



WPI

Citation of

Peter Hansen

for the

**2025 Denise Nicoletti Trustees' Award
for Service to the Community**

The recipient of this year's Denise Nicoletti Trustees' Award for Service to the Community is a widely recognized member of our campus whose outstanding service to both WPI and the Worcester community embodies Denise's passion for serving people everywhere.

Peter Hansen, professor in the Department of Humanities and Arts, has, in over 30 years at WPI, engaged in an impressive array of campus service roles while simultaneously dedicating himself to local organizations in need of thoughtful and experienced volunteer leadership. To the campus, he brings a broad institutional memory as well as an understanding of the academic enterprise in general and the WPI Plan in particular, as well as the critical role of the humanities and arts in STEM university education. To local groups, he provides guidance on matters that range from their day-to-day operational logistics to their global institutional missions.

Since 1996, Peter has been a vital member and active leader of the Wesley United Methodist Church of Worcester. Among his many roles and in addition to having served on the Staff-Parish Relations Committee and the Church Council, he has co-chaired the Finance and Stewardship Committee, helping the church manage its \$4 million endowment. During the COVID-19 pandemic and until December 2024, Peter led the church's Re-Entry Task Force responsible for its COVID response, monitoring up-to-date pandemic trends and researching guidelines as they emerged from the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, as well as from ever-evolving state and local policies. He established the church's Tech Team, which arranged the infrastructure needed for hybrid worship and the streaming of community events. In all, his efforts allowed the church to keep its doors open throughout the pandemic to serve the needs of not only its congregants but also the many community members dependent on the church's local outreach.

For the past decade, Peter has held key leadership roles in the Worcester World Affairs Council, serving previously as vice president and currently as president, where his work has been instrumental to the organization's success. The mission of the Worcester World Affairs Council is to educate, inspire, and engage citizens in international affairs by bringing together academics, professionals, and business leaders at monthly meetings with prominent outside speakers whose expertise illuminates the overriding global issues of our time. From the start of his involvement, Peter chaired the group's Technology Committee, updating its website, helping the Council

connect more effectively online with its membership, modernizing its registration process, and making it possible to continue its speakers' program during the COVID pandemic. Perhaps most importantly, Peter has served as a link between Worcester's academic community and the professionals represented within the Worcester World Affairs Council. Students at area universities formally meet with guest speakers, faculty members are introduced to the Council, and Council members participate in international programs at WPI.

Peter's wide array of past WPI campus service notably includes his leading role in changing the university-wide Humanities and Arts degree requirement to include our now-familiar Inquiry Seminar and Practicum, as well as his central role in the faculty's incorporation of Boyer's broader definition of scholarship in the criteria for promotion to full professor. More recently, within the Department of Humanities and Arts itself, Peter has chaired the Promotions Committee and the AI and Pedagogy Committee. He also has been a member of the Humanities and Arts Program Review Committee, an ad hoc Committee on Assessment of the Humanities and Arts Requirement, and an ad hoc Committee on Transfer Credit. Informally, Peter has been a consistent and stalwart mentor to junior faculty members, providing, according to one of them, sometimes brutally honest but always generous assessments and guidance. He well understands the vital nature, not just of high-profile campus service activities but also of the unglamorous work needed for a department and the university to function effectively.

For his clear demonstration, consistent with the spirit of this award, that service to the WPI community and service to the external community are of equal value, and for his steadfast and balanced commitment to both, WPI is proud to recognize Professor Peter Hansen as the recipient of the 2025 Denise Nicoletti Trustees' Award for Service to the Community.

2025 Selection Committee

Mark Richman, Aerospace Engineering, Committee Chair

Christopher Davis '26, Aerospace Engineering

Aaron Deskins, Chemical Engineering

Michael DiRuzza, Admissions

RJ Franzen, MS '25, Chemical Engineering

Meredith Merchant, Physical Education, Recreation, and Athletics

Sarah Wodin-Schwartz, Mechanical and Materials Engineering