Proposed Expectations, Rewards, and Incentives Initiative for review, revision and costing

To: Strategic Planning Task Forces Subcommittee: Project-Based and Cooperative Learning (PBCL); Global Programs (GP); Educational Technologies (ET); Scholarship (S); CGSR; Michael Carney, Director of Human Resources; Judith Miller, Director of CED

Copy: Chairs: Faculty Governance Committees

From: Planning and Implementation Committee (PIC), Prof. John Zeugner, Coordinating Member

Date: March 5, 1998

RE: Proposed Expectations, Rewards, and Incentives Initiative for Review, Revision, and Costing

A theme that emerged from recommendations of the Strategic Planning Task Forces is the need to examine expectations, rewards and incentives for WPI faculty. In subsequent discussions, PIC has reached the conclusion that: expectations, rewards, and incentives for WPI staff must be examined as well. The discussion and suggested actions in the task force reports regarding this issue are no less than stunning in their clarity with respect to the implication that faculty receive mixed messages about expectations for tenure and promotion. Furthermore, it is clear that there are widely varying, indeed, bipolar, perceptions as to what activities are rewarded and what activities should be rewarded more at WPI.

Below we describe our current view of the nature and extent of an initiative that we believe follows from the Task Force recommendations. Following the draft initiative we list the Strategic Planning Steering Committee goals, endorsed by the WPI Faculty, that this initiative supports, along with the Task Force recommendations (with the originating task force acronym in parentheses) from which this initiative evolved. Also included is some discussion from the Task Force and other reports that, while not presented as recommendations, provides some additional context about this issue. Finally, we outline a specific request to your group to assist us in defining further this initiative and the resources that would be required to address it.

PIC requests that your subcommittee act as the sounding board for campus reaction to the ideas in this initiative and that you assist PIC in modifying and finalizing an appropriate initiative for campus approval and faculty ratification.

Draft PIC Initiative
This initiative would create and fund the operation of two special commissions that will investigate the appropriateness, structure, implementation, maintenance, value, and cost of a system of defined expectations, rewards, and incentives for faculty and, separately, for staff. In this context, "rewards and incentives" for faculty encompass merit raises, tenure and promotion processes and criteria, recognition
awards, loading models, and creative ("thinking outside the box") alternatives yet to be explored - all of which should drive the faculty in a direction commensurate with the university's mission, vision, and goals. The commissions' deliberations should not be limited to practices and structures currently in place. The commission's recommendations will include clearly defined expectations and tenure and promotion criteria, appropriate checks and balances, and means for ongoing assessment and reevaluation. The assessment component will become a standard measure of individual, departmental, and institutional success toward attaining WPI's goals; hence, the rewards and incentives structure must reflect the ultimate goals and vision of WPI. A well-designed expectations, rewards and incentives system will create a dynamic, flexible, intellectually rich environment that encourages creativity and experimentation and that enables a good quality of life among faculty at all levels of seniority. In addition, the role of a revitalized reward structure as a recruitment and retention tool for a talented and diverse Faculty should not be underestimated.

In addition, PIC recommends that an equally important need exists to examine rewards and incentives for the WPI staff. In this context, "rewards and incentives" encompasses equity and merit raises, recognition awards and perhaps other structures yet to be created - all of which should drive the staff in a direction commensurate with the university's mission, vision and goals. In today's booming economic environment, hiring and retaining competent staff is a significant challenge for any organization. With unemployment hovering at 4% many staff (especially those with technical expertise) have left WPI to take positions in industry that promise better salaries, benefits or career paths. Replacing these individuals is costly to the university. WPI should offer competitive and comprehensive salary and benefit packages designed to help recruit and retain the best qualified staff.

**SPSC and Task Force Recommendations**

The preceding PIC Initiative encompasses and transcends all eight of the goals articulated by the SPSC and endorsed by the WPI faculty, with emphasis on the first:

- **Recognize and Adapt to Continuing Change**
- **Create a Campus in Harmony with our Programs**
- **Continue to Innovate in Our Undergraduate Program**
- **Integrate Education and Research**
- **Develop Creative Pathways to Graduate Degrees**
- **Make Creative Use of Information Technology**
- **Improve Community Relationships and Diversity**
- **Provide Global Opportunities for Potentially All Students**

Furthermore, the SPSC defined a guiding principle that "The community will regularly reassess its goals and vision, evaluate its progress, and be cognizant of its relationships and responsibilities to the local community and the world beyond the campus." None of the preceding eight goals is likely to be fully
realized without the process implied by this guiding principle— a system of faculty and staff expectations, rewards and incentives that guides our community in parallel with our goals and vision, and helps us assess our progress along the way.

