



# WPI

## **Search for the Vice President of Enrollment Management**

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Worcester, MA



*Since 1865, WPI has pioneered an educational philosophy that theory and practice must work together - producing graduates who combine technical expertise with the ability to solve meaningful problems.*



## THE OPPORTUNITY

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) invites nominations and applications for the position of Vice President of Enrollment Management. This is an exceptional opportunity for a strategic enrollment leader to drive growth and expand the national and international reach of a premier technological university known for its project-based learning, strong graduate outcomes, and innovative culture.

The VP of Enrollment Management will join WPI during a period of significant momentum, building upon the university's solid enrollment foundation and recent achievements, including Carnegie R1 research status and a series of high-profile national rankings. This leader will enhance WPI's undergraduate enrollment strategy, leverage opportunities and address challenges facing higher education while ensuring continued success in attracting top students. This work will elevate the university's visibility and market position while drawing interest from prospective students nationwide and internationally.

Reporting to the Provost and serving as a member of the President's Cabinet, this role represents a unique opportunity to shape WPI's enrollment strategy at the highest levels of university leadership. Working with key stakeholders from academic affairs, student affairs, and marketing & communications, the VP of Enrollment Management will be responsible for undergraduate enrollment strategy and oversee comprehensive undergraduate enrollment operations and precollegiate initiatives.

Leading a dedicated team of enrollment professionals across admissions, financial aid, analytics, and pre-collegiate programs, the successful candidate will set the enrollment strategy, strengthen data-driven recruitment approaches and expand domestic and international pipelines. WPI already attracts students from 48 states and 98 countries, demonstrating strong national and international appeal. This role offers the opportunity to strategically amplify this existing reach and position WPI as a first-choice destination for high-achieving students seeking excellence in science, technology, engineering, and business education.

The ideal candidate will bring significant experience setting strategic vision and leading enrollment team, operation and initiatives at complex institutions. They understand enrollment excellence throughout the entire cycle, excel at partnering with marketing and academic teams, and possess the leadership skills to build sustainable pipelines that showcase WPI's unique strengths in science, technology, engineering, and business education, hands-on learning, and exceptional return on investment.

All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to Nick Civitarese, Assistant Director of Talent Acquisition, at [ncivitarese@wpi.edu](mailto:ncivitarese@wpi.edu). All communications will remain confidential.

## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) was [founded in 1865](#) with a clear vision: to blend theory and practice as equal pillars of education. Located on a 95-acre campus in [Worcester, Massachusetts](#)—New



England's second-largest city and just an hour west of Boston—WPI serves more than 7,500 students, including 5,500 undergraduates and 2,000 graduate students. This mid-sized technological university has grown into a globally recognized institution while maintaining its founding commitment to an educational approach that combines rigorous academics with real-world application.

In 1970, WPI introduced the pioneering [WPI Plan](#), revolutionizing its project-based learning model. Through this innovative approach, students work in teams to solve authentic challenges, often in partnership with communities worldwide. Rather than simply learning theoretical concepts, WPI students develop the ability to think critically, adapt to complex situations, and implement practical solutions to meaningful problems—a philosophy that continues to define WPI today.

The university's signature project-based curriculum includes the [Interactive Qualifying Project](#) (IQP), where students address problems at the intersection of science and society, and the [Major Qualifying Project](#) (MQP), a senior capstone of professional-level work in students' fields. This educational model is delivered through 54 global project centers across 30 countries, where approximately 80% of students leave campus for project work and 63% complete projects abroad. More than 1,200 students completed immersive research projects in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Beyond science, technology, engineering, and business education, WPI demonstrates a strong commitment to the [humanities and arts](#). All undergraduate students complete substantial coursework in these areas, developing critical thinking skills and broader perspective needed for effective leadership in today's complex world. This holistic approach ensures graduates can not only solve technical problems but also understand their ethical, social, and cultural dimensions while driving innovation and entrepreneurship across science, technology, engineering, and business sectors.

