On January 20, 2009 Barack Obama took the oath of office to become the 44th President of the United States. The Inauguration of the first African-American president was a celebratory and historic day for our nation witnessed by countless millions of people in the United States and around the world. Many of us witnessed history taking place in the WPI Campus Center. The Campus Center lobby, Food Court and ‘46 Lounge were all filled with students, faculty and staff who stopped to listen to President Obama’s inauguration speech. When President Obama’s historic and inspiring speech concluded, members of the WPI community watching the inauguration speech applauded loudly.

President Obama let it be known that our nation faces difficult challenges ahead when he said in his inaugural address, “That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age.

Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly, our schools fail too many, and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.” Yet despite these problems and challenges, President Obama provided a message of hope and confidence in our ability to solve these problems and meet these challenges.

As I stood in the Campus Center lobby listening to President Obama’s speech I couldn’t help but think that WPI and WPI students will be involved in helping our nation solve these difficult problems. Listen again to the words in President Obama’s inauguration speech. “The state of our economy calls for action: bold and swift. And we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. All this we will do.”

WPI students will be involved in all of these challenges President Obama addressed in his inaugural speech. Our students will be addressing these real-world problems as they work on their projects and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and leadership. President Obama realizes he can’t solve the problems our nation faces alone. Our nation will need help from many innovators and leaders. WPI will be preparing the new innovators and leaders for the leadership opportunities that await our students in the months and years ahead. Given the challenges our nation faces, have you signed up for the Leading Edge Series Advanced Leaders Program that begins in D-term?

By: Jim McLaughlin
Director of Campus Center and Student Activities


As we recently said goodbye to 2008, everyone should welcome 2009 with open arms. Many look upon the New Year as a time for new beginnings, whether it be by creating resolutions or coming up with new goals to accomplish in the coming year. Working within a club or organization should be no different! Many organizations set goals at the beginning of the year whether it be at a retreat or with new officers, however it is important to come back to those goals or create new ones both individually and for the organization.

Reviewing past goals allows an entire group to review what has been accomplished or what might have been forgotten about throughout the academic year. This not only allows an organization to see how much they have done together, but encourages the group as a whole to refocus and use the remaining time in the year to achieve, prioritize and create new goals.

If your organization has not set goals, there is no time like the present! Use one of the first meetings of the year to talk with the general members of your organization and ask them what they have liked about their experience so far, what they would want to change and where they think the organization can grow. As a leader within the organization, facilitate a discussion to set new goals or build upon old ones and inquire how everyone in the organization can have a role or impact in making these goals a reality in the coming year.

It is important that everyone in the organization not only have a sense of belonging, but also ownership in its successes and responsibilities to ensure they remain invested in the group throughout the year. Remember that goals do not happen on their own, people need to feel motivated and acknowledge the value in working towards them no matter how large or small they may be. The start of 2009 can be an amazing transformative experience for your organization to accomplish the extraordinary. The sky is the limit!
Looking for a great way to get involved? Look no further than WPI’s Community Service Center. Officially open for two years, the WPI Community Service Center is dedicated to helping you find volunteer opportunities on the WPI Campus and in the city of Worcester. We are devoted to finding and maintaining strong, working relationships with volunteer agencies in the city of Worcester and passing that experience on to all of you. Whether you are looking to volunteer by yourself or with a club or organization, the WPI Community Service Center can help you find the best fit.

There are many ways to get involved throughout the city of Worcester. The WPI Community Service Center works with over sixty agencies in the city. Some of the agencies include after-school programs, environmental agencies, elderly homes, medical assistance facilities and food pantries. Our Community Service Center is staffed by seven WPI students who are willing to sit down and find an agency for you. The Center offers opportunities seven days a week, as there is always a need for volunteers.

The benefits of volunteering are vast. Many students chose to volunteer because they understand the need for assistance in the community. With job shortages and tough economic times, agencies rely heavily of volunteers and value the time and effort you are willing to give. Volunteering is enjoyable! Students have commented on the relationships they are able to form, working one to two days a week at after-school programs or elderly homes. Our programs range from working with people, to helping out in an understaffed office, to picking up trash in local parks, to helping build new homes through our Habitat agency. No matter what type of outreach you are looking to do, I can guarantee volunteers are needed for everything!

