

**WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE**

November 16, 2017

To: The WPI Faculty  
From: Mark Richman  
Secretary of the Faculty

The third Faculty meeting of the 2017-2018 academic year will be held on **Thursday, November 16, 2017** at **3:15 pm** in **Olin Hall 107**, with refreshments at 3:00 pm.

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Call to Order  | M. Richman  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approval of the Agenda</li><li>• Consideration of the Consent Agenda<br/>(including Minutes from 10-13-17)</li></ul>                                      |             |
| 2. President's Report   | L. Leshin   |
| 3. Provost's Report   | B. Bursten  |
| 4. Committee Business   |             |
| Committee on Governance (COG) - for discussion, only  | G. Gaudette |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A proposed new WPI Research Misconduct Policy</li></ul>   |             |
| Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR)   | K. Troy     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motion to modify the guidelines for financial assistance to<br/>Teaching and Research Assistants, Graduate Fellows, and<br/>Graduate Assistants</li></ul> |             |
| 5. New Business   |             |
| 6. Announcements  |             |
| 7. Adjournment  |             |

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**Faculty Meeting Materials, November 16, 2017**

	Page
1. Faculty Meeting Minutes: October 13, 2017	3
2. Committee Business:	
Committee on Governance (COG) – for discussion only:	
- Proposed (New) WPI Research Misconduct Policy;	8
Current (Faculty-approved) WPI Research Conduct Policy	17
Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR):	
- Motion to modify the guidelines for financial assistance to Teaching and Research Assistants, Graduate Fellows, and Graduate Assistants	24
2. Appendix: Consent Agenda Motion	26
CAO Motion:	
- to change the offering schedule for BB 3040 <i>Experimental Design and Data Analysis</i>	27

**WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE**  
**Faculty Meeting Minutes, October 13, 2017**

**Summary:**

1. Call to Order
2. President's Report
3. Provost's Report
4. VPR's Report
5. Committee Report (FAP)
6. Committee Business (CAO; CGSR; CAP and CGSR)
7. Adjournment

**Detail:**

1. Call to Order

The second Faculty meeting of the 2017-2018 academic year was called to order at 11:10 am in Olin Hall 107 by **Prof. Richman** (ME). The meeting agenda and the consent agenda (including the minutes from September 12, 2017) were approved as distributed.

2. President's Report

**President Leshin** discussed a proposal for the reorganization of IGSD, tentatively to be called the Global Impact Division (GID). One goal is to unify the Global Projects Program and the Great Problems Seminar, and at the same time to bring new elements into the Global Projects Program. An implementation advisory group of faculty and staff (co-Chaired by Dean Rissmiller and Dean Wobbe) has been assembled to develop the idea further, including exploring possible synergies with and within the GID, anticipating staffing needs, and identifying unintended consequences. President Leshin indicated that she had asked COG to work with her to initiate a search for a Dean of the GID who would replace the Dean of IGSD.

**President Leshin** explained that WPI had purchased land adjacent to Salisbury Estates, which includes a warehouse that we are currently having the National Emergency Management Association use as a staging area for Puerto Rico-related disaster management.

**President Leshin** described discussions concerning free speech issues that she had participated in at a recent meeting of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts. Pres. Leshin feels strongly that all faculty members should have the resources required to navigate the current campus climate, and she is determined to communicate effectively with the faculty about these issues.

3. Provost's Report

**Provost Bursten** introduced **Dean Jean King** (A&S). Dean King explained that her research explores the impact of stress on neural networks. She expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to join the WPI.

**Provost Bursten** indicated that from Oct. 1 2016 to Oct. 1 2017, the number of tenured and tenure track (TTT) faculty members had increased from 245 to 253. The current number does not include two current non-tenure track faculty members, who will become TTTs when certain immigration paperwork clears and four additional TTTs, who will join WPI in Jan. 2018.

**Provost Bursten** thanked CAP for exploring issues related to on-line student course evaluations, for running a two-year voluntary on-line course evaluation pilot program, and for bringing (with CGSR) the motion today to move to an entirely on-line course evaluation process. Provost Bursten described a task force concerned with on-line course reports that will address both the content of the student course report forms and the issues that would arise in moving to an entirely on-line system.

4. Vice Provost for Research

**VPR Vernescu** presented an update on recent progress in enhancing our research enterprise. (See **Addendum #1** on file with these minutes.) He reported that in the last 18 months, five WPI faculty members have received NSF

CAREER awards. Faculty colleagues have also received two R01 awards and one R35 award from NIH; as well as an NSF grant from the Division of Research and Learning. He also indicated that we have had a productive year with respect to intellectual property (in terms of disclosures, licenses, and issued patents).

**VPR Vernescu** reported on progress we have made in three major areas: large initiatives; research infrastructure; and increased visibility. In the category of large initiatives, last year WPI was awarded \$5 million from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for Practice Point, which lies at the interface of healthcare and cyber-physical systems, with \$2.5 million matching from GE Healthcare. The intention is to build a test facility at Gateway Park that companies could use for joint research with WPI and for related testing and prototyping of their products. As part of the Manufacturing USA initiative, WPI has been awarded \$2 million as part of Lightweight Innovations for Tomorrow (LIFT) and \$4M from BioFab USA. We also expect a \$4 million award for Integrated Photonics. The combined of these efforts is goal is to develop a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at Gateway Park that will re-connect WPI to regional economic development.

In the category of research infrastructure, **VPR Vernescu** announced that WPI's Research Solutions Institute had hired a Director of Manufacturing Innovation (Ellen Piccioli), a Research Opportunity Development Lead (Michael Wright), and a Grants Specialist (Colleen McShea).

Finally, **VPR Vernescu** described progress in increasing our research visibility, including establishing strategic partnerships, collaborating more effectively with Marketing and Communications, organizing and participating in workshops and high visibility events, and supporting faculty in their efforts to produce successful research proposals.

#### 5. Committee Report

##### Committee on Financial and Administrative Policy (FAP):

**Prof. Dominko** (BBT) presented a report from FAP concerning the most recent TTT Faculty Compensation Study focused on WPI faculty salaries in 2016-17 and how they compare to those in 2013-14. (See **Addendum #2** on file with these minutes.) Prof. Dominko explained that the data used in the study came from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) and involved comparing WPI to 13 peer institutions that had submitted their compensation information to CUPA. Prof. Dominko pointed out that between 2013 and 2017 our national ranking (65<sup>th</sup> in 2013 and 60<sup>th</sup> in 2017) improved slightly while the median national ranking of the peer group that we compared ourselves went down significantly (from 57<sup>th</sup> in 2013 to 78<sup>th</sup> in 2017). Over the same period of time, our total operating expenses increased by 27 percent, our research expenditures increased by 36 percent, and yet the number of our TTT faculty members increased by only one percent.

**Prof. Dominko** reported that across all ranks, WPI faculty salaries were at 108 percent of market median (approximately 75<sup>th</sup> percentile) in 2013, and decreased to 101 percent of market median (approximately 50<sup>th</sup> percentile) in 2017. This decrease occurred primarily because the salaries of the 190 WPI faculty members who participated in both surveys increased by 10 percent whereas the market median of the same group increased by 17 percent.

By rank, from 2013 to 2017, the average salaries of WPI assistant, associate, and full professors increased by 12.4 percent, 5.3 percent, and 7.1 percent (respectively), while the average of the corresponding market median salaries increased by 18.4 percent, 10.2 percent, and 15.4 percent (respectively). Finally, **Prof. Dominko** showed 2017 WPI salary data indicating that the salaries of 42 percent of full professors, 26 percent of associate professors, and 20 percent of assistant professors were below 95 percent of their individual market median salaries, while the salaries of 35 percent of full professors, 34 percent of associate professors, and 47 percent of assistant professors were above 105 percent of their individual market median salaries. **Prof. Dominko** expressed the hope that the data collected would help determine a strategy for upcoming faculty compensation decisions.

**Prof. Weathers** (BBT) asked if the data had been broken down by academic division. **Prof. Dominko** indicated that such data is available and can be shared to the extent that it does not reveal individual salaries.

