

The Female Student Experience at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (1965 - 1980):  
Uncovering Discriminatory Practices and Identifying Challenges  
Supplementary Materials

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IQP: Interactive Qualifying Project

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# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Appendix A: Consent Script for Interviews with WPI Alumni        | 3  |
| Appendix B: Consent Script for Interviews with WPI Faculty/Staff | 4  |
| Appendix C: Consent Script for Interviews with MIT Alumni        | 5  |
| Appendix D: Interview Questions for WPI Alumni                   | 6  |
| Appendix E: Interview Questions for WPI Faculty                  | 7  |
| Appendix F: Interview Questions for MIT Alumni                   | 8  |
| Appendix G: Types of Archival Documents                          | 9  |
| Appendix H: Authorship Table                                     | 10 |
| Appendix I: Mockup   | 14 |

## **Appendix A: Consent Script for Interviews with WPI Alumni**

Hello,

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). We are conducting research on WPI's past to illuminate women's experiences at WPI from 1965 to 1980. In doing so we are interested in hearing about your experience as a student at WPI. Our project is sponsored by Professor Stephan Sturm, a mathematical science professor here at the university and our goal is to compile authentic, firsthand experiences from different members of WPI to create a better understanding of the campus climate back then. From these stories and experiences, we hope to learn about any problems that may have arisen in hopes of being able to prevent them in the future. This report will be available online after we finish writing it, and we can also email it to you if you wish.

Would it be okay if we record this Zoom meeting so we may refer back to the information presented? If you are not comfortable with this, we completely understand and will stick to only note taking. Do we have permission to quote you in our report and if so, would we be allowed to use your name? Any information you share with us is completely confidential and will only be used for research purposes with your permission.

If we ask a question that you do not wish to answer, please let us know and we will move on. If a question is unclear, please let us know and we will try to rephrase. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any point. Before we start, do you have any questions about this interview?

[Insert List of Questions]

Thank you for talking with us today and for sharing your experience. Is there anything you wish to discuss more or that we have not covered? [If so, discuss it] Would you want to review our transcript of this interview? Thank you for your time today. If there is anything you wish to add later on or have any other reasons to contact us, you can email us.

## **Appendix B: Consent Script for Interviews with WPI Faculty/Staff**

Hello,

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). We are conducting research on WPI's past to illuminate women's experiences at WPI from 1965 to 1980. In doing so we are interested in hearing about your experience working at WPI. Our project is sponsored by Professor Stephan Sturm, a mathematical science professor here at the university and our goal is to compile authentic, firsthand experiences from different members of WPI to create a better understanding of the campus climate back then. From these stories and experiences, we hope to learn about any problems that may have arisen in hopes of being able to prevent them in the future. This report will be available online after we finish writing it, and we can also email it to you if you wish.

Would it be okay if we record this Zoom meeting so we may refer back to the information presented? If you are not comfortable with this, we completely understand and will stick to only note taking. Do we have permission to quote you in our report and if so, would we be allowed to use your name? Any information you share with us is completely confidential and will only be used for research purposes with your permission.

If we ask a question that you do not wish to answer, please let us know and we will move on. If a question is unclear, please let us know and we will try to rephrase. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any point. Before we start, do you have any questions about this interview?

[Insert List of Questions]

Thank you for talking with us today and for sharing your experience. Is there anything you wish to discuss more or that we have not covered? [If so, discuss it] Would you want to review our transcript of this interview? Thank you for your time today. If there is anything you wish to add later on or have any other reasons to contact us, you can email us.

## **Appendix C: Consent Script for Interviews with MIT Alumni**

Hello,

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). We are conducting research on WPI's past to illuminate women's experiences at WPI from 1965 to 1980. In doing so we are interested in hearing about your experience as a student at MIT, so we can understand WPI in context with another engineering institution. Our project is sponsored by Professor Stephan Sturm, a mathematical science professor here at the university and our goal is to compile authentic, firsthand experiences from different members of WPI to create a better understanding of the campus climate back then. From these stories and experiences, we hope to learn about any problems that may have arisen in hopes of being able to prevent them in the future. This report will be available online after we finish writing it, and we can also email it to you if you wish.

Would it be okay if we record this Zoom meeting so we may refer back to the information presented? If you are not comfortable with this, we completely understand and will stick to only note taking. Do we have permission to quote you in our report and if so, would we be allowed to use your name? Any information you share with us is completely confidential and will only be used for research purposes with your permission.

If we ask a question that you do not wish to answer, please let us know and we will move on. If a question is unclear, please let us know and we will try to rephrase. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from it at any point. Before we start, do you have any questions about this interview?

[Insert List of Questions]

Thank you for talking with us today and for sharing your experience. Is there anything you wish to discuss more or that we have not covered? [If so, discuss it] Would you want to review our transcript of this interview? Thank you for your time today. If there is anything you wish to add later on or have any other reasons to contact us, you can email us.