Additionally many students find great leadership opportunities through their community service. Volunteers in the past have helped coach youth basketball teams, coordinated teams for various benefit walks and assisted with on-site set-up, running and clean-up of large scale community events such as this past year’s W.O.W. (Work on Worcester) Event. Coordinating such events takes hard work and commitment, but the rewards are well worth the time and effort.

I encourage everyone to begin volunteering or continue their community work. If you are a new volunteer and not sure what you want to do, take some time to think about it. Ask yourself what population you want to work with, what type of work you want to do and what type of work would be a challenge. Take some time to do some research and encourage other friends, club members or anyone else to get involved. If you have any questions throughout the process, feel free to stop by the Community Service Center, third floor of the Campus Center. The staff can work with you to find an enjoyable, rewarding and meaningful volunteering experience.

Have you ever been told to stop and smell the roses? Usually used in a sarcastic way, the question posed is a good one. Do you ever take the time as a student and leader to take a moment and enjoy the small things in life? This could be anything from getting a cup of coffee in the Campus Center to taking a walk through the Quad. Very often, students and leaders especially get caught up in homework, to do lists and what meeting they have to be at next and do not take the time to enjoy the small pleasures or opportunities that pass by daily.

Satisfaction of fulfillment in life can be found in different ways for each person. Take a moment to ask yourself, what makes me happy? How can I ensure that I live a full and complete life or how do I better the lives of those around me? These are the questions that not only assist in personal growth and development, but expose the part of life that is dependent upon the relationships that are built and sustained throughout time and self reflection of one’s own reality or personal experience. Being successful and healthy means more than getting a great job after college and eating or exercising correctly, but rather living a balanced life and finding personal fulfillment as well. This is not to say that taking care of yourself professionally and physically is not important, but instead also shedding light on the importance of mental health as well.

It is important to take the time to examine the people, events and experiences that bring joy into each person’s life. What has created the passion or connection to these things or rather, what do you gain as an individual being associated with them. The Campus Center and Student Activities Office is hoping to assist you in finding the answers to these questions. Throughout the last week in March, a series of events will take place inside the Campus Center. Keep your eyes open for opportunities to send letters of gratitude to someone who makes your experience at WPI a satisfying one, take part in a book discussion about personal satisfaction, or even attend a Leadership Lunch focused on personal lessons from Dr. Vaz among various other opportunities to explore your personal satisfaction as a person, student and leader on campus.

For more information contact the Student Activities Office at 508-831-5291 or via email at sao@wpi.edu.
Leadership Lunch
The Leadership Lunch series provides the opportunities for leaders connected to and outside the Worcester and WPI Community to come to you. Once a term, a speaker will come to provide information about their leadership experiences and how it prepared them for where they are today! Lunch is provided.

The next Leadership Lunch will be on:
Thursday, April 2nd
Time: Noon to 1pm
Location: Hagglund Room, Campus Center
To register, go online to https://www.wpi.edu/Regi/SAO/

Featuring: Dr. Vaz
Dean of IGSD

Leadership Lecture
The Leadership Lecture series is an opportunity to learn about various issues surrounding leadership in an educational, but entertaining way.

Big Money!
Educational Game Show on Credit Card Debt!
Monday, April 27th
8pm

The informative program focuses on the importance of students actively managing their finances. Come see if you know the best practices of money management with the chance to win cash or prizes!

Leading Edge Series: For the Advanced Leader
The Leading Edge Series for the Advanced Leader is a seven week long series for students with leadership experience who are looking to further their skill set and discuss issues associated with leadership. The program is based on the Social Change Model of Leadership and is an exciting and innovative program designed to expose new ways for student leaders to view themselves and leadership in general. Applications for this program are available in the Student Activities Office and online. All applications must be submitted by March 6, 2009 to the Student Activities Office.