**Prof. Loiacono** (FSB) asked if CUPA data presented here was consistent with other salary data, such as that published in the Chronicle of Higher Education. **Prof. Dominko** indicated that CUPA was the main data source, but

a separate source of data was used for Business school data. **President Leshin** pointed out that the Chronicle of Higher Education uses CUPA data for their own salary report.

**Prof. Rulfs** (BBT) asked if the TTT salary data included administrators who hold faculty appointments. **Prof. Dominko** explained that the data included administrators only up the level of Department Heads.

**Prof. Gaudette** (BME) asked if data on the increase in salaries of other groups (such as the NTT faculty, the staff, and the Administration) had been analyzed. **Prof. Dominko** indicated that the study included neither NTT nor staff salaries, although a staff study was currently underway. **President Leshin** explained that executive compensation is looked at every year by the Executive Compensation Committee of the Board, and that on average WPI's executive compensation is not at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**Prof. Stapleton** (SSPS) asked if the data had been broken down by gender. **Prof. Dominko** explained that it had not been broken down by gender but that such an analysis would be worthwhile.

#### 6. Committee Business

##### Committee on Academic Operations (CAO):

**Prof. Zeng** (FSB), for the Committee on Academic Operations, moved that the undergraduate student graduation list (previously distributed) be approved for October 6, 2017 graduation. The motion **passed** without discussion.

##### Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR):

**Prof. Troy** (BME), for the Committee on Graduate Studies and Research, moved that the graduate student graduation list (previously distributed) be approved for October 6, 2017 graduation. The motion **passed** without discussion.

**Prof. Richman** thanked Registrar Sarah Miles and her entire staff for their hard work in compiling the graduation lists.

##### Committee on Academic Policy (CAP) and Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR):

**Prof. Humi** (MA), for the Committee on Academic Policy, and **Prof. Troy** (BME), for the Committee on Graduate Studies and Research moved that:

...the WPI Faculty approve the use of a *fully online process* for obtaining student feedback in WPI courses. This process, if approved, will use the *existing* WPI Student Course Report evaluation form and the *existing* rules governing the availability and use of the data collected from that form.

**Prof. Humi** explained this motion, although it would change only the course evaluation *process*, is necessary because in December 2012 the Faculty approved a motion from CAP that included the requirement that: "*Any changes to the course evaluation process, form, or rules will require faculty approval.*"

**Prof Gaudette** (BME) made a friendly amendment to add the following language to the motion:

If approved, the fully online process will not commence prior to presentation of the recommendations and conclusion of the Task Force for Improvement of Student Course Reports (created on September 15, 2017) to the Faculty. The Task Force report should address issues previously raised by CAP, including cut off time for the submission of the electronic reports by the students, and how to increase student participation.

**Prof. Gaudette** agreed with the idea of moving to a fully on-line course evaluation process, but he was aware of several concerns that needed to be addressed first. He thought that it was important for the task force (referred to in the amendment) to report back to the Faculty before the end of the current academic year. **Prof. Humi** explained that the motion in its original form did not address the time limits that might be placed on students to complete the surveys for each course, the pros and cons of various methods that might be used to ensure adequate response rates, and the question of whether a gender bias in student-response might be affected by a fully on-line implementation. Consequently, on behalf of CAP, **Prof. Humi** accepted the amendment on behalf of CAP.

**Prof. El-Korchi** (CEE) moved to postpone the motion until the November 16 Faculty meeting to give CAP more time to study the issues that have been raised but not addressed adequately. The motion was **seconded**.

**Prof. Humi** explained that the amended motion already makes clear that the on-line process will not be implemented until the task force reports back to the faculty. **Prof. Troy** (BME) was confident that the task force will be able to address the issues that Prof. El-Korchi and others were concerned about.

**Prof. Brattin** (HUA) did not see any value in waiting a month, but did see the value in waiting to vote until after seeing the results of the task force report. For clarification, **Prof. Richman** pointed out that as written, the amended motion required that the Faculty wait for the task force report, but committed the Faculty to adopt the fully online process regardless of its findings.

**Prof. Gatsonis** (ME) stated that a vote on the motion today would be premature, because the findings of the task force are unknown at this point.

**Prof. Ruiz** (CS) wanted to clarify that the original motion, if passed, would bind us to go to a fully online process regardless of the task force findings. **Prof. Richman** confirmed Prof. Ruiz's understanding of the motion. In that case, **Prof. Ruiz** thought it would better not to vote on the motion and instead just to wait until the task force reports back.

The motion to postpone until next month **failed**.

**Prof. Jiusto** (IGSD) made a friendly amendment to the first sentence of the added amendment to read as follows (with added text in **bold italics** and deleted text ~~struck through~~):

If approved, the fully online process will not commence prior to presentation **to and approval** of the recommendations and conclusion of the Task Force for Improvement of Student Course Reports (created on September 15, 2017) ~~to~~ **by** the Faculty.

**Prof. Humi** accepted the friendly amendment on behalf of CAP.

**Prof. Rahbar** (CEE) moved the **question**. The motion was seconded. The motion **failed**.

**Prof. Dougherty** (CS) questioned whether anything would change if the motion were approved today. **Prof. Heilman** (CBC) pointed out that the reference in the original motion to "*existing*" WPI Student Course Reports contradicted Prof. Gaudette's amendment, which allows for recommendations from the task force that might change the Reports.

**Prof. Orr** (ECE) saw that there were two questions: whether and when to adopt on-line Student Course Reports. In his view, we would inevitably move to a fully on-line process at some point. So rather than delaying the inevitable, Prof. Orr suggested supporting the change to a fully on-line process, letting the task force make evaluations based on what we learn by doing, and then making changes to the on-line process accordingly.

**Prof. Loiacono** (FSB) explained that her biggest concern was about the validity of the survey instrument we are using to collect student feedback, and she wanted to know if this would be a matter of focus for the task force.

**Prof. Humi** indicated that it would be.

**Jacob St. Germain** (Pres., Student Government Association) indicated that about 80 percent of responses received in a student survey were in favor on-line reports. SGA is extremely supportive of a fully on-line process and is committed to helping ensure that response rates to the on-line Student Course Reports would be high.

**Dean Wobbe** (UGS) explained that based on her experiences, she thought it would not be possible for faculty members to have the flexibility to adjust - on a course-by-course basis - the time made available for students to complete the surveys. Also, based on our past experiences with switching from one student course report system to another, Prof. Wobbe was confident that CTAF and COAP could adjust their evaluation metrics to account for variations between the two systems.

**Prof. Weekes** (MA) made a friendly amendment to the second sentence of the original motion to read as follows (with deleted text ~~struck through~~):

This process, if approved, will use the *existing* WPI Student Course Report evaluation form and the *existing* rules governing the availability and use of the data collected from that form.

**Prof. Humi** accepted the friendly amendment on behalf of CAP.

**Prof Rulfs** (BBT), speaking as the current Chair of CTAF, pointed out that when the Faculty agreed to experiment with the IDEA form of the Student Course reports, the motion that passed included an explicit option that allowed tenure-track faculty members to exclude the results from deliberations of their tenure cases if they so chose. She also pointed out that the results from the student course evaluations play an important role in CTAF's evaluation of teaching, so whatever changes we make to the student surveys must be made with care, especially when changes could lower response rates. **Prof. Humi** agreed, and thought that the use of appropriate software could keep response rates high.

**Prof. Eddy** (HUA) felt that the price of a new scanner for paper surveys would be modest, and that there were other more effective ways to save paper. **Prof. Eddy** also was concerned that our evaluation of the pilot program of online course reports did not include analysis of results by gender or by person of color, and she recommended that the task force look at such data. **Prof Humi** agreed, and thought that the task force was assembled, in part, to address these issues.

**Prof. Vick** indicated that the responses she has received from the on-line student course reports have been more rewarding than she would have gotten otherwise.