## ACADEMIC STRUCTURE

This distinctive educational philosophy is delivered through four innovative schools, each embodying WPI's commitment to project-based learning and real-world impact:

1. [Engineering School](#) - WPI's largest school, renowned for world-class programs in robotics, biomedical engineering, mechanical engineering, aerospace, and materials science. Students gain both deep technical expertise and understanding of how engineering advances society.
2. [School of Arts and Sciences](#) - Combines rigorous science and mathematics with humanities and social sciences, developing students' creativity, communication, and critical thinking alongside technical expertise in fields like computer science, data science, physics, and mathematics.
3. [The Business School](#) - Prepares leaders at the nexus of technology, business, and entrepreneurship, with students studying financial technology, business analytics, industrial engineering, supply chain management, and information systems. In 2003, the school earned prestigious AACSB accreditation, a distinction held by fewer than five percent of business programs worldwide.



4. [The Global School](#) - Offers interdisciplinary programs in International & Global Studies, Community Climate Adaptation, and Global Development. Through its network of 54 global project centers across six continents, students from all disciplines gain transformative international experience addressing real-world challenges.

The university offers more than 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs across these four schools. With a 13:1 student-to-faculty ratio, WPI combines the personal attention of a smaller institution with the resources and opportunities of a major research university. Each school presents distinct opportunities for enrollment growth and represents different student constituencies and recruitment strategies.

## **WPI'S COMPETITIVE POSITION**

WPI occupies a distinctive and increasingly prominent position in higher education by combining rigorous science, technology, engineering, and business education with innovative hands-on learning. This approach sets WPI apart from traditional universities and has created significant competitive advantages.

WPI has exceptional outcomes across all degree levels. Graduates achieve outstanding employment rates with impressive starting salaries for 2024 graduates: \$80,294 for bachelor's recipients and \$95,444 for master's graduates. These results contribute to WPI's remarkable ranking as 18th nationally on U.S. News & World Report's "[Colleges with the Best Return on Investment](#)," with an estimated ROI of \$3.4 million after 40 years. Additional recognition of WPI's exceptional value includes ranking among LinkedIn's Top 50 Colleges for 2025, based on career outcomes data including job placement, network strength, and alumni success.

What truly differentiates WPI is its project-based educational approach, which produces graduates who combine deep technical expertise with practical problem-solving skills and global perspective. These qualities distinguish them significantly from graduates of traditional STEM institutions. The university's extensive network of global project centers and international research collaborations provides natural pathways for building meaningful relationships with prospective international students.

This momentum creates an exceptional foundation for the incoming VP of Enrollment Management to build upon and drive sustained enrollment growth.

## **LEADERSHIP**

**Grace J. Wang, President**





WPI is led by President Grace J. Wang, PhD, a nationally recognized leader in research, innovation, and higher education. She became WPI's 17th president in April 2023 and also serves as a professor in the Department of Mechanical and Materials Engineering.

President Wang brings a unique blend of experience across higher education, government, and industry. Prior to joining WPI, she served as Executive Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Knowledge at The Ohio State University, where she oversaw a research enterprise with \$1.38 billion in annual expenditures and advanced interdisciplinary research, entrepreneurship, and industry partnerships.

Earlier in her career, she held senior leadership roles within the State University of New York system, including Interim President of SUNY Polytechnic Institute and Senior Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, where she guided \$1.7 billion in research activity and led major initiatives to expand innovation and economic development.

At the national level, President Wang served at the National Science Foundation as Acting Assistant Director for Engineering and as Director of the Division of Industrial Innovation and Partnerships, managing major federal investments supporting research, technology development, and small business growth.

Her professional roots began in the private sector at IBM and Hitachi Global Storage Technologies, where she earned seven U.S. patents in materials science and engineering. President Wang holds a PhD in Materials Science and Engineering from Northwestern University and currently serves on several national advisory boards, including the National Quantum Initiative Advisory Committee, appointed by the White House in 2022.

At WPI, President Wang is leading the university through a period of significant momentum. Her strategic priorities include elevating WPI's national visibility and expanding its reach to attract top students from around the world. She recognizes that strategic enrollment management is essential to WPI's mission of preparing students to solve global challenges. The VP of Enrollment Management will partner closely with President Wang to leverage WPI's Carnegie R1 achievement and translate its educational excellence into enrollment growth that positions WPI as a leading science, technology, engineering, and business institution.

**Andrew Sears, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs**



The VP of Enrollment Management will report directly to Andrew Sears, PhD, who joined WPI as Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs in August 2024. An accomplished computer scientist and academic leader with more than 30 years of higher education experience, Sears brings a unique blend of technical expertise, administrative excellence, and collaborative leadership to his role as the university's chief academic officer.

