



WABASH COLLEGE

Class Agents Letter

Alumni and Parent Relations

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Class of 1981

Class Agents

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This past semester has been a great one for Wabash College!

A Wabash senior, Jacob Burnett, originally from Mishawaka, was just awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. In the newspaper reports of this story there is mention that Jacob grew up in a single parent household with challenging finances. Jacob received a Lilly Scholarship, which allowed him to attend Wabash. He intends to study criminal justice at Oxford and then return to the U.S. to go to law school. This is a great example of how Wabash is a school that changes lives and I expect that Jacob will go on to change many on his own.

You may have been following the progress of our football team that again dominated DePauw and then used its stifling defense to overwhelm Franklin in the first round of the Division III playoffs. The Little Giants lost to the defending national champion team in the second round, Wisconsin-Whitewater that could well defend its title. It seems to me the last couple of times Wabash has been in the football playoffs; the Little Giants were defeated by the team that went on to win the national championship.

The cross country team won the conference and finished in the top 20 nationally. The soccer team had a great season making the conference playoffs for maybe the first time. Mike Gore, son of Mel Gore, was named the Newcomer of the Year for the conference in his first year at Wabash playing on the soccer team. The basketball, swimming and wrestling teams are off to very good starts to their seasons.

But much more than awards and athletic field success are going on at Wabash.

President Hess is now in his second year at Wabash and his impact is becoming all the more apparent. He has laid out four strategic initiatives:

- 1) Demonstrate and articulate the value of a Wabash liberal arts education;
- 2) Extend the academic and geographic footprint of the college;
- 3) Emphasize leadership development in each Wabash man;
- 4) Enhance the culture of philanthropy

As part of the implementation of the strategic initiatives, work is underway to implement four co-curricular initiatives that will provide Wabash students with the opportunity outside of the classroom to develop their leadership, critical thinking and other skills.

These four initiatives are:

- 1) **Global Health Initiative** - Students immersing themselves in global health public education, investigation, and service.
- 2) **Democracy and Public Discourse Initiative** - Students and the community using the power of public discourse to work through and solve controversial issues.
- 3) **Business and Entrepreneurship Initiative** - Encouraging students to connect their liberal arts education with experience in entrepreneurship, business, and public service.
- 4) **Digital Arts and Human Values Initiative** - Understanding the importance digital media has on our age and how we can engage students and leverage it's unlimited possibilities.

Michelle Janssen joined the College this past summer as Dean of Advancement. She comes to Wabash from Berea College in Kentucky. She also worked at Valpo. Berea is nationally known for being a college that educates the underprivileged and underserved and does so by not charging tuition. This is made possible by a very large endowment. This billion dollar endowment is result of generous gifts from people not associated with Berea but who believe in its mission.

Michelle addressed the Class Agents forum at the beginning of the semester about her interest and qualifications for the position of the Dean of Advancement. It was a bold and very encouraging introduction. She is impressed by the dedication of Wabash alumni to our College. A great example in a single day of that dedication was the April 430 initiative which saw a record number of alumni and supporters donate. More specifically on that day of amazing outpouring of support for our alma mater there were 2,329 gifts from 2,214 donors including 374 first time donors, which raised \$465,000. This date started with what ended up being the way too modest goal of motivating 430 donors to give on a single day.

What really impressed me about Michelle and her vision is that she sees and can articulate the great potential for attracting support for Wabash from those not associated with the College. In the news release accompanying her joining the College she was quoted as saying "Wabash College transforms lives through its distinctive commitment to educating our nation's young men" https://www.wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news_ID=10310. She sees that we can draw financial support from a much broader base of donors who will appreciate and support what the College does and does so well, educating men. Things have changed much in America in the 33 years since we graduated from Wabash. Today men make up less than 50% of college students and the percentage is dropping. Michelle noted how Wabash alumni can sometimes have the echo of an apology in their voices when we tell others that we went to an all-male school.

The Class Agents also got to hear Kim Johnson, Director of Communications and Marketing, talk about the College's new Social Media strategy. Wabash is working with a consulting firm that works with a handful of colleges on their social media strategy. She explained that one change the College has implemented is to post less on Facebook and put out fewer news stories.

The response is a higher level of engagement with what is posted. Less is more. The competition for the time and attention of high school students has never been more challenging and it was good to hear how the College is working smarter to meet that challenge.

The construction work continues to make progress on the building of the new student housing that's slated to be completed in 2016. You may have also heard that the College purchased and demolished the Lew Wallace Motor Inn.

There is a lot going on at Wabash.

Classmate news

Mike Kraus was recently honored in Indianapolis for the great and innovative work that he has done to improve lives of dialysis patients in Indiana and in the United States. One cannot but helped to be impressed by reading about Mike's accomplishments (and watching the video that produced for the gala) and the great good that he has done for so many patients.

Bill Payne was appointed the new Dean of the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources at the University of Nevada at Reno. Earlier this year **Scott Boone** was hired as the defensive coordinator for University of Nevada at Reno. This sounds like the nucleus of a local alumni organization if we do not already have one in Reno.

Jeff Struewing recently returned from Ethiopia but told me that too much happened to summarize it in this letter. I did find out that Jeff was recently recognized by a local youth-teen Shakespearian theatre group for his years of dedication building sets and being the prop master.

It has been a great semester for me personally. The other day on Facebook someone referenced the Bill Placher quote: "Walking around this campus at night with a new fallen snow, I always fall in love with it all over again." Not being as contemplative a person as Professor Placher, for me it is a Saturday afternoon at Little Giant Football game. It is the ringing of the Monon Bell on the Wabash sidelines, particularly the post-game triumphant ring. I had the pleasure this semester catching up with classmates while seeing three football games at Hollett Stadium and watching one of the most stifling Wabash defenses in my memory. At Homecoming I saw Bill Rippey, Mike Bettice and Ned Segelken. I was glad to see Chris Braun, Mel Gore and Dave Lewis at the Bell game. I also was glad to see Mark Lazar at the gathering before the Monon Bell game.

The Class Agents meeting was held the weekend of the home football opening game which was game against Hampden Sydney. The inaugural "Gentleman's Classic" (also called the "Sausage Bowl" by the undergraduates on the fundraising tee shirts they sold at the game). The game was great, including the participation of the President of the NCAA. He came to Wabash to speak to the teams on the Friday before and then attended the game on Saturday. On Thursday night before the game, I had the opportunity to hang out with my undergraduate fraternity brothers while they painted the senior bench. When we were at Wabash, the Lambda Chi did not paint the Senior Bench. Homecoming was a beautiful day at Wabash and I was privileged and humbled to be honored by the Lambda Chi alumni association by being inducted into the

local chapter's Hall of Fame. Finally, this Monon Bell weekend I had my first beer from the Monon Bell as part of a post-game celebration that I do not recall was a tradition while we were at Wabash.

It is always great to get back to Wabash and to catch up with classmates and to meet and be impressed by the current undergraduates. It is good to see first-hand that Wabash continues to transform the men who come to Wabash and then those men make their mark on the world.

Yours in Wabash!

Peter and Stephen

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LOST ALUMNI

CLASS OF: 1981

Aperghis, Nicholas
Beardsley, Christopher
Dooley, David
Harrier, Robert
Koenig, David
Mann, T
Matsubara, Yasuhiko
McCarthy, Brian
Payne, William
Wagner, Michael
Warr, Chris

In an attempt to engage Wabash alumni, we are including the above "lost" alumni in our class.

If anyone is in contact with classmates listed above, please contact the alumni office at alumni@wabash.edu or by phone (765) 361-6369.

Thanks for all you do for Wabash!