

WPI ACM Student Chapter
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About WPI ACM:

We are the ACM student chapter at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). We have around 15 chapter members with ACM accounts, and several other members who regularly show up to our events (~20-25). These members are generally computer science majors, but we have a lot more varying majors at our larger events like the Coffee House and the Hackathon (Attendance ~100). The most up to date information says we have 695 undergraduate computer science majors at WPI. We also do a whole bunch of other events throughout the year, like tech talks, linux install fest, social meetings, and barbeques.

Outstanding Chapter Activities Essay Submission

As the ACM chapter at WPI, we host a variety of activities that cater to both beginning and advanced coding enthusiasts. Our mission is to grow interest in computer science topics not covered by WPI courses and encourage discussion and collaboration among students. We are funded by the Computer Science department and the Student Government Association. Our major annual event is our hackathon, Hack@WPI.

We started Hack@WPI three years ago, and it has rapidly improved every year. Our first hackathon, Hack@WPI2015, had 3 sponsoring companies and 20 participants. It was very informal and was only open to WPI students. For Hack@WPI2016, we increased public advertising and established a social media presence. Although we still handled the main planning and logistics, we collaborated with the student chapters of Upsilon Pi Epsilon (UPE), IEEE, and Eta Kappa Nu (HKN), as well as WPI's Women in Computer Science (WiCS) club and Collablab for workshops, manpower, and equipment. We had 5 different sponsors and hosted 100 students for the overnight event.

Hack@WPI2017 was our most recent and most successful hackathon. We listened to feedback from past years and increased our planning efforts by contacting new sponsors including Major League Hacking (MLH), hosting tech workshops with campus clubs throughout the year, building a new website and increasing social media presence, booking a larger venue and setting up catering services, and buying swag for hackers. We had 11 sponsoring

companies, and we became MLH affiliated. We ended up with 130 participants, 20 of which came from other colleges. Of all the participants, a third had never attended a hackathon before. The feedback from both the companies and participants was very positive. Companies who had sponsored us annually commended us for our growth. One company was so impressed that they contacted an organizing member for a job interview. Participants thanked us for our efforts and reported that it was a great learning opportunity. Some reported that they had worked on their first non-academic project and that the experience provided them with a great foundation for future plans and projects.

Our impact on the student body has been phenomenal. We see students walking around campus proudly wearing our hackathon t-shirts. We overhear them boasting about their projects to friends and to companies at career fairs. In student lounges, we witness the camaraderie built among hackathon teams as they swap project war-stories. We believe that the Hack@WPI event has provided a valuable experience to the students at WPI, and we look forward to further expanding it in the coming years.

Links:

hack.wpi.edu

<https://hack-wpi-2017-4612.devpost.com/>

For any questions, please email acm@wpi.edu