**Prof. Wills** (CS) moved the question. The motion was seconded and **passed**.

The amended motion was read (with one word deleted from the original motion by amendment denoted by ~~striketrough~~ text, and text added to the original motion by amendments denoted by bold italics):

The Committee on Academic Policy and the Committee of Graduate Studies and Research recommend, and we move that the WPI faculty approve the use of a *fully online process* for obtaining student feedback in WPI courses. This process, if approved, will use the *existing* WPI Student Course Report evaluation form and the *existing* rules governing the availability and use of the data collected from that form. ***If approved, the fully online process will not commence prior to presentation to and approval of the recommendations and conclusion of the Task Force for Improvement of Student Course Reports (created on September 15, 2017) by the Faculty. The Task Force report should address issues previously raised by CAP, including cut off time for the submission of the electronic reports by the students, and how to increase student participation.***

The motion **passed**.

#### 7. Announcements

**Peter Thomas** (Exec. Dir., Lifetime Engagement) announced that the Hall of Luminaries ceremony will take place from 3:00 to 4:30pm on Nov. 1. Two former faculty members, William Grogan and George Alden, will be honored. Mr. Thomas thanked Prof. Sullivan, Dean Wobbe, Prof. Petke, and Prof. Roberts for their involvement in the planning process. He explained that the event was of great pride to WPI and that the goal was to get the widest level of participation across the campus. He encouraged all to attend.

#### 8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Richman  
Secretary of the Faculty

**Addendum on file with these minutes:**

- 1. Addendum #1 VPR Vernescu's Report – October 13 2017**
- 2. Addendum #2 FAP Report on Faculty Compensation – October 13 2017**

(To be presented for discussion only at the November 16, 2017 Faculty Meeting)

**Date:** November 16, 2017  
**To:** WPI Faculty  
**From:** Committee on Governance (Prof. Gaudette, Chair)  
**Re:** Proposed WPI Research Misconduct Policy

Attached to this memo (on pages 15 to 22) is a copy of the most recent draft of a proposed WPI Research Misconduct Policy that would replace our current research conduct policy. This draft has been approved by the Committee on Governance (COG), and will be presented for discussion (only) at our November 16, 2017 Faculty meeting. Based on the input that it receives, COG expects to bring back a draft of the policy (in the form of a formal motion) for Faculty consideration and vote at the December 12 Faculty meeting.

In the meantime, the Committee on Governance encourages you to read the proposed policy carefully and provide your feedback to Prof. Gaudette (Chair, COG) or to any other member of COG (Prof. Albano, Prov. Bursten, Prof. Richman, Prof. Roberts, Prof. Spanagel, Prof. Tulu, or Prof. Weekes).

For your convenience, included (at the end of the proposed policy on pages 23 to 29) is a copy of the “WPI Policy on Research Conduct” that currently appears in the Faculty Handbook (in Part Two, Section 4.G).



## **PROPOSED WPI Research Misconduct Policy**

### **Introduction**

Unethical behavior in research and scholarship strikes at the heart of the scholarly and educational enterprise. A shared understanding of expectations and responsibilities is, therefore, critical — not only to the quality of the research enterprise but also to the collegial life of this community. The appropriate institutional response to research misconduct will vary with the facts and circumstances of each case. In addition to requiring correction of the research record, WPI has recourse to a variety of disciplinary actions against individuals whose conduct violates this Policy, including, in severe cases and following applicable procedures, expulsion of a student, termination of an employee, or revocation of tenure. WPI has developed the following policy to respond to allegations of research misconduct<sup>1</sup> and to inform members of the community of the appropriate channels for bringing such matters to the attention of the University.<sup>2</sup> This policy applies to Research Activities conducted at WPI or by WPI faculty, staff, fellows, students.

Supervisors must enforce the highest standards for conducting research and creating and maintaining records of the research. The risk of misconduct increases in an environment where there is a lack of supervision. Specifically, laboratory and center directors and department heads, faculty supervisors, and principal investigators should clearly articulate standards and protocols for research, scholarship, and creative work, through discussion and review of research, and, when possible, with written guidelines and training that adhere to best practices.

### **Students**

If a student is involved in the review of an allegation of Research Misconduct (whether as a Complainant, as a Respondent, or as a person from whom information about allegations is obtained), fact finders and investigators must seek guidance from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research regarding the legal and policy requirements that may apply.

Except as they may be subject to the requirements of grants, sponsored research or research funded by a governmental authority, allegations of Research Misconduct committed by students will be addressed in accordance with provisions of the Student Code of Conduct dealing with Student Academic Dishonesty.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy is based upon the federal regulations governing research misconduct in connection with United States Public Health Service (“PHS”)-supported activities and will be interpreted and applied so as to be in compliance with those regulations. WPI has also determined that this policy will be applied as the minimum standard to all allegations of research misconduct, regardless of the funding source(s) or whether the scholarly activity is funded. Institutional response to research misconduct allegations in areas not PHS-supported will follow the same general principles except for the actual involvement of PHS. In the event another research sponsor has additional requirements beyond those covered by this policy, all research funded by that source will be subject to those additional requirements.

<sup>2</sup> [This policy replaces the prior policy entitled “Policy and Procedure for Removal of Tenured Faculty Member for Cause” adopted in 1969 as it relates to matters concerning research misconduct. This policy also replaces the Research Misconduct Policy passed by the Board of Trustees on December 13, 2013 and the Research Misconduct Policy passed by the faculty on January 23, 2014.](#)

## Definitions

**Research Misconduct** is Fabrication, Falsification, or Plagiarism in Research Activities or Deliberate Interference. It does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

**Fabrication** is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

**Falsification** is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the Research Record.

**Plagiarism** is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

**Deliberate Interference** is intentionally causing material harm to the research or scholarly work of others, and may include damaging or destroying the property of others, such as research equipment or supplies; disrupting active experiments; or altering or deleting products of research, including data.

**Research Activities** is proposing, conducting, reviewing, or reporting the results of research or other scholarly inquiry.

**Research Record** is the record of data or results that embody the facts resulting from scientific or other scholarly inquiry and includes, but is not limited to, research proposals, laboratory records (both physical and electronic), progress reports, abstracts, theses, oral presentations, internal reports, and journal articles.

**Complainant** is an individual who reports allegations of **Research Misconduct**.

**Respondent** is an individual who is the subject of allegations of **Research Misconduct** at WPI.

**WPI Advisor** is a WPI community member of the Respondent's choice, not the Respondent's family member or subordinate, who may participate and provide support to a Respondent in any meeting in connection with a review under this Policy. The role of the WPI Advisor is to provide support and guidance, not to be a substitute for the Respondent, who is the primary participant. In lieu of a WPI Advisor, the Respondent may have legal counsel for assistance or support through the Committee Investigation process.

**Preponderance of the Evidence** is proof by information that, compared with the information opposing it, leads to a conclusion that the fact at issue is more probably true than not.

## Duty to Report

Each member of the WPI community has a responsibility to report any conduct that they believe in good faith to be Research Misconduct at WPI. There may be circumstances in which, prior to taking that action, it would be appropriate for the Complainant to discuss any concerns with the prospective Respondent. Consultation and guidance is always available from the Vice Provost for Research or from senior

academic officers (e.g. deans, department heads, laboratory directors), who themselves are bound by a Duty to Report.

All allegations of Research Misconduct, wherever initially received, must be conveyed promptly to the Vice Provost for Research. A supervisor who becomes aware of possible Research Misconduct, either from the supervisor's own observations or because of reports, has a responsibility to bring allegations of Research Misconduct directly to the Vice Provost for Research in order to ensure that proper procedures are followed. If a supervisor feels that the Vice Provost for Research is not the appropriate official to whom to report allegations in a particular case, the allegations may be reported to the Provost. If a Complainant reports allegations to a supervisor and the supervisor fails to forward the allegations to the Office of the Vice Provost for Research or the Provost, then the Complainant should report the allegations to the Vice Provost for Research or the Provost directly.

