

2011 Board of Trustees' Award for Outstanding Academic Advising

David S. Adams

Professor Adams has shown tremendous enthusiasm and diligence in his role as an academic advisor. He embodies all that an advisor should be: a mentor, teacher and sometimes even friend. He helps students design their schedules, locate summer internships, provides advice on graduate schools, assists with medical school applications, provides recommendations, and helps with course work and job searches.

This is all clearly demonstrated in what Professor Adams's advisees have to say about him. His students write " Dave has been exceptional in not only helping me choose classes for upcoming terms but also when it came to summer internships, medical school applications, recommendations, help in his classes and now in searching for full time jobs as I get ready to graduate from WPI. To break this down further, I have seen several of my peers struggle when it came to putting together their schedules for the next year, especially when it came to figuring out whether they met all the requirements. With Dave as my advisor, I have never once had to worry whether I am taking the right number or types of classes. Moreover, as a pre-medicine student, I feel especially fortunate in having an advisor who recommends particular classes because aside from filling WPI requirements, they will aid me in medical school." Another student says "When I came in for my first meeting with him, he had already printed out a term by term schedule which he had taken the time to create. The schedule had all of the classes I had previously taken, how they would fit into my graduation requirements, and what classes he thought I should take in the future. He had even worked it out to allow me to graduate early!"

The trait that makes Professor Adams stand out among advisors is his personal concern for each of his advisees. He believes that advising is not just about a student's academic success but it is also about helping students look introspectively and helping them determine and define their career aspirations. Students report "He gave me advice on how to get a summer job, and even said I could include him in my email to my potential employer in case he had any questions for a faculty member. Without Dave's advice, I never would have gotten the internship (and invaluable experience in the biology field) that I did. He also has supported me as I have changed my plans for after graduation numerous times, and no matter what I wanted to do at the moment (whether med school, or grad school, or industry in the biotechnology field), Dave was patient and supportive in giving me advice on how to proceed. Now that I've decided I want to go to grad school, Dave has helped me choose schools and helped me figure out which schools would be a match for me. He has also used his

knowledge of past advisees to recommend which schools he thinks I will like the best and which ones he has found are not good matches for WPI students. He is even writing one of my letters of recommendation.” Still other advisees said “When it came to internships, Dave made a point to forward along any job openings that he came to know of and offered advice on how his advisees can seek out additional opportunities. During the course of this semester, I have been struggling to find a full time job and after getting advice from the CDC, I also emailed Dave. He promptly replied (as his responses always are) with names and contact information for Biotech Companies and also with information about professors at UMass Medical because he knew I was a pre-medicine student.”

It’s this type of steadfast dedication that clearly set Professor Adams apart and makes him one of the most popular advisors on campus. Despite advising upwards of forty eight students, he promptly responds to all his advisees’ inquiries and is an outstanding mentor to all of them. His advisees credit his advising as playing a significant role in their success both at WPI and early in their careers. This speaks to his exceptional efforts and commitment to advising and mentoring our students. For these reasons Professor Adams is most deserving of this award.

It is with great honor that we present this year’s Trustee’s Award for Outstanding Advising Award to Professor Dave Adams.