

LEAD WITH PURPOSE

The Strategic Plan for WPI

Report Card Year 2 | 2022–2023



WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

OUR MISSION

WPI transforms lives, turns knowledge into action to confront global challenges, and revolutionizes STEM through distinctive and inclusive education, projects, and research.

OUR CORE VALUES

Respect | Community | Inclusion | Innovation | Achievement

Engaging our diverse, inclusive community...

“To lead with purpose, we must enable our transformative STEM education and purpose-driven research by engaging the talents and insights of our diverse, inclusive community.”

—Wole Soboyejo,
Provost
Interim President (May 2022–March 2023)

In the first year of *Lead with Purpose*, we focused on community engagement as we took the plan from concept to reality. Teams were formed to add better clarity to the strategic goals. Year 2 continued that work, furthering activities across the institution focused on achieving our goals. The community leaned into student wellness and belonging—creating a more holistic view of the full student life cycle to understand how all divisions play a role in creating a better experience that incorporates wellness into academic planning.

Our academic core worked to enhance the value of a WPI education by incorporating value creation into project work, building new global

partnerships, strengthening ties to industry, and continuing to optimize our purpose-driven education and research.

Inclusion was at the core of our work in Year 2, as leadership focused on nurturing a community where all feel they belong.

As we wrap up Year 2, we will continue to integrate this work into university operations, transforming knowledge into action to build a sustainable future that aligns with our core values.

Over **200** Community
Members Engaged in
Implementation Work



To **LEAD WITH PURPOSE** we must directly address issues of student well-being, access, and affordability, and commit to building a thriving community of diverse learners and doers.

To **LEAD WITH PURPOSE** we must revolutionize what it means to be successful STEM professionals, enhance our project-based, interdisciplinary approach to their development, and build a strong infrastructure to support their success.

To **LEAD WITH PURPOSE** we must look inward to create a culture of inclusion, belonging, well-being, and respect, that draws diverse minds and provides the support necessary for all to thrive.

These goals are at the heart of this strategic plan.

Student Well-Being, Access, and Affordability

Take a holistic and inclusive approach to elevate student well-being across academic and co-curricular experiences, including launching the WPI Center for Well-Being.

Promoting Community Wellness

- Appointed **Charlie Morse** to inaugural **Dean of Student Wellness** to integrate and align student wellness service programs with well-being, health, counseling, and accessibility. **Paula Fitzpatrick, PhD**, joined WPI as the inaugural **Director of the Center for Well-Being**, which provides community wellness programming and support.
- Formed a **Campus Wellness Coalition**, transitioning the initial short-term task force into a long-term initiative to keep wellness at the forefront of community planning and decision-making.
- Created **Peer Well-Being Ambassador Program** with 14 student ambassadors.
- Dramatically **increased mental health education** for the community through training of over 3100 students, staff, and faculty.
- Launched new **wellness courses** that can be used to fulfill the wellness and physical education graduation requirement (previously the physical education requirement). Class and program offerings include Koru Mindfulness Meditation, Yoga, Approaches to Holistic Wellness, and Reiki.
- Since opening in late 2022, the **Center for Well-Being** has hosted six Wellness Days with 55 sponsored events and supported an additional 88 community-sponsored events.



Charlie Morse



Paula Fitzpatrick



Increase the number of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students, and students from low-income families who attend WPI.

Recruiting and Supporting a Diverse Student Body



The team took a deep dive into existing data to identify systemic challenges to success faced by underrepresented students, with a particular focus on the transition from high school to WPI.



Increased the number of participants from 80 to 100+ in the **Connections Pre-Orientation Program**—a residential bridge program for students who are underrepresented in STEM and identify as students of color, first generation, and/or with the LGBTQIA+ community.



Piloted a **First-Year Welcome Experience** to smooth the transition from high school to college by engaging with first-year students earlier in the summer, prior to their arrival for the residential New Student Orientation program.



Revamped **New Student Orientation (NSO)** to increase focus on wellness and sense of belonging.



