

2007 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching Recipient

Professor John Goulet

An outstanding teacher is a person who directly causes learning: someone who inspires, motivates, and influences students not only in the classroom but throughout their lives. The outstanding teacher helps students discover in themselves untapped sources of intellectual energy, and helps to trigger and focus the student's natural curiosity. The outstanding teacher makes an indelible impression on the student. This year we recognize Professor John Goulet as an outstanding teacher in every sense.

Professor John Goulet personifies what it means to be an outstanding teacher through his innovative style, his cheerful attitude towards mathematics, his availability as a trusted mentor and his dedication to teaching others how to teach. The stories of John Goulet's direct involvement in the achievements of his students are never ending, and he embodies the spirit of a true mentor. Whether he is encouraging a love for mathematics to high school students, teaching 120 freshmen calculus at 8 a.m., or instructing a roomful of professors on the art of teaching, Professor Goulet exhibits infectious excitement.

One student describes his innovative style of teaching as one that offers the most educational opportunity per class hour of any course at WPI. Professor Goulet integrates projects that relate class work to other areas of the students' education with real world examples. His concern for every student's success and full understanding of the material is foremost. He sets goals for his courses that each student must fulfill to complete the course. Despite this technique being more labor intensive for the professor, these goals provide students with a real-world style of learning that promotes true mastery of the material rather than just memorization. Students find him approachable, understanding, and dedicated to helping them master the material.

Not only is John Goulet an outstanding teacher, but he encourages others to be the same. As the director of the Masters in Mathematics for Educators program at WPI, he works with other teachers to develop their own innovative teaching style. His



At the 2007 Faculty Convocation are, from right, John Goulet, Jessica Amt '07 and Professor Robert Norton, members of the award selection committee, and John Orr, provost ad interim.

involvement with the annual Math Meet at WPI ensures that WPI and mathematics have a presence in the community to inspire students at the pre-college level.

A colleague who worked with Professor Goulet to bridge the gap in material covered between their classes described him as delightful to collaborate with, since he was focused entirely on what his students needed to learn rather than what he wanted to teach them. This is an important difference, especially for a roomful of students who plan to be something other than mathematicians. He is thoughtful, modest, and focused foremost on the students' needs and perspectives. The colleague goes on to say that he has lost count of how many of his advisees have declared John Goulet to be the best math teacher they have ever encountered.

For his patience with students, his commitment to teaching, and his legendary enthusiasm for mathematics, it is with great honor that we present the 2006 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Teaching to Professor John Goulet.