

## Academic Year 2024-2025

This year marked a pivotal moment for Staff Council as we hit our stride as an organization. After establishing ourselves in previous years, we focused on continued to amplify staff voices across campus and creating meaningful change in the areas that matter most to our community.

### Strategic Foundation

#### Approved Our First Strategic Plan

We spent considerable time developing and approving our strategic plan for 2024-2026, **"Connect. Grow. Thrive: WPI's Staff Evolution."** This plan gave us clear direction and measurable goals around seven key areas:

- Amplifying staff influence and visibility across campus
- Developing robust communication channels
- Building a supportive, engaged workplace
- Promoting staff health and well-being
- Creating diverse recognition initiatives
- Providing transparency through annual reporting
- Cultivating a collaborative environment

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### Impactful Policy Outcomes

#### PTO Task Force Success

One of our biggest accomplishments was the collaborative work on the expanded PTO Task Force. This group, which included Staff Council members, representatives from Talent & Inclusion, and staff from across campus, tackled the issues we've been hearing about since our inception:

- **37.5-hour work week approved**
- **Improved vacation accrual structure for non-exempt staff**
- **Additional institutional holidays and float days**
- **Updated bereavement leave policies**

The Cabinet's approval of these recommendations demonstrates the strength of the proposal and the effectiveness of our collaborative approach.

#### Increased Staff Representation

We successfully advocated for better staff representation across campus:

- **Modified the Fringe Benefits Committee composition** - changed from 7 faculty/5 staff to 5 faculty/5 staff with a staff vice-chair
  - **Secured staff positions on additional university committees and search committees.**
  - **Established regular communication channels** with Faculty Governance and union representatives
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## Communication and Engagement Breakthroughs

### All-Staff Meetings Launch

We introduced quarterly All-Staff Meetings that became an immediate success:

- **Averaged over 300 participants** at each of our four meetings
- **Featured panels with senior leadership** including President Wang and Cabinet members
- **Provided platform for direct Q&A** between staff and administration
- **Addressed hot-button issues** like federal policy changes, budget concerns, and workplace policies

### Enhanced Feedback Systems

- **Streamlined feedback form process** with direct connections to appropriate offices
  - **Established regular communication** with key departments to ensure staff concerns reach decision-makers
  - **Created follow-up mechanisms** to track resolution of issues
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## Recognition and Community Building

### GoatNotes Program Growth

Our electronic recognition program really took off this year:

- **225+ GoatNotes sent** throughout the year
- **Integrated into major events** like Harvest of Thanks
- **Became part of campus culture** with regular mentions in communications

### New Staff Awards Program

Working closely with Talent & Inclusion, we developed a comprehensive staff awards program launching fall 2025:

- **Four distinct award categories:** Innovation, Mentorship, Teamwork, and New Staff Contributions
- **Annual presentation** at Harvest of Thanks event
- **Creates parity** with existing faculty award programs

### Successful Events

- **Harvest of Thanks** - 175 staff attended with food drive component and extensive raffle prizes
- **Lunch & Learn series** - pilot program featuring staff sharing hobbies and skills
- **Worcester Art Museum trips** and other social activities
- **Barre Pilates sessions** and wellness programming partnerships

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# Operational

## Committee Structure Success

Our four committees really found their rhythm this year, each taking ownership of critical areas that directly impact staff experience:

### Feedback Form Committee

- **Processed almost 200 feedback forms** covering a spectrum of staff concerns.
- **Established direct communication lines** with key departments across campus
- **Used follow-up tracking systems** to ensure staff concerns weren't just heard but addressed
- **Served as liaison** with union representatives to coordinate on shared concerns
- **Advocated for policy clarifications** when feedback revealed confusion about existing procedures

### Engagement Committee

- **Planned and executed** Harvest of Thanks and our End of the Year Social
- **Launched the Lunch & Learn series** as a pilot program showcasing staff talents and hobbies
- **Coordinated community service initiatives** including food drives and volunteer opportunities
- **Organized social activities** like Worcester Art Museum trips and fitness programming
- **Surveyed staff interests** to ensure programming matched what people wanted

### Recognition Committee

- **Developed comprehensive staff awards proposal** working closely with Talent & Inclusion over multiple months
- **Enhanced the GoatNotes program** with seasonal themes and integration into major events
- **Coordinated with existing recognition efforts** like the annual service dinner to avoid duplication
- **Researched best practices** from peer institutions to inform award structure and criteria
- **Planned award launch timeline** to debut at fall 2025 Harvest of Thanks event

### Election Committee

- **Restructured constituency groups** for better representation
- **Streamlined nomination and voting procedures**
- **Planned transition processes** for incoming council members

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## Looking Forward

Over the past three years, Staff Council has worked to become part of WPI's governance structure. We are very excited that this seems to be accomplished. Senior Leadership approaches Staff Council regularly for feedback and input on major decisions that impact staff.

The success of the PTO Task Force work demonstrates what's possible when we approach challenges collaboratively and with data-driven proposals. The enthusiastic participation in our All-Staff Meetings shows there's real appetite for the kind of communication and transparency we're providing.

As we transition to a new council this summer, they will be entering a group that has clear processes and a track record of meaningful accomplishments. The foundation is set for continued growth and impact in the years ahead.