

## **STANDARD THREE: ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE**

WPI operates under a charter, granted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1865, with full and unrestricted authority to carry out its educational mission and to award degrees at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels.

Each of WPI's five fundamentally distinct organizational units—the Board of Trustees (or Corporation), the Administration, the Faculty, Student Government, and the Alumni Association—has its own form of governance or organization. Four of these units, as will be noted below, have formal articles of organization, such as bylaws or constitutions. The primary mission and procedures of the fifth unit, the Administration, are articulated in the recently revised online Faculty Handbook (@) and the new online Administrative Handbook (@).

### **The Board of Trustees**

The ultimate authority for governing the University rests with the WPI Board of Trustees. Composed of a minimum of 12 members, the Board currently has 37 trustees and 43 non-voting emeriti members.

The Board of Trustees is WPI's legal policy-making body. The Administration is charged with carrying out its policies and implementing them on a day-to-day basis. The president, who serves as the University's chief executive officer, is a member of the board.

All trustees are elected to membership by the Corporation. At-large trustees are proposed by the Corporation for terms of five years, with no limitation of service; alumni trustees are proposed to the Corporation by the WPI Alumni Association for terms of eight years with no eligibility for immediate re-election. WPI annually publishes a brochure (\*) listing the trustees and their achievements.

The responsibilities of the Corporation include ensuring that effective strategic and operational planning takes place, approving major expenditures and commitments, monitoring results against plans, and ensuring that WPI has effective top management. These duties and responsibilities are outlined in a set of bylaws (\*), the most recent amendments to which were made in 1998.

The Board of Trustees is organized into 11 committees appointed by the board chair and approved by the Corporation. These committees, each charged with specific responsibilities, are: Academic Planning and Student Affairs; Audit, Budget and Finance; Development and University Relations; Executive; Executive Compensation; Investment; Nominations; Physical Facilities; Technology; and Trusteeship. The Technology Committee, the most recently formed

(1999-2000), was established in response to the need to maintain currency in a fiscally responsible way in this important area. Much of the business that comes before the board is discussed and resolved by these committees and then brought to the Corporation for adoption or approval as necessary and appropriate. The board's Executive Committee is composed of the chairs of each standing committee, the immediate past chair of the Corporation, two at large members, and the president of the University.

The WPI Board of Trustees meets at least three times annually, usually in October, February and May (the annual meeting). The Executive Committee typically meets four times each year. Most Board committees meet at least three times annually, but some meet as often as six times during the year. Examples of the former are Audit, Development and University Relations, and Trusteeship. Examples of the latter are Academic Planning and Student Affairs, Investment, and Physical Facilities. During the past year, average attendance at Corporation meetings has been about 60 percent of the active members and several emeriti members. The five vice presidents, along with appropriate senior staff, also attend Corporation meetings and serve as staff liaisons on a regularly assigned basis to the various committees. Two representatives of the faculty (the secretary of the faculty and the chair of the Committee on Governance) and two students (the presidents of the undergraduate and graduate student bodies) are invited to meet with the Corporation and with most committees as observers.

No member of the board, other than the president, receives compensation for his or her service as a member of the Corporation. The board adopted a conflict of interest policy in 1990 that each trustee and officer is asked to sign annually. It details any external affiliations that might place them in a conflict-of-interest situation with WPI. All trustees and officers have signed this statement.

Members of the board are characteristically successful in their chosen careers. Current board members include the CEO of Xerox, the vice president for North American operations for General Motors, and leaders of many major corporations. The average age of board members is approximately 55 years. Twenty-five members of the Corporation are graduates of WPI; most hold engineering degrees. WPI's academic department advisory boards are a source of potential trustees. In recent years several new trustees have come from this background and have brought a high level of knowledge of the University as well as their own expertise to the board.

## Administration

The president is the University's chief executive officer. His executive team (the President's Cabinet) is composed of the institution's senior officers:

- five vice presidents (for academic affairs, administration, development and university relations, information technology, and student affairs);
- their senior associates: the associate and assistant provosts (Academic Affairs), the director of physical plant (Administration), the director of library services (Information Technology), and the associate vice presidents for student affairs and enrollment management (Student Affairs); and
- the deans responsible for continuing studies and for interdisciplinary and global studies.

