Draft PIC Initiative for review, revision and costing: Educational Development, Technology and Assessment

A message that permeates the Task Force reports is that there is a potential synergy to be exploited at WPI by capturing and coordinating the fragmented domains of expertise in educational issues that have developed or struggle for development at WPI. There is an opportunity for leadership in educational development, application of technology for education and outcomes assessment at WPI. The work that we are doing could remain another well-kept secret about WPI, or, we can expand upon and expose it. We believe that there is an urgency in our need to invest in ourselves and an opportunity to capture the limelight for our hard work.

As we discussed the recommended actions, above, it seemed to us that a new structure would be needed to successfully implement them. We propose the construction of an entity named the Center for Educational Development, Technology, and Assessment (CEDTA). We suggest that this new entity be assigned a number of tasks that include coordination and nurturing of several areas of expertise that are now housed in several parts of the university, including for example: that part of the activities of the IMC and several academic Departments that deal with new educational technologies and distance learning; that part of the activities of the Registrar's Office that provides assessment aid at present; that part of the Writing Resource Center that oversees peer tutors and peer learning training; activities in the SPSS concerned with expertise on cognitive theory and teaching and learning issues, as well as statistical measurement issues; and activities of the Center for Educational Development.

We envision this center as staffed by a full time director, staff with expertise in assessment and educational technology, visiting faculty, faculty on internal sabbatic leave, and faculty participating in various teaching and professional development capacities.

The full time staff would work with the WPI faculty to facilitate application and testing the outcomes of new approaches to teaching and application of new technologies. The K-12 outreach coordinator, to be discussed in the PIC outreach initiative, will also be attached to CEDTA.

CEDTA would also spearhead campus wide efforts to develop new pilot projects funded by external agencies such as those recently completed with the Davis Foundation. After the initial start-up phase funded by the capital campaign, CEDTA will be responsible for establishing a strong external funding based upon funded educational research, technology exportation, and provision of distance learning services.