Prior to joining WPI, Sears served as Professor and Dean of the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University, where he focused on bringing people together to support interdisciplinary efforts that produced new academic programs and impactful scholarly activities. He also held leadership positions at Pennsylvania State University, including Professor and Dean of the College of Information Sciences and Technology, where he helped establish the university's Center for Socially Responsible Artificial Intelligence.

Sears has extensive experience in research and innovation, with his work focusing on human-computer interaction, mobile computing, and health information technologies. His research has been supported by major agencies including the National Science Foundation, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, and NASA, demonstrating his ability to build strong partnerships between academic institutions and industry leaders.

A first-generation college student whose life was transformed by higher education, Sears earned his B.S. in Computer Science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and his Ph.D. in Computer Science with an emphasis on human-computer interaction from the University of Maryland-College Park. He brings a deep personal understanding of the transformative power of higher education and is passionate about creating inclusive academic experiences that open doors for all students.

## **ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT**

The Vice President of Enrollment Management will serve as a key member of the President's Cabinet and senior leadership team, leading WPI's efforts to showcase our distinctive educational excellence and drive enrollment growth. This role leverages WPI's unique institutional strengths—world-class science, technology, engineering, and business education, hands-on learning, high-impact research, and global presence—to build deeper pipelines with prospective students and expand institutional reach.

As a member of the President's Cabinet, this leader will participate in university-wide strategic planning, budget decisions, and institutional policy development. This cabinet-level responsibility includes contributing to major institutional initiatives and representing enrollment perspectives in senior leadership discussions that shape WPI's future direction.



This represents an important moment for WPI as the university celebrates achieving Carnegie R1 research status. The university seeks to transform its undergraduate enrollment strategy to leverage opportunities and address challenges facing higher education while ensuring WPI's continued success in fostering excitement about its education and outcomes. This transformation will elevate the university's visibility and market position while drawing interest from a broader pool of prospective students nationwide and across the globe. The enrollment leader will build upon WPI's solid undergraduate enrollment foundation while implementing, in collaboration with Marketing & Communications, a more coordinated approach to institutional visibility and market positioning.

The VP of Enrollment Management will direct comprehensive undergraduate enrollment operations, including admissions, financial aid, enrollment analytics, and recruitment. The role also involves coordination with graduate enrollment initiatives to support university-wide growth objectives. Leading a dedicated team of enrollment professionals, this leader will strengthen data-driven recruitment approaches, expand international pipelines, and position WPI as a first-choice destination for outstanding students nationwide.

The incoming VP of Enrollment Management will play a key role in converting WPI's educational excellence into sustained enrollment growth that advances our mission of preparing students to solve global challenges.

## **ENROLLMENT OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL AID**

The VP of Enrollment Management will manage an annual operating budget of approximately \$10 million and oversee four key direct reports:

- Dean of Admissions
- Executive Director of Financial Aid
- Executive Director of Enrollment Systems and Operations
- Director of Pre-Collegiate Outreach Programs

Together with supporting staff, this leadership team oversees a comprehensive enrollment operation of 54 professionals. This experienced team provides a strong foundation for enrollment operations, enabling the enrollment leader to focus on strategic growth initiatives while collaborating with established professionals who understand WPI's academic model and student community. The new leader will have opportunities to enhance and expand these operations while building upon existing relationships and proven practices.

Building on this operational foundation, the VP of Enrollment Management will also manage a substantial financial aid budget and lead comprehensive financial aid strategy development to maximize enrollment effectiveness while ensuring fiscal responsibility. This includes developing innovative financial aid packaging strategies, optimizing merit scholarship programs, and creating affordability initiatives that attract top students while supporting institutional financial goals.



## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRATEGIC IMPACT**

### **Transform National & International Market Presence**

The VP of Enrollment Management will partner closely with Marketing & Communications and key stakeholders across campus to transform how WPI tells its compelling story and positions itself on the global stage. Through sophisticated, data-driven campaigns that showcase WPI's unique value proposition—exceptional ROI, innovative project-based learning, and global opportunities—this leader will reach entirely new audiences and build substantial brand awareness in target markets. This collaboration will transform WPI from a strong regional institution into a first-choice destination that competes effectively with larger, more recognized institutions for the nation's top science, technology, engineering, and business students.

Building on WPI's current reach across 48 states and 98 countries, this role will develop and execute comprehensive enrollment and recruitment strategies. These strategies will transform WPI's presence from its traditional New England stronghold to national and international prominence.