The Cabinet generally meets two or more times a month, with individual officers meeting on a regular basis with the president, as well. Cabinet members and student representatives are also invited as observers to committee meetings of the Corporation.

The duties of the various Cabinet officers are generally consistent with what would be expected of similar positions in any collegial organization. Those duties will be outlined in the online Administrative Handbook, which is under development (@). The performance of the vice presidents is reviewed annually by the president and the Board of Trustees' Executive Compensation Committee. The vice presidents review those senior staff reporting to them. Cabinet members have direct budgetary responsibilities for their areas of focus. Faculty evaluation of senior administrators has been performed annually since 1992, with results communicated to the administrators and (in summary form) to the faculty.

The middle management of the administration is composed of heads and directors with program responsibilities. Since salary increments are based on merit performances and evaluations, members of the Cabinet have the ability and authority not only to reward good performance by middle managers, but to withhold increments in areas of poor performance based on the annual evaluations done in the spring of each year.

The provost, the associate provost and the assistant provost provide senior leadership of the academic program. The provost is responsible for the overall management and leadership of the Division of Academic Affairs, including the selection and development of faculty; review and action on tenure and promotion recommendations; oversight of academic departments; allocation of resources to departments and programs; leadership of academic planning efforts; development of academic budgets, and service as a liaison to faculty governance committees. The associate provost is responsible for ensuring the quality of the undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programs; maintaining academic integrity and protecting student interests; evaluating the learning experience; establishing scholarly expectations; monitoring admissions standards; and assisting in developing research programs and external support. The assistant provost is responsible for academic advisement support to students; assessment of the IQP, MQP and Sufficiency project programs; pre-college programs including the Massachusetts Academy of Mathematics and Science, teacher training and the School-College Collaboration; coordination of ROTC programs; direction of the Worcester Community Project Center; editing the University's scholarly series, *WPI Studies*, and providing operational oversight for accreditation activities.

## Faculty

The WPI Faculty Constitution (including the by-laws) and the Faculty Handbook were revised in 1999-2001 to ensure currency of policy and nomenclature. The Faculty and Board of Trustees voted to accept these revisions in spring 2001. The Faculty Constitution defines the WPI Faculty as "the President, the Provost, and those individuals holding full-time appointments with the exact titles: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Instructor" (revised version of the definition as voted at the Faculty Meeting of January 25, 2001). The constitution defines as the duties of the Faculty "...the establishment of admissions requirements, academic standards, curricula, courses of study, and the regulations pertaining thereto, as well as certification of

candidates for degrees and recommendation to the Board of Trustees for award of degrees.” The WPI faculty governance committee structure ensures that these and all other duties of the Faculty are carried out effectively.

Faculty governance at WPI operates through a committee structure with committees bringing motions for approval to monthly faculty meetings chaired by the secretary of the faculty, the senior elected post within the faculty. Below are the standing elected committees of the faculty, with brief descriptions of their functions:

- **Committee on Governance:** oversees faculty elections; addresses issues raised by members of the community that are not obviously under the purview of another standing committee; formulates proposed changes to the Faculty Constitution; addresses questions of jurisdiction among other committees.
- **Committee on Academic Policy:** makes recommendations concerning policy for the undergraduate program, especially in the areas of admissions and financial aid, degree requirements, and quality of the program as related to WPI goals.
- **Committee on Academic Operations:** monitors procedures for administering existing academic policies; recommends to the faculty changes in courses, projects or programs; reviews petitions for exceptions to established rules.
- **Committee on Graduate Studies and Research:** oversees all policy and procedural activities in the graduate program and WPI’s research program.
- **Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom:** recommends faculty for tenure to the provost and reviews problems involving academic freedom raised by any faculty member.
- **Committee on Appointments and Promotion:** makes recommendations to the provost for promotions to associate and full professor and for sabbaticals; participates in selection and review of department heads.
- **Committee on Advising and Student Life:** oversees the activity and development of student advisory and counseling programs, as well as any aspects of student life that affect learning.
- **Committee on Administrative and Financial Policy:** represents to the administration the interests of the faculty concerning administrative and financial policies.
- **Faculty Review Committee:** reviews, at a candidate’s request, negative decisions on nonrenewal of probationary appointments or on tenure, with the power to require reconsideration.

