students may add their names to the waitlist. If a seat becomes available in a waitlisted class, the open seat will be offered via email to the first student on the waitlist. The Registrar's Office sends students a standard email to which they must respond by the given deadline to claim the seat offered. *Even if there appear to be open seats in a course, instructors should NOT offer a student a seat prior to the start of the term since other students may be first in line.*

At noon on the first day of each term, waitlists are frozen. If a class has a waitlist at this time, then a student must obtain the instructor's approval to be admitted to the class. The waitlist will remain in place until the end of the add-drop period (4 days into the term). Students must bring these forms to the Registrar's Office to be processed. Instructors should feel no pressure to add students beyond a course's capacity; indeed the capacity is often defined by real constraints or good pedagogy.

If your class has students on the waitlist, the Registrar will send you an electronic copy (pdf file) of the waitlist that includes the date and time when each student was added to the list. If you are accepting additional students during the first few days of the term, you may wish to do so by order of the waitlist.

Wait list procedures are always under development, so watch for an email announcement from the Registrar's Office or Dean of Undergraduate Studies in case there are changes for the upcoming semester.

Writing Tutors and Teaching with Writing

Trained peer writing tutors are available in WPI's Writing Center: wpi.edu/academics/Depts/HUA/WC/. These tutors provide workshops and individual peer tutoring in a range of communication projects, such as course papers, dissertations, oral presentations, Spanish language projects, and more, including written, oral, and visual communication. All services are free to undergraduate and graduate students. Lorraine Higgins (ldh@wpi.edu, x5503, see photo), Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, coordinates the Writing Center and also is available to meet with faculty to discuss teaching with writing in courses and projects. Workshops related to Writing Across the Curriculum are a regular part of the Food for Thought teaching & learning seminar series.

