



May 1, 2020

Subject Letter of Affirmation: WPI STARS Innovation Credit: WPI's ReDI Symposium

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves to demonstrate that the Research, Discovery, and Innovation (ReDI) Annual Symposium at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) meets the requirements of the Innovation Credit for the STARS Survey. As Vice Provost of Research at WPI, I am in a position to evaluate the significance of this program. This response is organized by the criteria for this credit.

This innovation credit describes a new, extraordinary, unique, groundbreaking, or uncommon outcome, policy or practice. The new WPI Research, Discover, and Innovation (ReDI) Annual Symposium provides a platform for faculty to share new discoveries and ideas with colleagues and university partners. The symposium provides faculty with the chance to share their work while exploring new opportunities for internal and external collaborations. The ReDI Symposium features talks by WPI faculty members at the forefront cutting-edge research accompanied by talks from alumni, post docs and students who have developed exceptional innovations.

The inaugural event incorporated a set of critical cross-disciplinary themes, including university groups centered around materials and manufacturing, Bio-X (biologically-focused disciplines), the smart world, and global initiatives. These themes are supported by foundational underpinnings which represent core values that are evident throughout WPI's research and scholarship program: sustainability; diversity, equity and inclusion; innovation, entrepreneurship, and value creation; project-based learning and STEM; and design thinking and maker culture. Because of its interdisciplinary nature sustainability is inherently linked with all of the core foundational underpinnings, and it is also woven throughout all of the cross-disciplinary theme areas. Examples of presentation topics include: *Sustainable Water Management*, *Science at the Interface of Cells and the Environment*, and *Metal Production for a Sustainable Future*. The event culminated with presentations and a panel introducing case studies demonstrating the potential for the circular economy, which is an economic system where waste is eliminated and

effectively reduced to promote sustainable use of resources. WPI plans to continue to engage faculty and promote these collaborative, cross-disciplinary research themes.

This inaugural event incorporates the critical cross-cutting themes and foundational underpinnings evident throughout WPI's research and scholarship program: sustainability; diversity, equity and inclusion; innovation, entrepreneurship, and value creation; project-based learning and STEM; and design thinking and maker culture.

The innovation credit is not already covered by an existing STARS credit. This program has never been included in any other STARS credit.

The innovation practice, program, or outcome has occurred within the past three years. This program is currently in its second year.

The institution has not previously received a STARS innovation credit for this specific practice, policy program, or outcome. This program has not been previously reported for an Innovation Credit, or any other STARS credit.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bogdan Vernescu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bogdan Vernescu, PhD
Vice Provost for Research