



# Nixon Showalter '26

BS in Computer Science and Data Science

## Why did you choose to study at WPI?

Worcester Polytechnic Institute was not on my radar of schools for a long time. That was until one fateful morning in my senior year of high school when I received an email from WPI about its humanities requirement producing well-rounded engineers and how the [Interactive Qualifying Project](#) (IQP) was an experience that you will not find anywhere else. After reading that, Worcester Polytechnic Institute was a school that would never leave my mind. The more research I did about the school, the more I realized that it was perfect for the education I was hoping to get. The main selling point to me was how community-focused everything was: classes focused on group learning, large qualifying projects that set out to unite students to work together for some greater goal, and even the smaller size of WPI's campus helping to bring students closer together.

## How are you involved with the WPI community?

One of the best parts of WPI is that it's hard not to be involved in the community. I am a part of several clubs and, with constant activities around campus, there is always something to do. There are so many different clubs that you can participate in from all

## Hometown

Castaic, CA

## Mentor/Advisor

- [Michael Engling](#)
- [Lindsay Davis](#)

## Achievements

- Dean's List

## Interests

- Video Games
- Reading
- Coding
- Music
- Cooking
- Walking/Hiking

different genres. When I began at WPI, someone told me that if you can think of it, there's a club for it, and if not, you can make one. That has definitely proved to be true. Some clubs I really enjoy are [Bowling Club](#), which offers time to hang out with friends and bowl for free every week, [Exploradreams](#), which volunteers to help kids in Worcester at the Friendly House with projects and school subjects, and of course technology-based clubs, like [Computer and Technology Club](#) and [Association for Computing Machinery](#). I cannot properly state how much going to these clubs has helped me to make friends on campus, learn so much more than I can in the classroom, and help the community around me.

### **What's your favorite thing about WPI?**

My favorite thing about WPI is the size of the campus. It is large enough where everyone has enough space to do what they enjoy, but small enough where your classes are close together and there's always a friend nearby!

### **Do you have a faculty or staff mentor?**

In terms of my field, Professor Michael Engling had a huge impact on me. As my first computer science professor at WPI, he set a very high bar for those to come. He was always so happy and eager to help students do their best. The lightness and enthusiasm he brought to the classroom was something I had never experienced with a professor before, and it made me so excited to go to his class every morning. He really shaped my perspective at WPI right out of the gate and I cannot wait to take more classes with him in the future.

Another very influential professor was Professor Lindsay Davis. She offered me so many perspectives that I never thought to have before, which gave me a different lens to view so many

### **Campus Activities**

- Bowling Club
- Exploradreams
- Computer and Technology Club
- Association for Computing Machinery



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aspects of life. After taking STEM-inism with her, I knew that she was someone who really cared about her students and those around her.

**How has WPI's project-based learning influenced your education?**

The project-based learning at WPI has influenced my education by giving me the ability to approach problems and topics in a different way than I ever would have thought. An example of this is the integration of project-based learning into history classes at WPI. In high school, working with another student during a history class essentially did not happen. However, the first history class I took at WPI, I was placed into a group almost immediately to digest readings together and create projects for the class. Since I was not working alone, the students in my group provided a unique lens that I would have never experienced if I had to complete the work by myself.



**8 am - 10 am**                      **10 am - 11 am**                      **11 am - 12 pm**                      **1**

Wake up and get breakfast with friends                      Free time for reading or doing other hobbies                      Calculus IV class                      C

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