Created **Gompei's Guide** to help new students navigate campus. Launched an enhanced, **comprehensive web portal** for student resources.

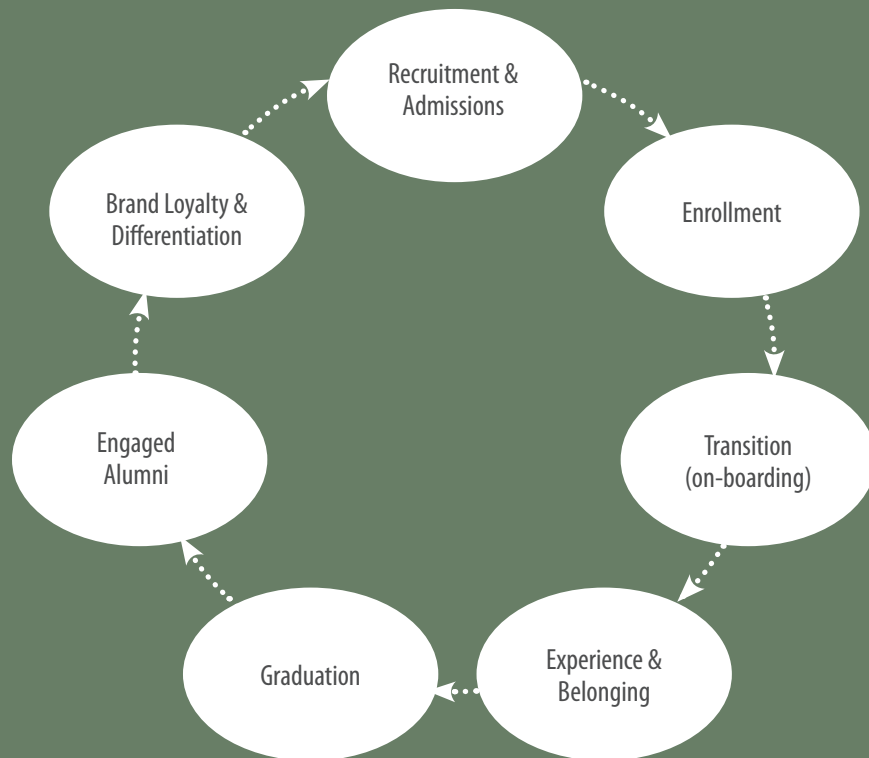


Maria-Christina Gavilan was hired as the inaugural **Director of Admissions for Diversity and Outreach**.

Enhance the outcomes and experience of minoritized and underrepresented student populations at WPI.

Student Experience & Belonging

Holistic Student Lifecycle Model



We put the student at the center of our thinking when designing a full **lifecycle model**, working to determine the desired student experience at each stage with a focus on well-being and belonging.

Advancing the Black Student Experience



Building on findings from phase 1, strategies were implemented to address issues impacting the Black Student Experience and Success. **The Center for Black Excellence** provides a space that redefines Black excellence, to honor, celebrate, and engage across the diverse intersections of Black diaspora. Additional programs offering academic, social, mental health, and career services support were also initiated.

Lavender Lounge



The **Lavender Lounge** provides a space and sense of community, empowerment, affirmation, and inclusion where diverse queer and trans people can thrive as their whole authentic selves. In this space individuals will experience a vibrant group, programs, services, and community connecting them with resources that support their success.

Reducing Financial Barriers



Since the launch of the strategic plan, the university has **increased the investment in financial aid assistance** to undergraduate students by 24%.



Support and communication to students is more focused and streamlined—the department has been more clearly named the Office of Financial Aid, dedicated caseloads were assigned to aid counselors, and **enhanced communications** were launched to better share available funding and financial aid policies.



To help **remove barriers** to completing a WPI education without additional expenses, the CSS Profile requirement was waived for Pell-eligible students and university financial aid policies were more closely aligned with federal and institutional satisfactory progress policies.



