

Sparks Center demolished

Community Center project gains momentum as students and staff return to campus

JAMES WALLACE '26
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Just a little over one year after the demolition of the Frank H. Sparks Center was planned to start, the wrecking balls finally toppled the structure. The summer of 2025 has proved a monumental period for the progress on the upcoming Community Center, with the giant crater where the Sparks Center once stood being the clearest indication that progress is well under way.

“The focus over the summer for the Community Center project included the relocation of a utility tunnel that provides all of the mechanical, electrical and internet services to Lilly Library, as well as the demolition of Sparks and preparing the subgrade for new concrete foundations,” said Director of Planning, Design and Construction Adriann Rhoades. “The demolition process included the salvage of a number of items from Sparks, including the cypress beams in the Great Hall.”

With most of the original Sparks Center now hauled away, the focus shifts to the final stages of demolition as the land is prepared for construction of the new Community Center.

“The preparation for the foundations has included the installation of a shoring system consisting of piles and lagging, which will act as a tem-



COURTESY OF @WELCHM81 ON INSTAGRAM

When students left campus back in May, the Sparks Center was virtually unscathed by demolition teams. By mid-July it was reduced to rubble, and when students moved in this week, a giant hole greeted them in the spot where Sparks once stood.

porary retaining wall while the new foundations and basement is constructed for the Community Center,” said Rhoades. “This work will continue through October to be ready for the start of new construction.”

Closely tied to the physical progress of the Community Center project is the USDA Rural Development loan that the College has requested to better finance the development. The loan, which totals \$64 million, will enable the College to finance \$32 million for the new Community Center and restructure the existing \$32 million in debt that the College already has under one loan at competitive rates.

Currently, the demolition and shoring process continuing through October was approved by USDA Rural Development to be self-funded, separate from the loan application for the Community Center.

“We had received approval from USDA RD to move forward with site demolition using our own funds,” said CFO Kendra Cooks. “Our ability to move beyond demolition from a project perspective requires final approval through funds obligation of our USDA RD loan. We believe we are in the final stages of the USDA RD loan review process, so we believe a decision and notification is imminent.”

One reason for potentially stretching out the approval process is personnel changes throughout USDA Rural Development at various levels.

“Everyone we started this process with, from the director of the USDA in the state of Indiana to our local contact that helped with the application process, are all gone for various reasons,” said Cooks. “That has been a complexity over the summer.”

With a new set of individuals transitioning into the roles filled by USDA Rural Development employees previously involved with the project, Cooks and other members of the senior staff have been waiting to plan out the College’s next steps.

“Once USDA Rural Development’s action is known, the administration and our project team will need to evaluate the next steps,” said Cooks. “We anticipate that we will receive approval of all or a portion of our request, so we will need to identify the final financial plan for the project once we know USDA Rural Development’s decision.”

So while demolition and shoring will continue in the footprint of where the Sparks Center once sat, Cooks and other members of the senior staff will continue to work to hear back from USDA Rural Development to analyze the next steps the College will take.

Q&A with President Feller

Editor-in-Chief James Wallace '26 sat down with Feller to discuss new senior staff hires, financial aid and more

JAMES WALLACE '26
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Q. What progress has been made with the community center this summer and what can students expect this year?

A. This summer was a big milestone to start knocking things down and hauling things away. In the immediate future, what we’ll see in the coming weeks will be the removal of a lot of dirt. Just as a reminder, the footprint of the new Community Center is substantially larger than the footprint of the Sparks Center. The new Community Center is going to come out towards the mall, and it’s going to line up with Lilly Library and Goodrich Hall. What students are seeing this week is the placement of steel around the perimeter that will hold the dirt in so that it doesn’t cave in as they dig down deep. Ideally later this fall, it’ll turn to seeing more construction, but in the short term, it’s a lot of dump trucks. I think we will want to make sure that we’re keeping an awareness that we have an active construction site in the middle of our campus. And then hopefully we can all extend a little grace if things get a little loud or a little dusty or a little muddy. I’ve seen all three of those things this summer, and the crew is cognizant that this is a place where we’re living and studying and working. It’ll be the new normal for a little while.