What follows is a list of the action items drawn from Task Force Reports, and other documents, that fall under this broad category that we call Expectations, Rewards, and Incentives. The originating task force initials are given in parentheses following each action item.

1. That the Institute discard the current faculty loading model and replace it with one that encourages project advising by properly recognizing and distinguishing the varied educational responsibilities of its faculty. (PBCL)

2. Develop a new loading model that reflects the time intensive nature of graduate research. (CGSR)

3. Analyze the faculty time commitment to support newly designed teaching/learning environments and compensate accordingly. (ET)

4. Reduced Teaching Responsibilities. WPI should maintain a sufficient number of tenure-track faculty positions to insure that each faculty member is required to teach between two- and-one-half and three courses per academic year. Project loads should be carried equitably within departments by individual department members. In this manner, no faculty member will be overwhelmed during any one term, and each faculty member will have at least one term per year to devote a more concentrated effort to scholarship. Combined with term breaks and summer recess, this will allow sufficient time for faculty members to focus effectively on their various scholarly activities. (S)

5. Redistribute teaching loads to reflect the importance of graduate research. (CGSR)

6. Make WPI a leader in globally informed technological education by incorporating international experiences and perspectives as a criterion for the hiring, assessment, and reward structure of faculty in all disciplines. (GP)

7. That the Institute recognize and reward project advising activity of all kinds in a tangible way that is consistent with the high profile of project activity in our educational program. (PBCL)

8. Provide a system of rewards for faculty active in research. (CGSR)

9. Establish formal procedures (e.g., peer-review process) to communicate and validate faculty work in the use and development of new educational applications of technology. (ET)

10. We need a set of criteria by which to define and against which to measure teaching excellence. These criteria should be tailored to our special institutional requirements and should include input from all segments of the WPI community. These criteria could be developed by a team, perhaps with a modest amount of funding to provide summer salary and visits by a few expert consultants. (White Paper on the Assessment and Reward of Teaching, J. Miller, et. al.)

11. We need to develop and support a coordinated system of data collection and analysis that includes but is not limited to the use of student course evaluations, classroom visits by peers who have been trained in the process, and the use of teaching portfolios. This evaluation process should be required for all forms of teaching evaluation that take place at WPI, for purposes of tenure, promotion, departmental reviews, merit raises, teaching awards, and external assessment. (White Paper on the Assessment and Reward of Teaching, J. Miller, et. al.)
12. We need to make rewards for excellent teaching equivalent to rewards for excellent scholarship. It is absolutely crucial that the reward process support Plan activities, if the Plan is to remain viable. (White Paper on the Assessment and Reward of Teaching, J. Miller, et. al.)

13. That co-advising be encouraged and rewarded. (PBCL)

14. Elect a committee of five faculty to provide a plan for the abolition of tenure by 2005. Rationale: Tenure is eroding faster than any union, association, or coordinated body can manage. 42% of faculty nationally are now part-time; adjunctcy is a way of life that enables the rather lush garden of the tenured to continue to produce pale fruit. Yet the explosion of adjunctcy is immoral and untenable. Why not take the lead in overcoming this growing system of indentured labor? (April 30, 1997 Memorandum to SPSC, "Keeping ahead of the curve: Five Items for Phase II," John F. Zeugner.)

15. Examine a list of the ten highest percentage raises for the last three years, identified not by individual, but by estimated percentages of teaching and scholarship, and by data on the total number of students for which that instructor filed grades in that year. We suggest that the Provost supply the WPI faculty with such a listing, in order better to understand what in fact WPI's priorities have been. (White Paper on the Assessment and Reward of Teaching)

16. Provide rewards for internal and external activities recognized as essential to WPI. (PIC)

The following discussion taken from Task Force and other reports, while not presented as recommendations or action items, provides some additional context about the need for the Expectations, Rewards, and Incentives Initiative:

