



# Paula Gibbons

## '26

**BS in Biomedical Engineering**

### Why did you choose to study at WPI?

I chose WPI for its unique [project-based learning](#) approach, as well as for the opportunity to work on projects abroad. I had always wanted to participate in a study abroad program, but I wanted to do more than go to school abroad. The opportunity to participate in a project abroad that aimed to fix an actual problem was what really drew me to WPI. I also saw that WPI's project-based learning approach would not only teach me how to practically apply what I learn in the classroom, but also how to step out of my comfort zone and work with peers from various outlooks and backgrounds. As a result, I decided to go to WPI because I knew that the skills I learn here would translate to help me in the future.

### How are you involved with the WPI community?

I am currently a member of the [Philharmonic Association](#), the [National Society of Black Engineers](#) (NSBE), the [Black Student Union](#), [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship](#), and I am also an LSAMP scholar. I chose these activities because they all relate to something I am interested in or have found community with. I enjoy being a part of these clubs because, through them, I have been able to meet

**Hometown**  
Worcester, MA

### Mentor/Advisor

- [Crystal Brown](#)
- [Hermine Vedogbeton](#)
- [Adrienne Hall-Phillips](#)
- [Catherine Whittington](#)

### Achievements

- LSAMP scholar
- Judges Award and People's Choice Award winner for Great Problems Seminar research project and presentation
- Charles O. Thompson scholar

### Interests

- Crocheting
- Reading
- Painting/drawing
- Watching period dramas
- Playing/listening to music

so many new people who have become a part of my community. I can reach out to them if I am struggling with something and need help. These clubs also helped me to grow as a person. I can serve on the executive board of NSBE and that has helped me to grow and take on more responsibility in the club, even in my first year. All of these clubs have given me a sense of belonging and a support network of people who want me to succeed as much as I do myself.

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

I really like the many different clubs and the activities always going on. A first-year student could feel scared they won't find their place, but there are so many different clubs hosting so many different events that they are bound to find something they are interested in or enjoy! I also really like all the different study spaces available across campus. You can really change your scenery or stick with a place that you like.

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

Social Science & Policy Studies Professors Crystal Brown and Hermine Vedogbeton have been quite influential for me since they provided me with my first student research job on campus. They were my Insight Advisors for the First Year Experience program, and they helped me navigate my first semester at WPI. They also inspired me to see a problem and try to figure out how to fix it during the course of my research.

Professor Adrienne Hall-Phillips has also been influential for me. From the first time I emailed her asking her to help me with my resume for the career fair, she has been such a supportive professor. She is always looking out for students and will even refer you for positions and opportunities that you would benefit from.

### **Campus Activities**

- Philharmonic Association
- National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
- Black Student Union
- Intervarsity Christian Fellowship

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Lastly, Professor Catherine Whittington has been influential for me. I met her in my junior year of high school when I interviewed her about working as a biomedical engineer. When I decided to come to WPI, she was one of the first professors I knew and she is now my faculty advisor who I can go to for help with any issues or difficulties I may have.

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

Project-based learning has been great for building my teamwork and collaboration skills. It has also been great for helping me practically apply what I learn in the classroom. I took the Great Problems Seminar "Heal the World" class. That class taught me how to effectively conduct research using keywords and tools like Google Scholar. It also taught me the importance of being culturally sensitive and how to solve real-world problems with your target community in mind. I learned how to work with a team, who I didn't know previously, to produce an excellent end product. My "end product" out of that class was a comprehensive presentation on the problem of Congenital Heart Disease in India and how it could be practically dealt with. My team and I even earned the Judges Award as well as the People's Choice Award for our research and presentation.

7AM	9AM	3PM	5
my worship routine, similar to meditation, gets me ready to start my day	attend my classes for the day	study, do my homework, and talk with friends	o

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