

2010 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Academic Advising

Holly Ault '74

Advisors play an important role in the lives of their students. Their guidance and dedication have an impact on their students' education, college experiences, and future career choices. WPI is very fortunate to have so many well-qualified and dedicated advisors. This dedication is crucial in dealing with the challenges that students face during their time at WPI, specifically in adjusting schedules around projects and the needed background materials. From new students entering WPI, to seniors planning their futures after graduation, advisors offer an invaluable service to the student body. Each year we recognize one outstanding academic advisor who has gone above and beyond the expectations of their students. This year, Professor Holly Ault has been selected for her remarkable commitment and dedication to our undergraduates.



Professor Ault has shown great enthusiasm and diligence in her role as an academic advisor. For many years, Professor Ault has volunteered to be the advisor for all students transferring in as Mechanical Engineering majors. She has been instrumental in ensuring that each of these students has a smooth transition to WPI. Their advising interaction with Professor Ault is usually the first experience that these students have with a faculty member and it is very clear that Professor Ault leaves these students with the lasting impression that WPI faculty do care very much about transfer students and their educational experience here.

Professor Ault is also very dedicated to students other than those in the Mechanical Engineering major. Every year since its inception ten years ago, Professor Ault has volunteered to be an Insight advisor mentoring approximately thirty five first-year students for their first semester. One of Professor Ault's Insight advisees wrote that she was an international student who was very confused about a major. "Professor Ault gave me advice on whom I should talk to for more specific information regarding Management majors and helped me look up course information on the website. She also helped me set up an appointment with Professor Banks, head of the Management department, and now I think Management Information Systems will be my major. I hope my new advisor will be as helpful and caring as Professor Ault as been."

Professor Ault's dedication does not stop there. She is also the faculty advisor for the fraternity Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE). In this role, Professor Ault mentors an additional forty students who live in the SAE fraternity house. One of the members of the fraternity wrote: "For the past few years, Professor Ault has continually advised the men of SAE on a variety of topics including: how to get the IQP you want, how best to utilize your professor on Academic Advising Day, and she also provides routine scheduling assistance. She has gone out of her way to always make time for any member of our house looking for assistance. Personally, I have talked to Professor Ault when my own advisor had conflicts scheduling an appointment around our busy schedules."

A recurring theme that many of Professor Ault's advisees note is her exemplary guidance on non-academic issues. Professor Ault's open, friendly, and helpful attitude encourages students to feel comfortable approaching her with difficult and sometimes very personal issues. Professor Ault is clearly someone who fully understands the stresses our students go through, as well as the impact of events outside their lives at WPI.

It is for these reasons and with great honor that we present the Outstanding Academic Advising Award of 2010 to Professor Holly Ault.