Additional **funding opportunities for students in need** include the Gapontsev Fund, which supports students impacted by the war in Ukraine, the Student Disaster Fund, and the food-insecurity-support Student Elevation Fund.

Purpose-Driven Education and Research

Increase our global impact by incorporating ONLINE AND TECH-ENABLED LEARNING OPTIONS into WPI's already distinctive, project-based curriculum at the undergraduate level, including cohort models, blended and fully remote options, and online experiential learning.



A Community for Faculty Teaching Support

WPI faculty developed the **Educators Exchange**, a site to share ideas, best practices, and challenges with online and hybrid instruction, run by the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center. Posts range from practical guidance on how to use technology, how to keep an active-learning, project-based curriculum alive and fresh over Zoom, and how to best use lecture capture to support students who need to be absent from class sessions.

Other uses for the exchange include sharing information on hot topics, such as the use of ChatGPT and similar AI bots. Faculty share information such as how they have been developing techniques to ensure that students do not use the technology in inappropriate ways that might violate our academic integrity standards. The site has been a great opportunity for the entire community to share ideas to prepare for teaching classes in a technology-driven environment.

Revolutionize what it means to be a SUCCESSFUL STEM professional, enhance our project-based, interdisciplinary approach to their development, and build an integrated research INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THEIR SUCCESS.

Workforce Development

The team completed a high-level inventory of Employer Outreach activities across campus and drafted a process and workshops to help align the curriculum with skills sought by employers.

Value Creation Across the Curriculum

- Initiative integrates **Value Creation** into projects, including IQPs, MQPs, First-Year Experience, and Graduate Studies.
- A new “**Innovation Through Making**” course integrates Value Creation and design-thinking into a project-based course.
- Over 1,600 students engaged in 40+ courses, projects, and events this academic year that integrated Value Creation into the curriculum.

Value Creation Jam

The newly launched Value Creation Jam included five potential start-ups and offered students the opportunity to develop career-distinguishing value creation skills of learning how to identify and address problems that matter in a safe, inclusive, positive, and fun learning environment.



Purpose-Driven Education and Research

Strengthen and grow new demand-driven graduate programs through differentiated pricing, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, and innovation, including practice-based MS/PhD, graduate programs from THE GLOBAL SCHOOL, stackable credentialing, and workforce development.

Enhanced Expert Database highlights areas of strength and expertise to the media, peer institutions, and potential partners



WPI Expert Database

- Increased reporter inquiries and media placements for our faculty experts.
- Improved WPI's ranking on search engines on several research topics.
- Serves as a tool to connect our faculty with peers for collaboration and funding.

