

2004 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Academic Advising

Professor George D. Pins

College is a defining period in any student's life. In these years, the students have the freedom to choose their futures. Worcester Polytechnic Institute provides a window of opportunity through the unique "WPI Plan," which offers students the chance to customize their own education. While the freedom of choice can be an incredible benefit, it can also be daunting to incoming freshmen who are still adjusting to the new environment. Under these stressful circumstances, students need someone they can turn to for academic guidance and who cares about their well being in general.



It is reassuring to know that this year's pool of nominees for the Outstanding Academic Advising Award was stellar and, as always, it was extremely difficult to choose a single advisor from the numerous excellent candidates.

In his relatively short time since he joined WPI in July 2000, Professor George Pins has become increasingly popular as a professor and an advisor. Testimony to this is seen in the overwhelming majority of nominations he received for the award this year. His wholehearted commitment to the students he advises is commendable and appreciated. As one of his students succinctly comments, "He is always around to help out with classes and academic planning. He makes me feel comfortable going to him with questions and concerns." The amazing thing is that he manages to do this for all thirty-nine undergraduate and six graduate students that he advises, as well as teach courses and contribute to several departmental committees.

In addition to his knowledgeable academic and professional advice, a recurring theme that many of his advisees noted was his exemplary guidance on non-academic issues. Professor Pins's open, friendly, and helpful attitude allows his advisees and students to feel comfortable approaching him with difficult issues. One of the comments made by a student to describe the depth of this statement was, "I went from inches away from failing out of this institution to exceeding in every endeavor I pursue here; all because my advisor did everything he could to support me." Another student noted, "I think Professor Pins's most important contribution to me was that he taught me a lot about myself and who exactly I am... he has become a role model and most importantly a good friend." As best described in one comment, "His amiability makes him easy to approach, and it also invites a peer-peer level of dialogue that is uncommon and extremely welcome." Professor Pins is clearly someone who fully understands the stresses students go through, as well as the impact of events outside our lives at WPI.

It is with great pleasure that we present the Academic Advising Award to Professor George Pins. His firm belief that all his students will be successful makes them want to succeed. As a final indication of the level of gratitude that students have for Professor Pins, we quote one of his advisees; "Everything that I have accomplished thus far in my undergraduate academic career I owe to Professor Pins."

Ann Garvin

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It is reassuring to know that this year's pool of nominees for the Outstanding Academic Advising Award was stellar and, as always, it was extremely difficult to choose a single advisor from the numerous excellent candidates. Even under these competitive circumstances, Ann Garvin stood out as the only nominee to be unanimously voted for by our committee to receive the award this year.

While Ann Garvin only had a few official advisees, as the former Director of Academic Advising, her daily duties allowed her to help numerous students in need. In fact, there is no WPI student or alumni over the past twenty years who does not owe Ann Garvin a thank you. She has been a friend to many students, and has always been ready to advise any student who walked through her door. While this may have been considered part of her job description, the breadth of her knowledge on advising students and her dedication to her role as academic advisor at WPI remains unchallenged. As one student commented, "She always gives her best." Another student comments, "Ann's attitude is wonderfully down to earth and she makes things easy for me to understand... who better deserves this award than someone who cares as Ann does?"

Although Ann recently accepted an early retirement, her actions and love for her students mandate that she should receive this year's Academic Advising Award. She is already a much missed part of our campus and as a final demonstration of the gratitude that students have for her twenty years of incredible service to WPI, we quote one of her many fans: "It is time that we give something back to the woman who has helped us all more than we will ever know."