The program will take place every Thursday evening during D Term from 5:30-7:30pm

Leadership Library
Xcel Points
Leadership Resource Center

Attention Graduates of the Leading Edge Series!!
Did you take part in the Advanced Leaders series? Do you want to take your leadership skills to the next level? For more information about an upcoming leadership honor society, contact wpileadership@wpi.edu.

Information
To Register for Leadership Events, go to http://www.wpi.edu/Regi/SAO/

Below are resources that are available for you both online and in the Student Activities Office!
- Leadership Library
- Xcel Points
- Leadership Resource Center

Have an idea or a question regarding leadership programs at WPI? E-mail us at wpileadership@wpi.edu.

Leaders of the Term

Ashleigh Smeal ‘10
Ashleigh was newly elected as the President of the Undergraduate Student Government Association. She is currently a junior and is majoring in Actuarial Mathematics with a minor in Management.

Andrew Schwalbenberg, ‘09
Andrew currently serves as the chair of the Senior Class Board and is the president of Theta Chi.
THE LEADERSHIP EFFECT

By: Michael Calabro,
President of WPI Toastmasters Club

How do you bring people together behind an idea? How do you hold people to commitments they’ve made? How do you draw forth ideas from all perspectives in an organization? These are all questions that an effective leader needs answers to, and sooner or later, like it or not, everyone will need to answer them at some time in one way or another.

Abraham Maslow said, “If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem will look like a nail.” One trait is ubiquitous among effective leaders—adaptability. A leader who possesses the presence of mind to make decisions based upon real time information and the context it is presented in will be more successful than one who takes the “hammer approach.”

This implies that leadership can be learned—by definition, an adaptive leader is one whose style is dynamic and demands constant adjustment. How do traditional followers turn themselves into leaders? They become involved in a group and take some initiative. This initiative provides direction to your organization—and sometimes this is all that leadership is.

I am a member of the newly (internationally) chartered Toastmasters chapter on campus. At Toastmasters, we focus on public speaking—but not just how to give a speech: how to tell a joke, how to excite a room, and how to draw people to you. At Toastmasters, the person speaking owns the room, not because we give them our attention, but because he commands it.

Developing these skills is fundamental to becoming an effective leader. When Toastmasters was established at WPI, few members truly stood out in their rhetoric from the rest. One year later, all of the founding members are capable of speaking with presence and authority in many situations. Speaking from my experiences and those of other Toastmasters, our time with the organization has paid high dividends. Job interviews often turn into fluid conversations. We look forward to presentations because they allows us to stand apart from the crowd. These characteristics are byproducts of a natural confidence that develops from the program.

What are the best answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this article? They are unique to you and your style of leadership—whatever it may be. The best way to define that style is to put it into practice by creating situations for yourself that allow you to exercise it. The Toastmasters organization is a great place to start.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Have you read the entire Xcel Newsletter? Fill out this quiz and answer the questions that cover everything from topics in this publication to recent pop culture knowledge and return it to the Office of Student Activities located on the 3rd floor of the Campus Center by April 1st! People who answer all the questions correctly or the most correctly, will be entered into a drawing for a prize!

1. What is the average speed of a house fly?
2. How many letters does the Hawaiian alphabet have?
3. What is one event taking place at the end of March?
4. How many ants are there to every human in the world?
5. Who is Michael Calabro?
6. What color will a gold fish turn eventually if you leave it in a dark room?
7. What event is taking place on April 2nd?
8. The average raindrop falls at what speed?
9. The WPI Community Service Center works with at least how many agencies?
10. What are the names of the WPI Leaders of the Term?

LOOKING AHEAD...

3/6 Last Day of C Term
3/6 Last day to turn in Advanced Leader Applications
4/2 Leadership Lunch with Dr. Vaz
4/27 Leadership Lecture: Big Money Game Show

Questions? Contact the Student Activities Office for more information!
3rd Floor of the Campus Center
http://www.wpi.edu/+SAO Phone: 508-831-5291 E-mail: ccsainfo@wpi.edu