### **The Review Process**

Upon receipt of an allegation of Research Misconduct, within 5 days the Vice Provost for Research will conduct an initial assessment of the allegations, to determine whether the alleged misconduct falls within the scope of this Policy. The Vice Provost for Research may institute appropriate interim institutional actions to protect the community, public health, federal or other governmental funds and equipment, and the integrity of the PHS supported research process. For such actions, the Vice Provost for Research should state the basis for such decision in a document maintained with records relating to the case and provided to the Respondent. The Vice Provost for Research may appoint an impartial fact finder with appropriate expertise to conduct this initial assessment and to make a recommendation to the Vice Provost for Research. If the Vice Provost for Research determines that the allegations do not fall within this Policy, the Vice Provost for Research will either close the matter or refer it to another office at WPI with authority or responsibility over the matter. If the Vice Provost for Research determines that the allegations do fall within this Policy, the Vice Provost for Research will initiate a two-stage review process under this Policy. The decision of the Vice Provost for Research to initiate or not to initiate a review is final.

The first stage of review under this Policy consists of preliminary fact-finding (the "Inquiry") to decide whether to recommend to the Provost a further, formal review. If after the Inquiry, there is a decision to initiate a further review by the Provost, WPI will proceed to a second stage of review, which entails a formal investigation leading to a recommendation whether or not WPI should make a finding of Research Misconduct in violation of this Policy (the "Investigation").

The procedures described in this Policy are consistent with requirements that apply to the review and reporting of allegations of research misconduct arising in the context of certain federally sponsored research. This Policy should be reviewed and updated periodically in order to ensure compliance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Standard of Proof for a Finding of Research Misconduct**

In order to enter a finding of Research Misconduct, WPI must determine by a preponderance of the evidence:

- that the Respondent engaged in Research Misconduct; and

- that the Research Misconduct marked a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant academic community; and
- that the Respondent committed the Research Misconduct intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly.

## **Inquiry**

The Inquiry consists of information gathering and fact-finding to determine as a preliminary matter whether an allegation of Research Misconduct warrants further, formal review. The Inquiry should follow within 30 days, if called for, after the Vice Provost for Research's initial assessment of the allegations. The Vice Provost for Research will appoint three impartial fact finders to conduct the Inquiry. If necessary, fact finders may be found from outside the WPI community. At this time, the Vice Provost for Research will provide written notice to the Respondent that an Inquiry has been initiated. The written notice ordinarily summarizes the allegations under review and advises the Respondent of the right to select a WPI Advisor to support the Respondent in the course of the proceedings. The Respondent will be given an opportunity to respond, in writing, to the Vice Provost for Research within 10 days following the Respondent's receipt of the allegation.

Either before or when the Respondent is notified, the Office of the Vice Provost for Research will promptly take all reasonable and practical steps to obtain custody of all the records and other evidence needed to conduct proceedings under this Policy and will sequester them in a secure manner. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research will provide Respondent with reasonable, supervised access to the records or, when appropriate, copies of the records. The Office of the Vice Provost for Research may seek additional records or other materials that may be potentially relevant during the course of the review. Oversight for the Inquiry process will be provided by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

The Inquiry should, to the extent reasonably possible, be limited to a review of documentary materials, including the Respondent's written response to the allegations. The fact that an Inquiry has been initiated should be made known only to the Respondent and other persons with a need to know. At the conclusion of the Inquiry, the fact-finding committee will prepare a draft written report summarizing the process and information reviewed and recommending whether to proceed with an Investigation. The draft Inquiry report should identify the name and position of the Respondent, a description of the allegations, the PHS support (if any), including the specific grant or contract, and should explain why the allegations do or do not warrant an investigation. A recommendation to proceed should be based on whether there are reasonable grounds to conclude that the allegations may have substance and that Research Misconduct may have occurred based on the information reviewed. In either case, the Respondent will be given a copy of the draft Inquiry report and an opportunity to respond within a reasonable time period set by the Vice Provost for Research. Such response will be reviewed by the fact-finding committee before finalizing the Inquiry report. In addition, any comments provided by the Respondent will be included as an appendix to the final Inquiry report. The final Inquiry report should state the number (but not the names) of the members of the Inquiry Committee who voted that an allegation warrants further review. The final Inquiry report will be forwarded to the Vice Provost for Research.

The Vice Provost for Research will review the Inquiry report and may ask the fact-finding committee for additional review or explanation. If this additional review by the fact-finding committee results in

revisions to the report, the Respondent will have a further opportunity to submit written comments before any supplemental final Inquiry report is resubmitted to the Vice Provost for Research.

The Vice Provost for Research will submit a final Inquiry report to the Provost along with a written recommendation whether or not to proceed with an Investigation. The Provost will then decide whether or not to proceed with an Investigation. Before the Provost decides to proceed with an investigation, the Provost shall consult with the fact-finding committee and with the Secretary of the Faculty. If a majority of the Inquiry Committee voted not to proceed with an Investigation, but the Provost decides that there should be an Investigation, then the Provost should state the basis for such decision in a document maintained with records relating to the Investigation.

Following these consultations, the Vice Provost for Research will send written notice to the Respondent of the Provost's decision whether or not to proceed with an Investigation. The Complainant, if known, will be informed whether an Investigation will or will not be initiated.

The Inquiry, including preparation of the final Inquiry Report and the decision of the Provost on whether an investigation is warranted, must be completed within 60 calendar days of initiation of the Inquiry, unless the Vice Provost for Research determines that circumstances clearly warrant a longer period. If the Vice Provost for Research approves an extension, the inquiry record must include documentation of the reasons for exceeding the 60 day period. Within 30 days of finding that an investigation is warranted, the Provost shall provide ORI (and any other funding agency or authority required to be notified) with a copy of the Inquiry report.

### **Investigation**

If a formal investigation is warranted, it shall begin within 21 days of the conclusion of the Inquiry. The Vice Provost for Research initiates an Investigation by requesting the Secretary of the Faculty (SOF) and the Chair of the Faculty Review Committee (FRC) to appoint a five member investigation committee ("the Committee") to be selected from elected FRC members who have the expertise to evaluate the particular issues and evidence involved in the alleged misconduct. The faculty members must be unbiased toward the Complainant, Respondent and witnesses. (If there are not five unbiased elected FRC members with the required expertise, then the SOF and FRC chair will appoint the required number of qualified faculty from outside the FRC. If the Respondent or Complainant is either the SOF or FRC Chair, then the other will appoint the Committee.) The Committee shall elect its own chair who shall be responsible for determining the manner in which the witness interviews and other procedures will be conducted by the Committee. The Respondent is entitled to a presumption of innocence. The Respondent shall have the opportunity to present a defense, to offer witnesses to be interviewed by the Committee, and to respond to allegations of Research Misconduct.

The Vice Provost for Research will provide written notice to the Respondent that the Investigation has been initiated. The written notice will summarize the allegations, identify the members of the investigation Committee and advise the Respondent of the Respondent's right to the support of a WPI Advisor or legal counsel in the Investigation. Respondent may challenge the composition of the Committee, if s/he believes that one or more of its members is biased. The remaining members of the Committee shall determine whether bias exists and otherwise act to ensure its own credibility. The

Committee shall request that the Chair of the FRC and the Secretary of the Faculty replace a committee member when appropriate.

As the Investigation proceeds, the Office of the Vice Provost for Research should provide the Respondent with reasonable updates and opportunities to respond to information obtained in the investigation.

Oversight of the Investigation and specific guidance as it proceeds will be provided by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

The Investigation consists of a formal examination and evaluation of all relevant information to determine if Research Misconduct occurred. The Investigation will typically include an examination of all relevant documentation and interviews of individuals who may have relevant information about the research in question. The Investigation Committee may review the Inquiry findings but is not bound by the findings of the Inquiry.