## **Appendix D: Interview Questions for WPI Alumni**

### **Childhood:**

1. Can you tell us about your childhood?
  - a. Hometown, family, activities
2. How did your interest in STEM come about?
  - a. Were there any factors during your childhood that influenced you to pursue a STEM education?

### **College Process:**

1. How did you first learn about WPI and what was your initial impression about the school?
2. Why did you choose to attend WPI?
  - a. Did you look into other engineering schools or any other schools in general?
3. Did you consider the male-female ratio when making your college decision?
4. Can you describe the application process you went through while applying to WPI?
  - a. Were you provided support during the process by the school or others?
  - b. Did anyone/anything discourage you from applying?
5. How did you choose your major?
  - a. Did you switch your major at all and why?

### **On Campus:**

1. Can you describe a typical day as a student for you?
  - a. Where did you spend time on campus?
2. Can you describe your involvements on campus?
  - a. Why/what made you get involved in these?
3. How do you feel the campus climate was towards women while at WPI?
4. During your time at WPI, how did you see the university and community change as women came to campus?
5. Being a woman on campus, did you ever feel like you had certain expectations or standards to meet? If so, what were some of these expectations/standards?
6. Who did you tend to interact with outside of class?
  - a. Can you describe what your social life was like outside of academics?
7. Can you describe your interactions with male peers and faculty?
8. How did you feel you were treated compared to your male counterparts?
  - a. How did you feel your experience compared to that of your male counterparts?
9. Can you describe some of the challenges you encountered while at WPI?
  - a. How did you overcome these challenges
10. What was your support system like at the university?
  - a. Was there anyone who served as a mentor or role model for you on campus?
  - b. Were there any professors who impacted you?
11. How did WPI support you in forming your life after college?
  - a. Or was there a lack of support?
12. Can you refer us to anyone else who may have been present on campus during that time and that could be useful for our research?

## **Appendix E: Interview Questions for WPI Faculty**

### **Pre-WPI/Background:**

1. Can you tell us a little about yourself?
2. Before you started working at WPI, what were your impressions of WPI?
3. What made you choose WPI as a university to teach at?

### **Experience at WPI:**

4. What were your initial thoughts about the increase of female students on campus?
5. How did your colleagues appear to react to this change of the campus demographic?
  - a. Did they share the same feelings/beliefs as you or were they opposed?
6. How did you feel the campus climate was at WPI towards female students (student body vibe)?
  - a. What were your thoughts on the way WPI responded to and treated female students on campus (formal)?
7. Can you describe any changes you saw on campus as the number of female students increased?
  - a. Did WPI do anything to change the campus climate for women?
  - b. Who and or what drove those changes?
  - c. How did these changes develop?
8. How did the increase in female students impact your curriculum and role as a professor, if at all?
  - a. What was done by WPI for teachers during this transition on campus?
9. Were you involved in increasing the enrollment of women on campus? If so, can you describe your role?
  - a. Did you join any committee that advocated for women, etc.
10. For those who have not done it before, what was it like for faculty/you to advise female students (normal advisor)?
  - a. What about for IQP or MQP?
11. How were women incorporated into project-based learning during that time?
  - a. Did faculty try to put women with other women
12. Did you notice any differences in the way faculty treated female students compared male students?
13. What challenges do you believe female students faced while on campus?
14. To what extent were there conversations across campus about reversing the decision to admit women?
15. Can you refer us to anyone else who may have been present on campus during that time and that could be useful for our research?

## **Appendix F: Interview Questions for MIT Alumni**

### **Childhood:**

1. Can you give us a brief background description of yourself?
  - a. Major, what year you attended MIT, where you're originally from
2. Where/when did your initial interest in STEM come from?
  - a. Anyone in your childhood that encouraged this interest?

### **College Process:**

1. What made you go to MIT?
  - a. What did you know/ hear about the school before arriving?

### **On Campus:**

1. Can you describe a typical day as a student for you?
  - a. Where did you spend time on campus/what did you like to do/ Who did you interact with?
2. Can you describe your involvements on campus?
  - a. Why/what made you get involved in these?
3. How do you feel the campus climate was towards women while at MIT?
4. During your time at MIT, how did you see the university and community change as women came to campus?
5. Being a woman on campus, did you ever feel like you had certain expectations or standards to meet?
  - a. If so, what were some of these expectations/standards?
6. How did you feel you were treated compared to your male counterparts?
  - a. How did you feel your experience compared to that of your male counterparts?
7. Can you describe some of the challenges you encountered while at MIT?
  - a. How did you overcome these challenges?
8. What was your support system like at the university?
  - a. Was there anyone who served as a mentor or role model for you on campus?
  - b. Were there any professors who impacted you?
9. How did MIT support you in forming your life after college?
  - a. Or was there a lack of support?

