WPI Progress: Corporate and Professional Education

Michael Ahern
Director, Power Systems
Formed Energy Strategy Board

- Formed Energy Strategy Board in early 2012 to partner with industry to help meet their needs

- Current Members:
  - National Grid
  - Northeast Utilities
  - ISO-New England
  - United Illuminating
  - Unitil
  - New York ISO

- Board Met and conducted several conference calls in advance of 2012 Energy Symposium
Energy Strategy Board: Roles for WPI

- Partnership should include student engagement through:
  - K-12 marketing programs to promote understanding of the Engineering Profession
  - student ambassadors
  - internships
  - graduate assistance
  - part time PhD/ faculty co-op programs

- Lead the Collaboration through an active Energy Strategy Board

- Build capability by adding faculty to teach power programs

- Long term, acquire an endowment to assure a faculty position with a continuing emphasis on electric power systems
Building a Pipeline (Results from 2012 Symposium)

How can we better assure that the industry can attract and retain sufficient numbers of well-qualified people at all levels? While this pipeline is being developed, how can the industry meet its current needs?

• Observation: The industry and its education providers have not effectively communicated its attractive combination of high pay, societal contributions, and a broad range of creative opportunities to young students, their teachers or their guidance counselors.
• Insights:

— The industry and its education providers should conduct sustained outreach to middle and high schools through ambassador programs, internships and scholarships

— The outreach programs should communicate the industry’s combination of high pay, societal contributions, and a broad range of creative opportunities

— Near term, the industry should continue its efforts to retain its employees using visible support from leadership, public emphasis on making a difference for society, professional development, and competitive pay
Strengthened Capabilities

In addition to Engineering Ambassador Program and On Campus Initiatives:

- Dr. Edvina Uzunovic, already an Adjunct Professor, is now WPI’s new Associate Director of Power Systems Engineering

- WPI began a graduate Protection and Controls Graduate Certificate (4 courses) with one of the top substation engineering firms – helping to build the existing talent pool
Conclusions

1. WPI has listened to input from the Power Industry

2. WPI has responded

3. WPI is making progress in helping to meet Industry Needs

Thank you!