- Another faculty obstacle to the integration of educational technology is the formal reward system in place at WPI. Perception is the reality we are judged by; currently, the perception is that tenure and promotion policies pay little attention to the improvement of teaching and learning. The "publish or perish" reasoning guides how faculty spend their time -- to do otherwise would be professional suicide. (ET)

- Each faculty member strives, as a teacher-scholar, for a balance between various teaching activities (undergraduate/graduate, in-class/research project) and creative scholarship. In order to achieve a proper balance between these activities at WPI, it is now necessary to increase the emphasis placed on actively conducting scholarship. (Enhancing the Role of Graduate Studies and Research at WPI, CGSR)

- In general, it is inconsistent to expect our students to have a global perspective if our faculty do not. And it is unrealistic to expect a change in faculty perspective and activity unless our systems for faculty review and assessment at both the departmental and university level are aligned with our mission. [What is necessary is] a transformative change in the way in which we define, assess, and reward the activities of faculty. This change in culture must include at its core the message that faculty activity should be in support of the mission and students of WPI, not just those of a particular department or laboratory. (GP)

- We have not defined what we mean by teaching excellence. We have no specific criteria by which to define such excellence, for purposes of tenure, promotion, merit raises, or teaching awards. Our implied criteriasuggest that only classroom teaching is worthy of evaluation, when in fact project advising, academic advising, and career and personal mentoring are important at a project-based, high price tag school such as WPI. (White Paper on Assessment and Reward of Teaching, J. Miller, et. al.)
• Although we claim to value teaching, the perception is widespread that the biggest rewards go to the outstanding scholars, not to the outstanding teachers. (White Paper on Assessment and Reward of Teaching, J. Miller, et. al.)

• Because scholarship is perceived as being highly rewarded but teaching is perceived as merely necessary, most faculty try to do both, and when conflicts arise, scholarship generally receives first priority on a faculty member's list of things to do. (White Paper on Assessment and Reward of Teaching, J. Miller, et. al.)

Specific Requests
PIC requests assistance from the previous Task Force members based subcommittee with respect to the following:

1. Please review the above draft initiative. Your committee will play an important role in modifying this proposed initiative to address the needs of the WPI campus. This draft is intended to provoke discussion and reflection regarding the future thrusts for WPI and means to implement these goals with the help and within the context of the WPI capital campaign.

2. Please canvas the campus for comment and represent the collective wisdom of all interested parties in constructing your criticism and amendments.

3. Please produce a list of suggestions, by April 13, to be addressed by PIC. This need not be a formal report, but should include background information for each suggested change and an assessment of the campus wide reaction to the initiative that led to the suggested changes. This feedback can take the form of a simple email to the member of PIC coordinating this initiative, or, a new draft of the initiative.

4. Please be prepared to interact with PIC in the preparation of a second version of the initiative in response to feedback received. Also, please be prepared to participate in an open meeting with PIC and the campus community to discuss this second revision.

5. Please assist PIC is the evaluation of the costs of undertaking this initiative. As was explained at the December faculty meeting, the campus will participate in an exercise aimed at capturing the sense of priorities assigned to the various initiatives to be proposed. To conduct this exercise, we need to assign a set of costs to each initiative associated with each kind of resource required by each initiative. Please consider the following questions:
   a. What do you estimate will be the start-up costs of this initiative?
   b. What do you estimate to be the steady state operational costs of this initiative?
   c. What revenue streams, other than the operating budget, can you envision supporting this initiative?
   d. In addition to those ways that might have been suggested above, in what other ways do you imagine this initiative could benefit from the capital campaign?
   e. What space requirements do you think this initiative will need?

Then, please divide the costs into the following categories:

f. One time (start-up phase) cash expenses.
g. Endowed chairs, fellowships and/or scholarships or other self-replenishing funds.

h. Facilities (construction or equipment costs) that might be addressed through a gift-in-kind or gift that targets this project-specific one-time expense.

i. Continuing costs that impact the operating budget.

j. Potential offsets of continuing costs, due to new revenue streams.

Consider the fact that those initiatives that are selected for implementation after campus priorities have been illuminated will have to share the new resources being developed by the capital campaign. These currently untargeted new resources are, conservatively, estimated at approximately $16 million in unrestricted (effectively cash) and $30 million in restricted funds (scholarships, fellowships, chairs and other gifts dedicated to a particular purpose according to the interests of the donator.)