New Partnership Highlights

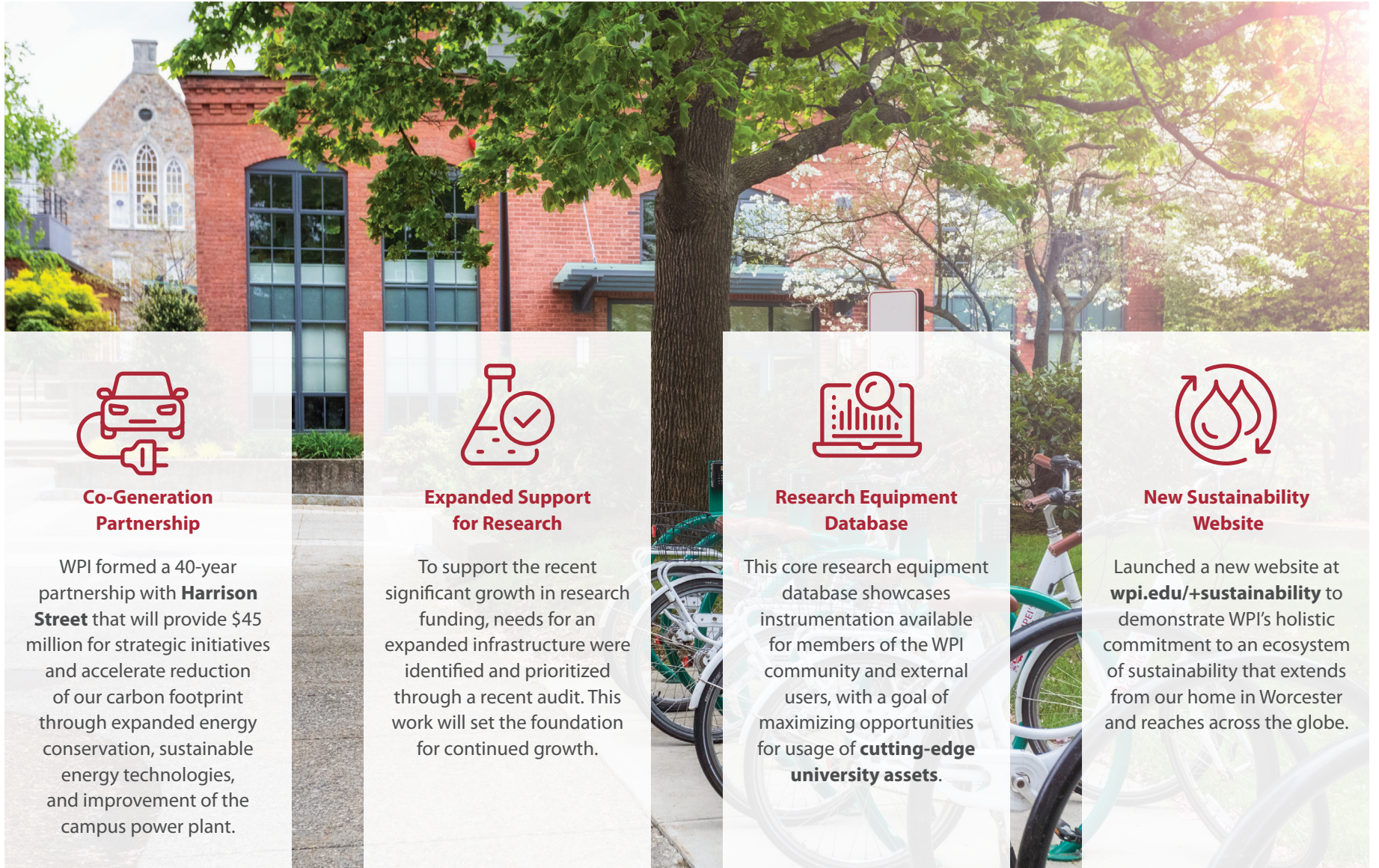
- A five-year collaborative with the **U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Army Research Laboratory (DEVCOM ARL)** to help equip soldiers in the field.
- **Teradyne Inc.** continued support of WPI's DEI programs with a shared mission to increase the diversity of STEM.
- Following a recent visit from the **African Centers of Excellence**, WPI initiated relationships with a number of African universities and received funding for **Global Visiting Fellowships**.

New Program Development

- Pilots of the **New Program Development Framework** focus on demonstrated market demand and distinctive expertise.
- A new process was launched to create "**Stackable Credentials**" designed to upskill the community and working professionals in high-demand areas.
- A new **master's degree in Global Health** is in the final stages of development.
- A new agreement with Swiss-based **Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW)** launched new dual degree master's programs.

Expand scholarly work at WPI: GROW INTERDISCIPLINARY DISCOVERY and address global challenges such as sustainability, climate change, human health, and socially just technologies, through increased funding, better proposal win rates, and greater student engagement in transformational research for IMPACT ON SOCIETAL PROBLEMS.

Infrastructure, Growth, and Sustainability



Co-Generation Partnership

WPI formed a 40-year partnership with **Harrison Street** that will provide \$45 million for strategic initiatives and accelerate reduction of our carbon footprint through expanded energy conservation, sustainable energy technologies, and improvement of the campus power plant.



