



A Message from President Leshin

“Because we are a community that thrives on imagining more—because we are WPI—we must look at the challenges that still exist in our neighborhood, our nation, and our world and ask, ‘How can we do better?’”

I posed that question during my inaugural address on November 8, 2014. In short order, the question became a challenge as I asked the WPI community to work with me to develop a plan for the Institute’s near-term future. Through open retreats and a focused planning effort, more than a thousand faculty and staff members, students, alumni, trustees, partners, and friends took part, lending their imaginations, their passions, and their voices to the process and sharing creative ideas that have crystalized into an exciting blueprint.

I am pleased to present the result of that effort: *Elevate Impact: A Strategic Plan for WPI, 2015-2018*. Building on our strengths and reaffirming our core principle (the productive partnership of theory and practice), the plan seeks to better align WPI with the needs of our students and the opportunities inherent in our changing world. Through goals and objectives designed to further the university’s excellence in education and research over the next three years, the plan is intended to accelerate and extend WPI’s impact.

Why is a new strategic plan needed? WPI is stronger today than it has been at any time during its 150-year history. Through the time-tested WPI Plan, our innovative approach to undergraduate education, and our Global Projects Program, with its unparalleled network of 40-plus international project centers, we are having a positive impact on our students’ lives and are preparing them to be exceptional leaders and problems solvers. Our faculty and graduate students are engaged in important, groundbreaking research that spans disciplines, transforms industries, and improves the human condition. We are increasingly known not only for the quality of our academics and scholarship, but for the return on investment of a WPI education.

But WPI has never been content to rest on its laurels. We are a community of innovators who know there is always a better way and a brighter future. We believe in asking hard questions (“*How can we do better?*” “*How can we continue to lead?*” “*How can we increase our impact?*”) and working together to craft answers that keep us moving forward. We face new challenges and opportunities—at WPI, in higher education, and throughout the world. *Elevate Impact* is a roadmap that will help the university advance toward its goal of becoming the premier global polytechnic. The initiatives detailed in this document underscore three major goals:

- **Extend the success of our distinctive undergraduate education**
- **Expand transformative research and graduate education**
- **Enhance WPI’s reputation and visibility**

Each initiative represents a critical investment in the people, programs, and places that distinguish WPI. Each represents an opportunity to further the university’s reputation as a paragon of innovation. And each reflects the best thinking of a community that embraces the ideals of this institution and believes in its ability of its people to change the world.

I am proud of the plan our community has created, and I’m eager to see the results of our collective action.

Laurie A. Leshin
President