Once the Investigation is completed, the Committee will prepare a draft written report offering a judgment based on the evidence as to whether the Respondent has committed Research Misconduct, and if so, its level of severity. The report should summarize the facts and analysis that support that conclusion, addressing the merits of any reasonable explanation or defense provided by the Respondent, and including the vote of the Committee. If the Committee determines Respondent has committed Research Misconduct, it shall also recommend disciplinary action. The Respondent will be provided with a copy of the draft Investigation report with an opportunity to respond within a reasonable time period set by the Vice Provost for Research. Such response will be reviewed by the Committee before finalizing the Investigation report. In addition, any comments provided by the Respondent will be included as an appendix to the final Investigation report. The final Investigation report will be forwarded to the Vice Provost for Research.

The Vice Provost for Research will review the Investigation report and may ask the Investigation Committee for additional review or explanation. If this results in revisions to the report, the Respondent will have a further opportunity to submit written comments before any supplemental final Investigation report is resubmitted to the Vice Provost for Research.

The Vice Provost for Research will submit the final Investigation report to the Provost and the Respondent along with a written recommendation whether or not WPI should make a finding of Research Misconduct. If the Vice Provost for Research recommends a finding of Research Misconduct, he or she will also recommend disciplinary actions to be taken. Before the Provost makes a finding of Research Misconduct, the Provost shall consult with the Committee and with the Secretary of the Faculty.

If the Provost determines that Research Misconduct has been committed, the Provost shall decide on appropriate disciplinary actions, which may include, but are not limited to, formal reprimand, suspension, expulsion, revocation of degree, change in WPI status, revocation of tenure and termination of employment.

If the Provost imposes a sanction of termination of employment or revocation of tenure, the Respondent may appeal the sanction to the Board of Trustees within two weeks after the Provost notifies the Respondent of the imposition of the sanction. If the Respondent appeals to the Board, the Chair of the Board, in collaboration with the Secretary of the Faculty, shall appoint a committee of five faculty

members. The faculty committee will have access to all written reports and materials relevant to the case. This faculty committee will summarize the basis for its recommendation in a written report to the Board Chair within thirty days. The Board's decision shall be final.

The Respondent may appeal any other sanction to the President. Before the President decides the appeal, the President shall consult with the Provost and the Secretary of the Faculty. The President's decision shall be final.

The Investigation is to be completed within 120 days of beginning it, including conducting the Investigation, preparing the report of findings, providing the draft report for comment and sending the final report to ORI. However, if the Vice Provost for Research determines that the Investigation will not be completed within this 120-day period, the Vice Provost for Research will submit to ORI a written request for an extension, setting forth the reasons for the delay.

The Vice Provost for Research will provide written notice of the Provost's decision to the Respondent. The Complainant, if known, will be informed whether there was a finding of Research Misconduct. However, WPI officials will not notify the Complainant of any disciplinary action taken.

The Provost has the authority to mitigate the effects of the misconduct, including withdrawing WPI's name and sponsorship from pending abstracts and papers, notifying individuals known to have relied upon research that was affected by the misconduct, and taking formal steps to correct or retract publications and the Research Record.

If there is no finding of Research Misconduct, all reasonable and practical efforts should be made to restore and protect the reputation of the Respondent. All reasonable and practical efforts should be made to protect or restore the position and reputation of any complainant, witness or committee member.

## **Provisions Common to Misconduct Review Process**

### **No Conflicts of Interest**

To the extent reasonably feasible, the Vice Provost for Research should ensure that fact finders and investigators (1) have sufficient expertise to carry out a thorough evaluation of the relevant information and (2) have no real or perceived conflicts of interest that could affect their ability to be objective reviewers. In cases where the Provost has a conflict of interest, the President shall serve in the Provost's role. In cases where the Vice Provost for Research has a conflict of interest, the Provost will serve in that role.

### **Confidentiality**

Proceedings concerning Research Misconduct often raise difficult issues for those making the allegations, for those who are the subject of the allegations, and for those responsible for reviewing the allegations. Review of the allegations should therefore be conducted promptly and with care and sensitivity.

All participants in the review process under this Policy are expected to maintain confidentiality to protect the privacy of all involved, to the extent possible and as permitted by law. Participants should keep in mind the effect that allegations can have on reputations, even if the allegations are not sustained by the proceedings. Thus, only those people with a need to know should be informed of a complaint.

## **No Retaliation**

No one shall be retaliated against for participating in a review of a misconduct allegation in good faith as a Complainant, a witness, a factfinder, or investigator or in any other capacity. Reasonable efforts should be made to counter potential or actual retaliation against these complainants, witnesses and committee members. Retaliation is typically a significant adverse action taken against an individual because the individual participated in a review process. Retaliation is a serious offense. A complaint of retaliation may be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including terminating the individual's relationship with WPI.

## **False Accusations or Testimony**

A false or unfounded report of misconduct determined by the Institute to have been made in bad faith and dishonesty in the context of an Inquiry or Investigation are serious offenses. Such offenses may themselves be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or other affiliation with WPI.

## **Duty to Cooperate and Preserve and Produce Information**

All members of the WPI community must cooperate with efforts to review allegations of Research Misconduct.

While the destruction or absence of, or failure to provide upon request, information relating to allegations of Research Misconduct is not misconduct per se, such failure may be considered to be evidence supporting a finding of Research Misconduct when the evidence shows the Respondent had relevant information and intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly destroyed it; had the opportunity to maintain the information but did not do so; or maintained the information and failed to produce it in a timely manner in connection with a Research Misconduct proceeding, with the result that the Respondent significantly departed from accepted practices of the relevant academic community.

## **Record Keeping**

The Office of the Vice Provost for Research is the custodian of records relating to proceedings under this Policy.

## **Notice to Sponsors**

To the extent a sponsor requires notification from WPI that research it funded has become the subject of proceedings under this Policy, the Vice Provost for Research will supply that notification. In addition, the Vice Provost for Research will give applicable sponsors written notice of any decision of the Provost entering a finding of Research Misconduct at WPI.



**CURRENT (Faculty-Approved)**  
**WPI Policy on Research Conduct**

(From the current Faculty Handbook: Part Two, Section 4.G)  
(Approved by the Faculty, January 23, 2014)

**1. Introduction and Applicability**

The integrity of the University and its academic endeavors require that teachers, researchers, advisors and other members of its community be dedicated to maintaining the highest ethical standards in their professional activities. In recognition of this need, WPI has developed the following policy to respond to allegations of research misconduct<sup>3</sup> and to inform members of the community of the appropriate channels for bringing such matters to the attention of the University.<sup>4</sup> This policy applies to tenured, tenure-track, and continuing non-tenure track members of the WPI faculty.

**2. Definitions**

*Complainant.* The individual, department or entity bringing forth an allegation of research misconduct.

*Respondent.* The individual against whom an allegation of research misconduct is made.

*Research misconduct*<sup>5</sup> is defined as knowing, intentional or reckless fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in the conduct of scholarly activity. Research misconduct also includes the failure to follow standards of professional conduct with regard to human or animal subjects. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

- i. *Fabrication* is inventing data or results and recording or reporting them.
- ii. *Falsification* is manipulating research results, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that information is not accurately represented in the research record. The research record is the record of data or results of scholarly activity and includes, but is not limited to, research proposals, laboratory records (both physical and electronic), progress reports, abstracts, theses, oral presentations, internal reports, and materials submitted for publication or published in any form.
- iii. *Plagiarism* is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, data or words without giving appropriate credit.
- iv. *Scholarly activity* includes, but is not limited to, writing research proposals, undertaking research activities, and reporting or presenting research results. Scholarly activity includes all basic, applied, and demonstration research in all fields of study. Scholarly activity also includes reviewing the research of others for publishers, funding agencies or any other purpose.

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<sup>3</sup> This policy is based upon the federal regulations governing research misconduct in connection with Public Health Service ("PHS")-supported activities and will be interpreted and applied so as to be in compliance with those regulations. WPI has also determined that this policy will be applied as the minimum standard to all allegations of research misconduct, regardless of the funding source(s) or whether the scholarly activity is funded. Institutional response to research misconduct allegations in areas not PHS-supported will follow the same general principles except for the actual involvement of PHS. In the event another research sponsor has additional requirements beyond those covered by this policy, all research funded by that source will be subject to those additional requirements.

