

# Academic Advising

WPI's advising program is based on a cooperative and understanding relationship between students and advisors. Under the WPI Plan, students have the final responsibility for designing their own educational experience at WPI which includes understanding all their degree requirements and making sure those requirements have been satisfied for graduation. Advisors will support students in doing so.

All WPI students are assigned an academic support advisor in the Office of Academic Advising upon matriculating to WPI. These advisors are not major specific and will work with the student throughout their time at WPI to provide holistic and individualized academic support. In the second semester of the first year, students are also assigned a Faculty Advisor who is a professor in the student's chosen major. The two advisors work in tandem to support students in their academic pursuits and pathway to graduation.

The role of both the academic support advisor and the faculty advisor is to help their advisees design a program of study which reflects the students' interests and professional goals. While advisors are willing to suggest specific programs of study and help students explore the academic opportunities WPI has to offer, they will not insist that students follow a particular path. Advisors also help students choose among academic alternatives, help interpret degree requirements and review their Academic Progress Reports. Students are expected to understand curriculum planning resources such as the Program Tracking Sheets and Academic Progress Reports and their implications for academic progress. Therefore, it is critical that students take the initiative to consult regularly with their academic advisors for help with curriculum planning and course selection.

The Office of Academic Advising at WPI has several areas of focus, including but not limited to: 1) general academic advising; 2) academic resources; 3) transition programs; 4) Pre-Health programs; 5) nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships advising;

## General Academic Advising

Students can come to the Office of Academic Advising for general advising in areas such as course selection, academic standing concerns, major selection, and individualized academic coaching. Support is also offered for students looking to include a co-op experience or pursue a BS/MS program. Academic support advisors are available to meet with students throughout the year for any of the reasons above, and may provide drop-in support at various times of the academic year such as add/drop periods and course registration. Academic support advisors may refer students to their Faculty Advisor when appropriate. Students are encouraged to meet with their Faculty Advisor for major-specific support.

The academic coaching program, primarily geared toward students on Academic Warning and Probation or who are at risk of being on Warning or Probation, includes guidance from an Academic Advisor in areas such as learning styles, effective study strategies, problem solving and critical thinking skills, organization, and time management. Students work on setting academic goals and designing learning and study strategies that work best for them.

## Academic Resources Center

The Academic Resources Center (ARC) is located on the 5th floor of Unity Hall and houses the academic tutoring program and MASH (Math and Science Help). Peer tutors and MASH leaders are students who have demonstrated a mastery of material, and have been trained in peer tutoring and communication.

MASH is an academic support program for students enrolled in math and science classes. Offered to all students in a supported course, MASH provides assistance through regularly scheduled weekly study sessions beginning the first week of every term.

MASH review sessions are offered for a limited number of courses which students and faculty have identified as challenging. Many of the courses are typical first year classes, allowing extra support for students transitioning to college-level work. Each session is guided by a MASH leader, an undergraduate student who has taken the course before and has excelled. They understand the course material and what the instructor expects.

Through the MASH and tutoring programs, students become actively involved with the content material in a supportive environment. Studies show that students who attend MASH or tutoring regularly earn higher grades than students electing not to participate. Even more importantly, they learn how to master new concepts, learn how to put ideas into perspective, develop a better way to study, and effectively manage their time.

## **Transition Programs**

The Office of Academic Advising oversees programming for First Year students (including the Insight Program) and sophomore students. OAA also provides specific programs and advising opportunities tailored to the unique needs of students transferring to WPI from other institutions.

Insight Program: Beginning with New Student Orientation and continuing through the first semester, incoming first year and transfer students are assigned to an Insight Team, a group of students and advisors dedicated to assisting with the transition to college. This group of fellow students and mentors will help new students acclimate both personally and academically, and make the most out of their first year at WPI.

## **Pre-Health Advising**

The Pre-Health Advisor works with students who are interested in pursuing careers in the health professions.

Students may meet with the Pre-Health Advisor to

- a) explore various careers in healthcare and receive assistance in selecting the most suitable path for themselves;
- b) receive advice regarding pre-requisite courses and other preparation for various health professions programs (e.g. medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, physician assistant studies, physical therapy among others;
- c) receive assistance throughout the professional school application process, including the arrangement of a committee recommendation letter;
- d) take advantage of academic coaching or receive general help.

Special programming is offered throughout the year for Pre-Health students. To get connected with the Pre-health Advisor, students may email [academic-advising@wpi.edu](mailto:academic-advising@wpi.edu).

## **Scholarships and Fellowships Advising**

Nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships are selective awards that provide financial and professional support for individuals who exhibit interest in a particular area or field of study and who are likely to make positive contributions and advancements in their field.

These awards are available to help fund undergraduate education, graduate school, international study, and many provide additional benefits including access to alumni networks, employment opportunities, and conference funding. Funding from each scholarship is provided for a specified amount of time such as an academic year or for several years.

The Office of Academic Advising provides students with support and guidance with the application process for these highly competitive awards. This includes assistance in understanding the nomination process, feedback on application materials, support in determining suitable letter writers, and submission of the final application to the scholarship foundation for selected nominees.

Many national scholarships and fellowships require official nomination from WPI, which entails an on-campus selection process. Students who are interested in being considered for institutional nomination for a scholarship opportunity can connect with the Office of Academic Advising for additional information regarding nomination procedures. [For more information click here.](#)