

2000 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Academic Advising

Professor David S. Adams

In order for an individual to excel in Academic Advising, a professor must be more than just a resource for what classes a student should take. A professor should be a mentor and a role model--someone that a student can count on when times are rough. When a student arrives at WPI as a freshman, things can be confusing. They're away from home and on their own for the first time; they're expected to both manage their own lives and their schoolwork; and they have a dizzying variety of both options and obligations to pursue in order to fulfill the WPI Plan. So an Academic Advisor is someone that students can look to for guidance in their academic, professional, and sometimes even personal lives. Through his warmth, reliability, and knowledge, David S. Adams exemplifies the role of Academic Advisor.



In addition to both his research and teaching duties in the Biology/Biotechnology Department, Professor Adams has the daunting task of managing 38 advisees. But the demands on his time don't seem to faze him a bit. As one of his advisees puts it, "Whenever I am unsure about anything, he is always willing to sit down and help, even if it is his only break time all day."

In his main role as Academic Advisor, Professor Adams is able to help his advisees build the curriculum that best suits their needs. As one student points out, "Dave has an incredible amount of knowledge about all the classes WPI has to offer. And if he doesn't know, he finds out incredibly fast. I actually changed advisors freshman year to Dave--and since then he has helped me shape my program to my needs...and told me which classes would be most effective."

Professor Adams also possesses a very approachable demeanor to his advisees. As one student says, "Professor Adams is a very down to earth guy; he is easy to approach and easy to talk to. This may seem like an almost meaningless quality, but it makes a big difference to students." This approachability is not limited to his professional duties, either. As another student points out, "He is not only an amazing professor in class; he has a very caring and warm personality outside of school work. He knows what to say and to do to make someone feel better and more comfortable."

Professor Adams is also a great role model for his advisees. Through his work, his teaching, and his compassion, Professor Adams helps his students realize the potential within themselves. One of his advisees says, "Every time I go to see Dave he is full of energy and words of encouragement no matter what I see him about--whether it be internships, classes, programs, careers, MQP, or just life in general. He is truly an

inspirational person to not only his advisees but also to his colleagues at WPI and to the people at the Biotech companies where he consults. In addition to his tremendous capacity at WPI as a mentor, advisor, professor, and colleague, he is also a good friend."

But Professor Adams doesn't just reach out when times are good for his advisees. He's there during the tough times, as well. He calls parents, pulls strings--whatever he can do to help out his students. One of his advisees testifies to this, "This man is my inspiration and has helped me get through one of my toughest times here at WPI."

Perhaps this statement by a student sums up Professor Adams best, "He's just great, and I feel very lucky and proud that I have him as my advisor."

For his dedication to his role as Academic Advisor, his devotion and genuine concern for his students, and his exemplary performance as both role model and mentor, we proudly present the 2000 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Academic Advising to Professor David S. Adams.