<sup>4</sup> [This policy replaces the prior policy entitled "Policy and Procedure for Removal of Tenured Faculty Member for Cause" adopted in 1969 as it relates to matters concerning research misconduct.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Definitions relating to research misconduct are based on the Federal Policy on Research Misconduct, 42 C.F.R. Part 93.

### 3. **Sanctions**

It is not feasible or wise to automatically assign a specific sanction to particular research misconduct. Generally, sanctions should be commensurate with the seriousness of the research misconduct or cause. Seriousness, and thus the sanction, may be affected by the persistence of behavior in the face of prior warnings, counseling, or sanction as well as the egregiousness of a particular action. Disciplinary actions fall into two categories:

Major sanctions include, but are not limited to, dismissal and/or removal of tenure, suspension without pay, reduction in academic rank, and public censure. A major sanction may not be imposed without following the investigatory process outlined below.

Minor sanctions are penalties less serious than a major sanction and include, but are not limited to, verbal or written reprimand, denial of eligibility for merit salary increase, and suspension with pay. Minor sanctions may be imposed administratively.

Should the Respondent disagree with an imposed minor sanction, the Respondent can request in writing a full inquiry within 5 business days of being notified of the minor sanction.

### 4. **Initial Inquiry**

- a. In all situations, complaints or allegations of research misconduct should be made in writing to the Vice Provost for Research.<sup>6,7</sup>
- b. Complaints or allegations of research misconduct are not subject to investigation if the alleged misconduct occurred more than six years prior to the date the allegation or complaint was received by the Vice Provost for Research. However, an exception to this limitation is made (a) if the Respondent republishes, cites or otherwise uses falsified, fabricated or plagiarized data or information within the six year limitation period, in which case the limitation period begins at the time of republication or other use; or (b) if the health or safety of the public is in jeopardy, in which case there is no time limit.
- c. Within five business days of receiving an allegation of research misconduct, the Vice Provost for Research will determine whether the behavior alleged meets the definition of research misconduct above and is sufficiently credible and specific so that potential evidence of such misconduct may be identified. If the behavior meets the definition of misconduct and the allegation is sufficiently credible and specific the VPR shall forward a copy of the complaint or allegation to the person named therein (“Respondent”) along with a copy of this policy. The Vice Provost for Research shall, at the same time, forward a copy of the allegation to the Respondent’s department head or other immediate supervisor and immediately arrange to take all appropriate actions to obtain and secure all research records and evidence needed to conduct the research misconduct proceeding. Respondent shall have an opportunity to respond in writing to the Vice Provost for Research to any allegations raised. Responses must be received by the Vice Provost for Research within ten business days following the Respondent’s receipt of the allegation. Upon reasonable request, the Vice Provost for Research may choose to grant additional time. After considering the information provided by the Respondent, the VPR will reassess the credibility of the allegation. If the behavior meets the definition of misconduct and the allegation is sufficiently credible and specific an inquiry will be conducted. Otherwise the VPR will notify the Respondent in writing that the matter is dismissed.

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<sup>6</sup> If the Complainant is the Vice Provost for Research or the Provost, the Secretary of the Faculty shall perform the role of the Vice Provost for Research in the initial inquiry.

<sup>7</sup> If the Respondent is the Vice Provost for Research or Provost then the President shall perform the role of the Vice Provost for Research in the initial inquiry.

At any time, the Respondent may meet with the Vice Provost for Research and Provost to mutually resolve the issues raised by the complaint or allegation. If the parties cannot agree on a settlement of the issues, the proceedings outlined in this policy shall continue.<sup>8</sup>

- d. If the VPR determines that an initial inquiry will be performed, then the VPR, in consultation with the department Head and, if the VPR deems appropriate, the Director of Research Administration, and/or such other persons as the VPR decides would be helpful to the inquiry process shall form a committee of three tenured faculty members. This “Inquiry Committee” will undertake an initial review of the evidence and may interview Respondent, complainant and other relevant witnesses, all on an individual basis.
  - i. During the inquiry period, the identities of all parties involved will be held in confidence to the maximum extent that an effective inquiry allows.
  - ii. The entire inquiry process must be completed within sixty calendar days of the formation of the Inquiry Committee, unless the Vice Provost for Research determines, for good cause shown and documented on the record, that circumstances warrant a longer period.
  - iii. The Vice Provost for Research shall, at any appropriate time and when required by law, notify federal authorities of allegations of research misconduct in federally supported research.<sup>9</sup>
- e. Based on the information gathered, the Inquiry Committee shall prepare a written preliminary report. The Vice Provost for Research and Respondent shall be provided a copy of the preliminary report. The Respondent will be provided an opportunity to respond or comment within ten business days.<sup>10</sup>

After evaluating all of the information, the Inquiry Committee shall determine if there is substance to the complaint or allegations of research misconduct and prepare a final report that includes any comments provided by the Respondent.<sup>11</sup> The final report will be delivered to the Respondent, the Vice Provost for Research, and the Provost.
- f. If the Inquiry Committee determines that there is not substance to the allegations, then the Provost will notify the Respondent in writing that the matter is dismissed.
- g. If the Inquiry Committee determines that there is substance to the allegations of misconduct and the Provost decides that major sanctions are not supported, then minor sanctions may be imposed administratively after first providing the Respondent an opportunity to respond to the Provost. In this case, the Provost will determine the appropriate minor sanction only after reviewing and considering the response received from Respondent. Should the Respondent disagree with an imposed minor sanction, the Respondent can request in writing a formal investigation within 5 business days of being notified of the minor sanction.

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<sup>8</sup> If PHS-supported research is at issue, the Vice Provost of Research must notify the ORI, if WPI intends to close a case at the inquiry, investigation or appeal stage on the basis that Respondent has admitted guilt or a settlement with Respondent has been reached (42 C.F.R. § 93.316).

<sup>9</sup> Regulations require institutions receiving grants under the Public Health Service to notify the Office of Research Integrity (“ORI”), a component of the Office of the Director of the National Institutes for Health (“NIH”), when an institution determines that a formal investigation is warranted (42 C.F.R. § 93.309) and certain specific conditions exist (see 42 C.F.R. § 93.318). If it is determined that an investigation is not warranted, the institution must maintain, for a period of at least seven (7) years, sufficiently detailed documentation of the inquiry to permit a later assessment of reasons supporting that determination (42 C.F.R. § 93.309(c)).

<sup>10</sup> Inquiry reports involving PHS-supported research must comply with Federal Regulations. See 42 C.F.R. § 93.309.

<sup>11</sup> Inquiry reports involving PHS-supported research must comply with Federal Regulations. See 42 C.F.R. § 93.309.

- h. If the Inquiry Committee determines that there is substance to the allegations of misconduct and the Provost determines that major sanctions might be appropriate then a formal investigation is warranted.
- i. No action shall be taken against the Respondent as a result of research misconduct allegations prior to the conclusion of the appropriate investigation, unless it is determined that the presence of that person on campus or in class poses an immediate threat of physical or psychological harm to others. A suspension on this basis shall not result in a reduction of salary while an investigation is pending.