Expanded Support for Research

To support the recent significant growth in research funding, needs for an expanded infrastructure were identified and prioritized through a recent audit. This work will set the foundation for continued growth.



Research Equipment Database

This core research equipment database showcases instrumentation available for members of the WPI community and external users, with a goal of maximizing opportunities for usage of **cutting-edge university assets**.



New Sustainability Website

Launched a new website at **wpi.edu/+sustainability** to demonstrate WPI's holistic commitment to an ecosystem of sustainability that extends from our home in Worcester and reaches across the globe.

Our Inclusive Community

Drive more explicit engagement with WPI's mission and values to advance our campus culture; regularly take the pulse of our employees on how well we are living our values.

A Campus Culture That Exemplifies our Values

Developed WPI Core Values Workshops on respect and inclusion in the workplace.

Transitioned Title IX back to Talent & Inclusion and refocused efforts toward education and prevention and with a revised "non-discrimination" investigative process and the addition of a trained investigator and additional network of volunteers.

Reinitiated in-person celebration events and the benefits fair to encourage community engagement.

Created gender-inclusive restrooms in every academic building on campus.



Sharing ideas and perspectives is critical to our community, which is why the School of Arts and Sciences hosts the Critical Conversations series. A recent forum, "LGBTQIA+ Enhancing Community, Building Belonging," emphasized that it's important to approach each of our interactions with an honest interest in learning, a lack of judgement, and an openness to stories that may not be our own.

Our Inclusive Community

Build an INCLUSIVE CAMPUS CULTURE through the implementation of our divisional Inclusive Excellence plans, equitable practices, and inclusive policies.

Promoting an Inclusive Campus Culture



A robust review of **Sustainable Inclusive Excellence** plans was conducted across all divisions to ensure they are aligned and updated to reflect ongoing priorities.



Planning is underway for the inaugural **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) Symposium** that will take place in November 2023.



Launched a series of **Faculty and Staff of Color** receptions and "Lunch & Learns" throughout the academic year.

Our Inclusive Community

Build an INCLUSIVE CAMPUS CULTURE through the implementation of our divisional Inclusive Excellence plans, equitable practices, and inclusive policies.



Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- Completed a comprehensive database of job boards, networking opportunities, and associations that outreach to underrepresented groups.
- Created a funding process to support diversity recruitment.
- Developed toolkits to assist in recruitment, such as Inclusive Practice Guidelines for position searches.
- Held an on-site job fair for local residents.
- An overhauled employee handbook is in process to ensure inclusivity and appropriate updates.
- The new hire process is being enhanced to create a more inclusive onboarding experience.
- Developed new WPI recruitment brochure for prospective employees of color including testimonials from many incumbent employees.

Our Inclusive Community

Investment in advancing the PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WELL-BEING, AND JOB SATISFACTION of faculty and staff will create stronger, more inclusive shared governance, including the creation of a Staff Council to expand the voice of the staff in steering the university.



William Battelle
Facilities Management



Jennifer Cluett
Enrollment Management



Amy Curran
Accessibility Services



Diane Dubois
George C. Gordon Library



Roxanne Gardner
Talent & Inclusion



Kim Hollan
School of Engineering



Caitlin Keller
Academic Technology Center



Sarah Miles
Registrar



Theona Scola
Advancement

Members of WPI's Inaugural Staff Council

Professional Development, Well-Being, and Satisfaction

- In its inaugural year, the **Staff Council** ratified its bylaws and constitution.
- A **Climate Survey** tool was evaluated and will be launched next year.
- Hosted **HERS Leadership Institute** alumnae event, with future plans to develop a similarly focused internal program funded by the **Women's Impact Network**.
- Equity recommendations to employee benefits program are being considered.
- Launched **staff compensation and classification** project to improve equity.
- Expanded professional development offerings for employees, including the development of the inaugural **WPI Leadership Academy**.
- **Staff Council and Talent & Inclusion** began refreshing employee rewards and recognition programs.
- Began negotiations with the **Graduate Student Union**, formed in November 2022.





WPI

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