

Citation of
Stacy Shaw
For the
Romeo L. Moruzzi Young Faculty Award for
Innovation in Undergraduate Education

As a scholar on deliberate rest, Professor Stacy Shaw has advanced deliberate rest as a transformative pedagogical technique and a vehicle to address student health and wellbeing. To this end, Professor Shaw coaches students in designing deliberate rest periods.

In her psychology courses, Professor Shaw challenges students to design a two-hour deliberate rest activity that they could use if they suddenly found themselves with an unexpected block of free time. After exploring the science behind rest and discussing strategies for overcoming common barriers to restful practices, she introduces her innovative intervention: students are surprised to learn that they are assigned not to attend the next class session. Instead, they are to spend that time engaging in the deliberate rest activity they planned. Following this experience, students reflect on their chosen activities and share insights about how it felt to intentionally prioritize rest, fostering a meaningful conversation about the value and impact of deliberate downtime.

This innovative approach improves students' mental health and wellbeing while equipping them with additional tools to navigate stress. Students were able to see the immediate benefits of rest on their personal and academic lives, reporting that engaging in deliberate rest "improved [their] ability to learn and ... made [them] a better student" because Professor Shaw demonstrated the myth that avoiding breaks to enhance productivity was wrong.

For her work to promote deliberate rest within WPI and beyond, WPI presents the 2025 Romeo L. Moruzzi Young Faculty Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Education to Professor Stacy Shaw.

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