## Appendix G: Types of Archival Documents

- Monday Memos
  - Internal Weekly Newsletters (1973 - 1984)
  - Found in Archives UA50.01
- Tech News / WPI Newspeak
  - Student newspapers
  - Named Tech News 1909 - February 1973
  - Named WPI Newspeak March 1973 - May 2000
  - Digitized on Digital WPI
- The Peddler
  - Student Yearbooks (1928 - 2018)
  - Photo of students/campus and sometimes has interviews with students/professors
  - Found in Archives and Digitized on Digital WPI and Internet Archive
- Trustees Meeting Minutes
  - Notes from the Board of Trustees meetings, included some information on their decisions such as admitting women
  - Found in Archives RG 10/01 Trustees Minutes & General Records
- Faculty meeting minutes
  - Notes from the faculty meeting minutes, included updates from the Board of Trustees meetings, admissions updates, and updates from committees
  - Found in Archives RG 60/01
- Dean of Undergraduate Studies
  - Various personal documents of William Grogan about undergraduate admissions
  - Found in Archives UA 32.01.01 William R. Grogan
- Betty Hoskins Papers
  - Includes collection of document related to the Committee on the Status of Women
  - Found in Archives MS0601.04
- Books on WPI's History
  - *Two Towers* by Mildred McClary Tymeson
    - Covers 1865 to 1965
  - *True to Plan: Crafting an Educational Revolution Beneath the Two Towers* by John Landry and Jeffrey Cruikshank
    - Covers 1965 to 2015

## Appendix H: Authorship Table

| Section   | Primary Author | Editor                        |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Introduction</b>   | Bryan Lima     | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately |
| <b>Benefits of Implementing DEI Initiatives in Higher Education</b> | Grace Gately   | Bryan Lima<br>Maylee Gagnon   |
| <b>Attitudes, Impacts and Results of Women in Engineering</b>       |                |                               |
| Campus Climate for Women in Engineering from 1940 - 1970            | Grace Gately   | Bryan Lima<br>Maylee Gagnon   |
| Reasons Behind Lower Graduation Rates for Women in STEM             | Bryan Lima     | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately |
| Negatives Impacts on Women's Well-Being Due to Discrimination       | Bryan Lima     | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately |
| Inclusion of Women at Engineering Institutions                      | Maylee Gagnon  | Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima    |
| <b>WPI and the Inclusion of Women</b>                               |                |                               |
| WPI: An Engineering Institution for Men and Eventually Women        | Maylee Gagnon  | Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima    |
| Efforts to Increase Women's Enrollment                              | Maylee Gagnon  | Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima    |
| Women's Increased Inclusion in Student Life                         | Maylee Gagnon  | Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima    |

|   |                               |   |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| The Support and Setbacks Around WPI's DEI Initiatives           | Grace Gately                  | Bryan Lima<br>Maylee Gagnon                 |
| <b>Methodology</b>  | Grace Gately                  | Bryan Lima<br>Maylee Gagnon                 |
| Assessing Attitudes Around the Admittance of Women at WPI       | Grace Gately                  | Bryan Lima<br>Maylee Gagnon                 |
| Assess the Experiences of the First Four Women Cohorts          | Maylee Gagnon                 | Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima                  |
| Advocacy for Female Students and its Effects on Campus          | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima |
| Impact of University Practices                                  | Maylee Gagnon                 | Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima                  |
| <b>Results and Analysis</b>                                     | Grace Gately                  | Bryan Lima<br>Maylee Gagnon                 |
| The Acceptance of Female Students                               | Maylee Gagnon                 | Grace Gately                                |
| Unsuitable Living and Lack of Accommodations Provided for Women | Bryan Lima                    | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately               |
| Unequal Methods of Assessment                                   | Grace Gately                  | Maylee Gagnon                               |
| Limited Extracurriculars  | Maylee Gagnon                 | Grace Gately                                |

|  |   |                               |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| Minimal Female Mentorship  | Maylee Gagnon                               | Grace Gately                  |
| Sexist Views about Women   | Grace Gately                                | Maylee Gagnon                 |
| Forms of Harassment on Campus  | Grace Gately                                | Maylee Gagnon                 |
| Challenges With Belonging  | Maylee Gagnon                               | Grace Gately                  |
| Heightened Expectation of Female Students                              | Maylee Gagnon                               | Grace Gately                  |
| Various Experiences as a Female Students at WPI                        | Grace Gately                                | Maylee Gagnon                 |
| Support for Women from the Administration                              | Maylee Gagnon                               | Grace Gately                  |
| Peer Support for Women   | Maylee Gagnon                               | Grace Gately                  |
| Comparing the Female Experience at MIT to the Female Experience at WPI | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately<br>Bryan Lima | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately |
| Conclusion   | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately               | Maylee Gagnon<br>Grace Gately |

## **Appendix I: Design**

Link to mock up of page to be incorporated onto the Global Labs Site

(<https://global-lab.wpi.edu/>)

<https://xd.adobe.com/view/bf306d4f-408c-4f8e-b151-ce18631a5155-ea63/?fullscreen>