More detailed descriptions of these committees and of their membership may be found in the WPI Faculty Handbook (@). The handbook also sets out in detail WPI's administrative procedures and policies with respect to

- affirmative action.
- faculty appointments and reappointments of tenure-track faculty.
- academic freedom and tenure (including procedures for removal of a tenured faculty member for cause).
- promotion.
- retirement.
- sabbaticals, unpaid leaves and released time.
- summer salary.
- consulting policy.
- inventions, patents and copyrights.
- sexual harassment.
- indemnification.

Finally, the handbook spells out the details of WPI's benefits package (annuity and insurance plans, medical plans, tuition assistance policy, and fringe benefits).

## Academic Departments

Leadership of academic departments is provided by department heads, who serve as the operational and intellectual leaders of their departments. Heads are appointed by the administration for a period of five years, with the understanding that an additional five-year term is possible. A search committee of faculty and administrators recommends candidates to the provost and president. Selection and evaluation procedures are indicated in the Faculty Handbook and are followed by the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP), with a recommendation made to the provost.

As mentioned earlier, all 14 heads report directly to the provost, who meets with them in a general monthly meeting. In addition, the provost meets, as needed, with individual heads and calls special meetings and occasional retreats, as necessary.

Each department establishes its own internal governance structure. While the titles vary from department to department, most departments have standing faculty committees that deal with personnel (especially tenure) and curricular issues.

## Alumni Association

The WPI Alumni Association is a separate nonprofit corporation, chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1891 and operated according to its own constitution and by-laws (\*). Its activities are supported operationally by WPI based upon an agreement reached in 1971. The association nominates alumni trustees and offers a wide variety of programs and services for WPI's more than 25,000 living graduates, who work around the globe. The activities of the association are guided by the following vision and mission statements, which were ratified in 1997:

**Vision Statement:** The WPI Alumni Association is the resource and networking hub for lifelong career and educational opportunities and for maintaining a bond within the WPI community.

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the WPI Alumni Association is to work in partnership with WPI to build strong bonds among alumni, students, faculty and staff; provide alumni with opportunities for lifelong education and career development; and utilize the talents and generosity of alumni in support of WPI and the programs of the association.

The programs and services of the association are developed and overseen by a partnership between the University, through the staff of the Alumni Division of the Development and University Relations Office, and the leadership of the association—especially the Alumni Association Cabinet and the Alumni Leadership Council.

The membership of the Alumni Association Cabinet, the association's operational decision-making group, includes the officers, the members-at-large, and the leaders of the association's main divisions. The divisions were established to carry out the goals of the association's Master Plan. These divisions, with their objectives, are:

- **Alumni Funds:** to actively promote the lifelong financial commitment from alumni in support of the educational mission of WPI.
- **Career Development:** to work in partnership with WPI, and specifically the Career Development Center, to develop and promote programs and services that meet the needs of alumni in the areas of career counseling, transition and job placement.
- **Communications and Marketing:** to assure that active and effective lines of communication are maintained among the University, the association, and the alumni body. The division works closely with the staffs of the *WPI Journal* and *The Wire*, oversees the design and content of the association's extensive Web offerings, and works with other association divisions to assure that information about their activities and programs are communicated to alumni.
- **Lifelong Learning:** to communicate with alumni about existing opportunities and make more opportunities available for continuing education from graduation through the retirement years.

- **Operations:** to assure communication among the association's volunteers, as well as work with various committees that make up the internal operations of the association: Class Boards of Directors, Citations, Alumni Trustee Search, Nominations, and Program Review.
- **Service and Social:** to work in partnership with WPI, and specifically the Alumni Office, to provide alumni with opportunities to build strong bonds among alumni and students through such programs as Reunion, Homecoming, Alumni Admissions, the Student Alumni Society (SAS) and the Tech Old Timers (TOT).

The Alumni Leadership Council is the governing body of the WPI Alumni Association. The council, which meets at least once a year, is composed of all voting members of the Cabinet; all alumni members of the Alumni Funds Board; all program committee chairs; the chair or designate of each class board of directors; an additional representative from each class having more than 300 living members; class head agents; a representative from the 50-Year Associates; a graduate representative from the School of Industrial Management; the chair of the Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD); the chair of the President's Advisory Council; members of the Past Presidents Advisory Committee; the officers of the Tech Old Timers; one representative of each alumni club; one graduate representative of WPI's graduate programs; the alumni advisor and student chair of the Student Alumni Society; and one representative of the Alumni Admissions Program.