### **Optimize Enrollment Operations**

The VP of Enrollment Management will systematically analyze and enhance every stage of the enrollment process, from initial inquiry through enrollment and first-year retention, with attention to operational excellence and budget management. This approach involves identifying and eliminating drop-off points, improving yield rates, streamlining application processes, and creating seamless student experiences that reduce friction while maximizing conversion rates. This operational excellence will allow the team to build processes in both operations and student engagement, improve effectiveness, and maximize efficiency.

This leader will collaborate closely with student success teams to ensure enrollment strategies align with retention goals, creating an integrated approach that attracts the right students and supports their long-term success from admission through graduation.

### **Maximize Financial Aid Impact**

The VP of Enrollment Management will develop and implement innovative financial aid strategies that position WPI competitively while maximizing enrollment effectiveness and ensuring fiscal responsibility. With oversight of a substantial financial aid budget, this includes creating sophisticated merit scholarship programs and developing need-based aid packages that improve yield rates. The role also involves implementing strategic financial aid modeling to attract top students from key geographic regions.

This leader will leverage financial aid as a key enrollment tool, using data analytics to optimize aid distribution, enhance affordability messaging, and create compelling value propositions that demonstrate WPI's exceptional return on investment to prospective students and families.

### **Build Resilient Enrollment Strategy**





The VP of Enrollment Management will develop forward-thinking enrollment strategies that position WPI to thrive despite significant demographic shifts, growing public concerns about college ROI, and changing international enrollment landscape. WPI's proven value proposition directly addresses these concerns, with the university ranking 18th nationally on U.S. News & World Report's "Colleges with the Best Return on Investment" and earning recognition among LinkedIn's Top 50 Colleges for 2025 based on career outcomes and alumni success.

This leader will leverage WPI's strong outcomes data, distinctive educational model, and global reach to create sustainable enrollment growth that align with long-term institutional goals and positions the university for continued success in an evolving higher education landscape.

### **Advance Enrollment Technology and Analytics**

The VP of Enrollment Management will advance enrollment technology platforms and data systems to enable sophisticated analytics, streamline operations, and support evidence-based recruitment decisions. Working with the established enrollment team, this leader will implement clear metrics and accountability systems to measure progress toward enrollment goals, optimize yield strategies, and identify the most effective approaches for reaching target student populations.

This operational excellence will provide the foundation that enables all strategic enrollment initiatives to succeed at the highest levels while driving continuous improvement across all enrollment functions.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

### **Essential Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred in education, business, marketing, or related field
- Minimum 10 years of progressive enrollment leadership experience in higher education, with demonstrated success in strategic planning, team management, and enrollment growth at complex institutions
- Proven track record expanding enrollment pipelines and enhancing institutional visibility, particularly in competitive STEM and business markets and diverse geographic regions including international markets
- Strong collaborative leadership experience managing cross-functional teams and substantial budgets, with expertise in financial aid strategy development and implementation
- Expertise with enrollment technology systems, CRM platforms, and data analytics, with ability to leverage insights for strategic decision-making and operational excellence
- Successful experience partnering with marketing and communications teams to strengthen institutional brand and execute integrated outreach strategies
- Deep understanding of contemporary enrollment challenges and experience leading organizational transformation initiatives in higher education



- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, with ability to represent the institution effectively at the executive level
- Willingness and enthusiasm for national and international travel for recruitment and partnership development

#### **Essential Leadership Characteristics:**

- Strategic enrollment leader with deep commitment to WPI's mission and distinctive educational approach
- Collaborative leader who excels at building partnerships across campus and with external stakeholders
- Results-oriented professional with data-driven approach to decision-making and strong budget management capabilities
- Entrepreneurial mindset with demonstrated ability to lead innovation and organizational transformation
- Executive presence appropriate for cabinet-level leadership and high-stakes external representation
- Demonstrated ability to develop long-term strategies that align with institutional priorities
- Highest standards of personal and professional integrity, emotional intelligence, and ethical leadership

## **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Candidates should submit a resume and a two- to three-page letter of interest that addresses the opportunities and challenges outlined in this profile.

All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

#### **Nick Civitarese**

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Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
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Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, or disability. WPI seeks individuals from all backgrounds and experiences who will contribute to a culture of creativity, collaboration, inclusion, problem solving, innovation, high performance, and change making. The university is committed to maintaining a campus environment free of harassment and discrimination.