VISION STATEMENT: Paulette Clancy
Candidate for Gordon Dean of Engineering

There is something very special about an inaugural Deanship, not least because of what it says about WPI, that it is an institution ready and eager to enhance its place on the national educational scene. Given the existing strength and reputation of engineering at WPI, I am honored to be considered for such a position.

It is clear that the first Dean of Engineering at WPI will need to exhibit considerable leadership to bring together the engineering departments, perhaps in new ways, with a greater sense of shared vision for the future that will help leverage their external visibility. The Dean must also work effectively with the other new Deans, both in Management, an obvious partner for initiatives within the Engineering College, and in Arts and Science, where the departments of biology and biotechnology, chemistry and biochemistry, mathematical sciences, physics, and social science and policy, are obvious points of liaison with engineering initiatives. I am a strong believer in interdisciplinary research efforts and would encourage and facilitate such interactions as Dean. I resonate with your culture of interdisciplinary research that is a treasured part of WPI history.

After absorbing the essence of the WPI culture and understanding the best ways for the College of Engineering to take its place on the national stage, it will be the Dean’s role to help individual engineering departments to enhance their strength and visibility in research and instruction. I believe that I can help WPI’s engineering departments to be more competitive for federal research and instructional funding. And I am confident that I can effectively convey a sense of excitement about the College’s future and directions to your alumni to increase the level of fundraising to help bring about your dreams of the future of your departments.

As is clear from the above, the Dean has a strong role to play in reflecting the face of the College to others, and in forming relationships: primarily to gain the confidence of the engineering faculty, but also to form new expressions of internal WPI relationships across colleges, and to create new external collaborations with industry and, perhaps, with neighboring universities.¹

In terms of research opportunities, it seems clear that the grand challenges of the 21st century lie in solutions to improve human health and to provide earth-sensitive energy solutions. Contributing to the solution of both of these challenges are best served by a multi-disciplinary approach that brings to bear the departmental strengths that you already have. These areas are already the source of considerable federal funding, and WPI faculty could, and should, be presenting strong viable proposals to capture some of these awards. I have seen, and have helped, Cornell Deans with strategies that will facilitate the creation and competitiveness of such proposals.

¹ Note, for instance, the visibility that the Colorado Schools of Engineering created by building a pan-State collaboration around sustainable energy.
Education is the primary function of any university and WPI is already a national leader in creating effective student-faculty interactions. In this domain, the Dean should be looking to facilitate strong linkages between research endeavors and undergraduate and graduate education. The production of a stream of highly qualified BS graduates who become valued graduate students elsewhere can play a role in enhancing the status of WPI among its peers.

**Personal Statement:** I have spent my career as a very active researcher and I find great joy in this activity. During my term as Chemical Engineering’s Director, I have maintained a research group of about 6 or 7 PhD students and numerous undergraduate researchers. I consider my research work to be growing in impact in recent years. I take great pleasure in leading and writing large team proposals (IGERT, GAANN, STC, MURI) for research centers. My recent activities to create and help define the energy initiative as co-Director of the College of Engineering’s Energy Institute contributed to two $25M proposals to DOE for an Energy Frontier Research Center in 2008.

In terms of service, I am proud of my contributions to mentoring students and young faculty, as evidenced by several awards. My interest spans the spectrum of advising and mentoring, from being an effective faculty advisor to undergraduate and graduate students, to my role on the tenure appeals process. I have taken, as a personal quest, the promotion of diversity, especially of women, among the faculty and student ranks.

My management style is direct: I am able to size up situations quickly, take a position, and act upon it. I am, however, very open to changing my mind in the face of a persuasive argument to the contrary. I am a consensus-builder. I favor lean administration and the empowerment of the faculty, and department heads, to provide strong “grass roots” leadership for educational programs. I am a “big picture” person with a sense of vision and “out of the box” thinking. I am good at delegating and trusting faculty and administrators to do their job. I sweat the details, but I don’t micromanage. I tend to embrace the challenges that change brings, but I am also sensitive to the need for structure and tradition.

I am an experienced and very effective fundraiser. Through co-operation with Cornell’s Alumni Affairs and Development staff, I have raised over $6 million in endowment from alumni in the past seven years for special projects alone, not counting the annual gifts from industry and alumni that my efforts engender each year. I enjoy promoting the merits of my School, College and University to alumni and corporate entities. I redesigned the face of Chemical Engineering to the outside world through brochures, web site, recruitment DVDs, and the redesign of an annual publication (“Olin Hall News”).

The prospect of the Dean’s position at WPI appeals to my sense of tackling challenges: The opportunity to start with a “clean slate” and help define a new leadership position that promotes and redefines the strengths of the College. I am excited by the chance to create something fresh, timely and effective, with the help and support of the faculty in the new College.