## **5. Procedures for Formal Investigations**

- a. If a formal investigation is warranted, it shall begin within twenty-one (21) days of the conclusion of the initial inquiry. Before the investigation begins, the Provost shall notify the Respondent and Vice Provost for Research in writing that a formal investigation is in order. When the complaint or allegation involves externally funded research, the Vice Provost for Research will inform the sponsor of the formal investigation.<sup>12</sup>
- b. All parties involved in a formal investigation and any subsequent proceedings shall, to the extent possible, endeavor to maintain confidentiality regarding the allegations, evidence and proceedings, and use care in balancing the need for disclosure and the privacy interests of persons involved.
- c. The Provost will request the Secretary of the Faculty (SOF) and Chair of the Faculty Review Committee (FRC) to appoint a fact-finding committee (“the Committee”) of five elected FRC members who are unbiased<sup>13</sup> in the investigation and have the required expertise to evaluate the particular issues and evidence involved in the alleged misconduct. (If there are not five unbiased elected FRC members with the required expertise, then the SOF and FRC chair will appoint the required number of qualified faculty from outside the FRC. If the Respondent or Complainant is either the SOF or FRC Chair, then the other will appoint the committee.) The Committee shall elect its own chair who shall be responsible for determining the manner in which the witness interviews and other procedures will be conducted by the Committee. The investigation will be completed within 120 days of the Committee’s formation, subject to external factors such as the availability of the parties, Committee members, witnesses and other evidence, and whether proceedings concerning the same allegations are pending in another forum. The VPR may determine that the investigation cannot be completed within this 120-day period and will so notify the granting agency if necessary.
- d. The Committee will be provided with all necessary information about the complaint or allegation and empowered to review relevant documents and interview witnesses. The Committee shall review all relevant research records and documentation and interview Respondent, complainant and any other available persons who have been identified as having relevant and material information regarding the investigation. The Committee may seek assistance from WPI counsel in conducting its investigation and from ORI, if needed.
- e. The Committee will pursue all significant issues and leads developed during the investigation, including evidence of additional instances of possible research misconduct. The Committee will give Respondent written notice of new allegations of research misconduct not addressed during

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<sup>12</sup> If the Complainant or Respondent is the Vice Provost for Research or Provost, the President shall perform the roles of the Provost and VPR in the formal investigation.

<sup>13</sup> “Unbiased” in this context means person(s) “who do not have unresolved personal, professional or financial conflicts of interest with” Respondent (42 C.F.R. § 93.310(b)).

- the inquiry or in the initial notice of investigation within a reasonable amount of time of deciding to pursue such allegations.
- f. The Committee will maintain records of its fact-finding proceedings, including copies of materials submitted by all parties, documentary evidence considered by the Committee, and a written record or summary of its witness interviews.
  - g. Respondent may exercise the following rights during the investigation of the Committee:
    - 1. Respondent may have an advisor or legal counsel to assist or support them through the Committee investigation process.
    - 2. Respondent may challenge the composition of the Committee, if s/he believes that one or more of its members is biased (see footnote 6). The remaining members of the Committee shall determine whether bias exists and otherwise act to ensure its own credibility. The Committee shall request that the Chair of the FRC and the Secretary of the Faculty replace a committee member when appropriate.
    - 3. At the request of Respondent, the Committee shall use its authority to obtain documents and evidence and to interview witnesses who have information relevant to the defense of Respondent.
    - 4. Respondent is entitled to a presumption of innocence and need not prove his or her innocence<sup>14</sup> to the Committee and to the Provost.
    - 5. Respondent shall have the opportunity to present a defense to the Committee, to present witnesses for interview by the Committee, and to respond to all allegations of research misconduct.
    - 6. Respondent shall receive a copy of the draft report of the Committee and shall have an opportunity to provide a written response to such report. Respondent shall receive a copy of the final report at the time it is provided to the Provost.
  - h. Once the investigation is completed, the Committee will prepare a written investigation report<sup>15</sup> (the “Report”) offering a judgment based on the evidence provided as to whether the Respondent has committed research misconduct, and if so its level of severity, and summarizing the facts and analysis that support that conclusion, addressing the merits of any reasonable explanation or defense provided by Respondent, and including the vote of the Committee. Findings of research misconduct shall only be made if a majority of the members of the Committee agree that such findings are supported by a preponderance of evidence<sup>16</sup>. If the Committee determines Respondent is guilty of research misconduct, it shall also recommend disciplinary action. If the disciplinary action includes termination and/or removal of tenure, it must be by agreement of four or more of the Committee members. The Report should normally be prepared within fifteen (15) days of conclusion of the evidentiary phase of the investigation.

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<sup>14</sup> The Respondent does bear the burden of proving any affirmative defenses raised (e.g., honest error or difference of opinion) or mitigating factors. (See 42 C.F.R. § 93.106.)

<sup>15</sup> If applicable, the investigation report shall comply with the requirements of 42 C.F.R. § 93.313.

<sup>16</sup> “Preponderance of the evidence” as applied to the Committee’s and Respondent’s (defense’s) burdens of proof means, “proof by information that, compared with that opposing it, leads to the conclusion that the fact at issue is more probably true than not.” (42 C.F.R. § 93.219.)

## **6. Final Findings**

- a. The Committee will provide Respondent with a draft copy of the Report prior to the time it is presented to the Provost.<sup>17</sup> Within 15 days of receipt of the Report, the Respondent may file an appeal or objection to the Report. Such appeals or objections must be in writing and state the reasons therefor. The Committee will prepare a Final Report that considers and includes the appeal(s) or objection(s) and any changes in the Committee's vote, finding, and recommendation.
- b. The Committee shall transmit the Final Report to the Provost and to the Respondent. The action of the Committee shall either be sustained by the Provost or the case returned to the Committee with the Provost's objections specified in writing. If the case is returned, the Committee shall reconsider, taking account of the stated objections and receiving new evidence as necessary. The Committee shall frame its reconsideration and communicate it in the same manner as before, including any change in the Committee's vote, finding, and recommendation. Only after study of the new report, and after consultation with the VPR and Department Head, should the Provost make a final decision.
- c. If at least four members of the committee voted that the respondent did not commit research misconduct, but the Provost decides on a finding of a guilt, then at most a minor sanction may be imposed.
- d. If the Provost decides that termination and/or removal of tenure is appropriate, but if four members of the Committee do not support the decision, then both the Provost's written recommendation and the Committee's report will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for its decision. In this case, the Board will provide both the Respondent and the Complainant with 10 days to submit any additional relevant information. The Board will then review all materials received and any other relevant material submissions or information which the Board, in its discretion, may solicit from the Respondent or Complainant, or the Provost. The Board will relay its decision to the Provost who will inform the Respondent. This shall be the final decision on the part of the University.
- e. The Provost will allow for submission of the report to ORI<sup>18</sup> or the appropriate sponsor no later than 120 days from the date the investigation began if there is a finding of research misconduct. If this time period cannot be met and PHS-supported research is at issue, the Provost must file a written request and explanation for an extension with the ORI.
- f. The Provost shall promptly notify Respondent in writing of the decision on research misconduct and, if applicable, disciplinary action. This decision shall be final, subject to a limited right of appeal to the Board of Trustees as described below.

## **7. Review of Disciplinary Actions by the Board of Trustees<sup>19</sup>**

If both the Committee and Provost recommend termination and removal of tenure, the respondent may appeal the disciplinary action, not the underlying finding of research misconduct, to the Board of Trustees ("the Board"). Such appeal must be in writing, must state the reasons for appeal, and must be presented to the Board within ten (10) days of the date of Respondent's receipt of notice of such disciplinary action. Thereafter, the Provost shall promptly transmit the final investigation report and his/her written recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The Board shall review the

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<sup>17</sup> If the Complainant or Respondent is the VPR or Provost, then the President, in consultation with the Secretary of the Faculty, shall fulfill the role of the Provost in sections 6 through 9 of this policy.

<sup>18</sup> If PHS-supported research is involved, the contents of the final report must comply with federal regulations (42 C.F.R. § 93.313).

<sup>19</sup> This Review is extended only to cases involving a tenured faculty member.

reasons for appeal, the final investigation report, the Provost's written recommendation, and any submission made by the Respondent relevant to the appeal, and may seek additional submissions or information from Respondent or the Provost. The Board shall notify both Respondent and the Provost of its decision, which shall be the final decision on the part of the University.

## **8. Special Measures**

- a. If there is a finding that research misconduct occurred and the Provost determines that further action is required, the Provost<sup>20</sup> shall direct the department head or program director<sup>21</sup> to notify the editors of publications to which abstracts and/or papers relevant to the research misconduct have been submitted, and request that the work be withdrawn prior to publication. If any relevant work has already been published, the department head or program director will request that a correction or retraction be published. The individual who was found to have committed research misconduct will ordinarily be responsible for preparing and presenting appropriate corrections and/or retractions.
- b. Should the procedure followed under this policy lead to a finding of no research misconduct by the Respondent, the party or parties who conducted the initial inquiry or formal investigation shall, as appropriate, undertake a good faith effort to restore the reputation of the Respondent. Reasonable efforts will also be taken to protect the standing of the individual(s) who raised the issue of possible research misconduct, unless the inquiry or investigation reveals that such individual(s) acted in bad faith, in which case appropriate disciplinary actions may be taken.

