

## 2004 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching Recipient

**Professor Judith E. Miller**

Professor Judith E. Miller is described by students as a great teacher, but her impact on WPI students extends far beyond her own discipline and her own classroom. She has been a leader in improving the quality of every aspect of teaching and learning on the WPI campus.



Professor Miller succeeds in getting students involved in and excited about biology, but she also helps them grow in ways that lead to success in all academic work. Students describe her as "approachable, innovative, and supportive." Another student writes, "I have not yet had a class where a professor assigned a project that forced me to stretch my mind and connect details as much as my freshman year bio course, and I'm currently in the final stages of my MQP." Her introductory courses teach biology, but they also help students adjust to college life, learn to work well in groups, and gain the confidence needed to overcome what seem to be overwhelming assignments. In the words of one student, "She teaches at two entirely different levels, helping students learn the material for the class, but also helping students develop skills that lead to success in more advanced classes." As another student observes: "She connects with and influences people like no one else at WPI."

Several students from her introductory courses have gone on to become Peer Learning Assistants (PLAs) in subsequent years and write about how much they have learned from Professor Miller about facilitating learning for younger students. One former PLA particularly liked the fact that Professor Miller would engage PLAs in discussions of problems encountered by student groups and then encourage the entire PLA staff to devise possible solutions. Professor Miller conveys a deep respect for learning, not just the particular subject of the course, but for learning to learn as the crucial skill for success in college and in life.

WPI faculty colleagues describe Judy Miller as a "teacher of teachers." As Director of the Center for Educational Development, Technology, and Assessment, she has developed and maintains initiatives which have improved WPI's educational programs at all levels from the first year to the post-graduate. Her work on peer-assisted cooperative learning has improved several courses in several departments across campus. She has designed and delivered summer programs on college teaching for graduate students. Many of her colleagues have described how her Food for Thought Programs continue to bring new ideas and fresh outlooks on teaching to WPI. One colleague says her work goes well beyond providing tools for teaching and "helps new

faculty become members of the WPI community." Another colleague praises her work in the Mentoring Program for New Faculty and writes that she is the "one person who has had the most impact on me as a teacher."

Professor Miller has been a source of energy and encouragement and challenge and guidance for all who seek to learn. For her excellence in teaching and mentoring, for her unconditional support of both students and colleagues, we proudly present the 2004 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching to Professor Judith E. Miller.