## Student Body

The WPI student body is organized with its own leadership at both the undergraduate and graduate levels (the Student Government Association, SGA, and Graduate Student Organization, GSO, respectively.)

The revised undergraduate government constitution and bylaws (\*), adopted in the spring of 1991, establish a student senate that is more representative of the entire student body than the previous organizational structure. Members are elected from the entire student body, thereby eliminating the prior perceived problems of broad representation and communication.

The Graduate Student Organization, formed in 1987, elects its own officers. The GSO is a representative form of government with its structure based on those of WPI's academic departments. In the spring of 1991, the Student Life Office assumed responsibility from the Office of Dean of Graduate Studies for programming and support of graduate students.

## Appraisal

### Trustees

The Corporation is seeking broader diversity of membership. At present, the membership includes two women and one person of color. Identifying and enlisting minority members and women, an effort in which the Trusteeship Committee is continually engaged, is a constant challenge to the renewal process and the success of the board.

The board conducts a thorough self-assessment annually, focusing on the effectiveness of the board and its committees, rather than the performance of individual trustees. The assessments have generally been quite positive, but members continually indicate a desire to be better informed about student and faculty interests.

## **Administration**

For many years, a selected group of middle-level managers called the Executive Staff met regularly. A survey of this group in 1998-99 indicated that many of them regarded their meetings as ineffective, dealing mainly with information flow from Cabinet members.

## **Faculty**

Few faculty meetings achieve attendance of half of the voting members (roughly 110 of 218). In the recent past, meetings have occasionally suspended business for loss of a quorum (one quarter of the voting members.)

In 2000-01, the Committee on Governance began reviewing the definition and status of faculty members in terms of the distinctions and varying authorities and responsibilities of tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track full-time faculty members. This effort will continue into next year.

## **Student Affairs**

The Student Affairs Division is comprised of two distinct administrative areas or branches, Enrollment and Admissions and Financial Aid, as well as the student life/student services offices, which are comprised of Student Life, Athletics and Physical Education, and Career Development.

Enrollment strategies and the development of a comprehensive enrollment marketing plan are the responsibilities of the associate vice president for enrollment management; directing the administration of a comprehensive financial aid office is the responsibility of the director of financial aid.

The student services areas are the major responsibility of the associate vice president for student affairs/dean of students (who serves as the chief student life officer at the University, providing leadership and supervisory responsibility for all out-of-classroom services and activities for students), the director of physical education and Athletics, and the director of career development.

To achieve successful outcomes, academic affairs and student affairs must work together closely, communicating on an ongoing basis and developing cross-functional participation from their staff on issues pertinent to students and the community.

## Projection

WPI is seeking a more effective forum in which professional staff members may communicate with their peers in other divisions and more effectively present their views to senior managers.

Experiments conducted in 2000-01 with scheduling faculty meetings in mid-afternoon rather than at the end of the day have succeeded in increasing attendance. No meetings have lost a quorum, causing the suspension of business, since the time change was instituted.

Enrollment services and financial aid, both of which are direct reports to the vice president for student affairs, need to work side-by-side in providing access and financial support for our students. Developing the most effective enrollment strategies and financial aid models will require close collaboration between both offices.

Approaching student life issues impacting the quality of the out-of-classroom experience requires collaboration among the athletics department, the wellness and alcohol education staff, the Student Development and Counseling staff, and the Student Life staff.

The challenge for the undergraduate Student Government Association will be maintaining continually effective student leadership. The increased appeal of global project centers has attracted significant numbers of student leaders. Consequently, student leaders in key positions across the campus, including residence advisors, the Student Government senators, Interfraternity Council officers and orientation leaders may be at project sites for a term, unable to assume the leadership role to which they were elected or selected. Consistent student leadership becomes a major challenge.

Now that the Campus Center is open, a campus-wide board of directors from all WPI constituencies will need to be developed to share in the operational policy planning of the facility.