## **9. Reporting**

- a. If the research misconduct occurred in the context of externally sponsored research, the Provost shall instruct the Vice Provost for Research to convey the results of the investigation and any decision or further actions taken as a result of that investigation to the sponsor of the research.<sup>22</sup> This communication shall include a description of the procedure that was followed to investigate the allegation(s) and a summary of the views of the person(s) found to have engaged in research misconduct.
- b. The Vice Provost for Research shall file reports on allegations and investigations of research misconduct as required by the Federal Office of Research Integrity, Office of Scientific Integrity, or other relevant agency.

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<sup>20</sup> If the Complainant or Respondent is the VPR or Provost, then the President, in consultation with the Secretary of the Faculty, shall fulfill the role of the Provost in sections 6 through 9 of this policy.

<sup>21</sup> For the purposes of this section, the Associate Provost/Vice President for Research will fulfill the responsibilities of the department head when the research misconduct was committed by a department head or program director.

<sup>22</sup> If the Complainant or Respondent is the VPR or Provost, then the President, in consultation with the Secretary of the Faculty, shall fulfill the role of the Provost in sections 6 through 9 of this policy.

**Date:** November 16, 2017  
**To:** WPI Faculty  
**From:** Committee on Graduate Studies and Research (Prof. K. Troy, Chair)  
**Re:** Motion to modify the guidelines for financial assistance to Teaching and Research Assistants, Graduate Fellows, and Graduate Assistants

**Motion:** The Committee on Graduate Studies and research recommends and I move that the guidelines for financial assistance to Teaching and Research Assistants, and Graduate Fellows, and Graduate Assistants described in the Financial Assistance section of the Graduate Catalog be modified as described below.

### ***Description of the Proposed Modifications***

Current First paragraph of the Financial Assistance section of Graduate Catalog (p. 14):

Financial assistance to support graduate students is available in the form of teaching assistantships, research assistantships, fellowships, internships, and loans. Entering students are awarded either teaching or research assistantships or fellowships will receive official notification pertaining to the type and level of financial assistance from the Graduate Studies Office.

(Other paragraphs follow.)

Proposed Revised Text:

(with text deleted from the version sent out on Oct. 6 denoted by ~~strike-throughs~~; text added to that version denoted in **underlined bold**; text added by friendly amendment denoted in **underlined bold italics**; and text deleted by friendly amendment denoted in ~~**strikethrough underlined bold italics**~~):

*(The following proposed text will replace the entire section.)*

Financial assistance **from WPI** to support graduate students is available in the form of teaching assistantships, research assistantships, other graduate assistantships, fellowships, **and** internships, **and** **loans**. When graduate students are awarded teaching or research assistantships or fellowships that are processed through WPI, the student will receive official notification pertaining to the type and level of financial assistance from the Graduate Studies Office.

Fellowships are defined as full financial support for 12 months. They include a stipend and full tuition of at least 9 credits per semester during the academic year. In summer, there is typically no tuition offered but the fellowship recipient maintains the same stipend. Fellowships ~~do not carry specific responsibilities~~ **carry the specific expectations as defined in the notice of award**, and are used to support the student **to focus on research** in their area of study.

Teaching Assistants are almost always for a full academic year of 9 months (fall and spring, or for students who begin in January, they would be for spring and at least the following fall), and include both a stipend that meets the minimum level, and full tuition of at least 9 credits per semester. The expected responsibilities of Teaching Assistants are to support courses as defined by the supporting department or program. Exceptions are made under special circumstances and must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Some approved exceptions would include: 1) the student is graduating midway through the year, 2) the support is split between RA and TA for different semesters.

Research Assistants are typically for 9 or 12 months, and must include a stipend that meets the minimum levels required for that type of student, and full tuition of at least 9 credits per semester. The



expected responsibilities of Research Assistants are to support research activities as defined by the supporting faculty member.

It is possible to combine multiple sources of support. For example, a student may be a Teaching Assistant for the 9 month academic year and a Research Assistant for the 3 summer months. For TAs and RAs that have already completed the number of credits required for their pending graduate degree, they may be offered less than 9 credits of tuition, as long as the amount is commensurate with their maintaining full-time student status.

Graduate Assistants are students that are not otherwise supported as full-time Research or Teaching Assistants or Fellows. There is no implied long-term commitment. These students typically receive hourly or fixed stipends and/or partial tuition support for a specific activity defined by a sponsor. The expected responsibilities of Graduate Assistants are typically to support research activities as defined by the sponsor. This classification is intended to provide a means for providing support to graduate students who would otherwise not receive assistantships, typically self-funded Master's students.

**Rationale:**

The updated text is intended to clarify the different funding options available to graduate students. Graduate students can often be confused about the type of funding they are being awarded, the duties required, and whether or not it is renewable. The updated text intends to ensure that full-time funded PhD students can maintain a minimum level of funding while they are maintaining satisfactory progress. For example, if someone is brought to WPI as a PhD student TA, they should be assured that they will continue to be funded in some way as long as they are meeting expectations. On the other hand, an additional funding category was added that would give faculty more flexibility to hire a student on a research project for a short period of time, or at less than full support. This category would primarily be used for Master's students or could be used for PhD students who do not need full support.

**Implementation Date:** 2018-2019 academic year

**Resources needed:** No new resources

## **Appendix: Consent Agenda Motions**

**Date:** November 16, 2017  
**To:** WPI Faculty  
**From:** Committee on Academic Operations (Prof. Zeng, Chair)  
**Re:** Motion to change the offering schedule for BB 3040 *Experimental Design and Data Analysis*

**Motion:** On behalf of the Department of Biology & Biotechnology, the Committee on Academic Operation recommends and I move that the offering schedule for BB 3040 *Experimental Design and Data Analysis* be changed as described below. (old text is marked ~~removed~~, new text is marked added).

**Description of proposed change** (with text to be deleted denoted by ~~strike through~~, and text to be added denoted by underline):

BB 3040. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS.

Cat. II

This applied course introduces students to the design of experiments and analysis of data. A combination of lecture, reading and discussion will be used to cover a variety of experimental situations occurring frequently in modern biology, including testing the fit of data to theoretical distributions, comparisons of groups, and regression analysis.

Emphasis will be placed on the formulation of hypotheses, the design of experiments to test a formulated hypothesis, and the will be used to illustrate the importance of experimental control as well as some of the most common errors made in choosing and performing statistical tests. Students will learn to use computer packages to carry out both parametric and non-parametric tests on their own experimental data.

Recommended background: a solid background in a biological area at about the depth provided by any BB 3000 or 4000 level course.

**This course will be offered in ~~2018-19~~ 2019-20, and in alternating years thereafter.**

Students may not receive credit for both BB 4040 and BB 3040.

**Rationale:** We are requesting to change the alternate year pattern for a Cat II course from 2018/19 to 2019/20 and alternating years thereafter for the following reasons.

The professor who re-developed and has taught this course for the past several offerings is leaving WPI. The faculty member who is best suited to teach this course has a full teaching load which includes a category II course that will run in 2018/19. Moving this course to the alternate year (2019/20) would help balance that teaching load while assuring that the best qualified instructor would be assigned to the course.

**Impacts on students:** Enrollments in this course for the past three offerings have been relatively small (11, 5, 14). This is one of 11 courses offered at the 3000 level, so students have a number of other options at this curricular level. For those students who feel they need to master statistical analysis of data in a specific time frame, MA 2610, *Applied Statistics for the Life Sciences* is offered every year.

**Resource Needs:** None

**Implementation Date:** The course would next be offered in academic year 2019/20 and alternate years thereafter.