Q. Last year marked an extensive search process for a new Dean of Students. What will Dean Brown

bring to the table and what changes can students expect to see in the Dean of Students office?

A. I am really excited to have Dean Brown here. He definitely hit the ground running — ever since last spring, he’s been learning about Wabash. He has been talking to people, reading and listening to the community. Dean Brown also comes with a lot of experience — he’s done this job at multiple colleges. I think his varied experiences at institutions that have a lot of overlap with Wabash College was a thing that was really drawing his candidacy above others. Maybe the even more exciting point is that although he brings a lot of experiences, he’s been spending his time asking questions and listening and learning. He’s bringing in outside experiences and views and thoughts to share with us, but he’s putting in the work to ask the questions and learn about us. I think students are going to find this a really exciting time. Dean Brown wants to hear about things that students would like to see happen. So when you ask what students can expect to see, I think the bigger question is, what are the changes students want? Students should be articulating that to Dean Brown and the team because this is a point where they really want to learn. What things do we want to see changed?

Q. There was an expedited search process this summer for a

new Athletic Director. What was different about that process and what can athletes and students expect from AD Peeples?

A. The big difference was the time scale. The Dean of Student search process was about a nine month process. Fast forward to Director Peeples’ search — we had to compress the search to a two month period. My request to the committee was not to rush but also not to delay, because I did feel it was important that, if at all possible, there be an athletic director on campus the day that new student-athletes began to arrive in August. We very quickly mounted a national search for a new athletic director and I’ll admit, I was nervous about if it was realistic to get this done, but as soon as we posted the job description most of my worry went away. My colleagues were saying, ‘Scott, this is one of the best jobs in Division Three athletics.’ That lowered my anxiety. Once we got applications in, we really focused on the logistical challenges of interviewing semi-finalists over Zoom and getting the committee together. All credit to Dean McDorman and Jim Amidon for organizing the search and the committee for working hard. We were able to bring three candidates here in person on our desired schedule, and the feedback was really strong. There was great depth in the candidate pool, but one person stood out — someone with extensive Division III experience and the ability to get to work right away. That was



COURTESY OF WABASH COLLEGE

Wabash College President Scott Feller rings in the Class of 2029 with Caleb Mills’ bell, one of the first traditions freshmen experience as Wabash men.

our ideal candidate, and we got it with Director Peeples.

Director Peeples arrived here on a Sunday night, and on Monday, he was in our senior staff meeting and was engaged. He’ll be very busy because he’s jumping right into the season, but he’ll be around for students and student-athletes. I’m also very excited because he’s got experience, not only running Division Three athletic programs, but also running really good intramural wellness programs. It’s clear he’s got ideas about keeping this entire campus active and utilizing the Allen center in a way that it touches all 900 students, all faculty and staff. I don’t think we

could have done much better with the two new folks who are joining the senior leadership.

Q. What is the current status of O’Bannon Grants and other forms of financial aid? What is the college continuing to do to advocate for state and federal funding towards education?

A. I think at the good end of things, certainly at the top of the list of things that went our way, was the ultimate changes to the endowment tax. So the endowment tax was really hanging over us at the beginning of the summer, you might recall that

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Summer political roundup: What you missed

CONNOR PHILLIPS '28
STAFF WRITER

It certainly has not been a dull summer in politics. More of President Trump’s platform has been coming to fruition, but not without pushback from his critics. Here’s a breakdown of some of what you missed this summer.

Redistricting: This summer, President Trump pushed for Republican states to do mid-decade redistricting to give the GOP more seats in Congress. This started in Texas, a state about which Trump said, “We are entitled to five more seats.” This prompted Texas House Democrats to flee the state to prevent a quorum in an effort to delay the passage of the map. However, the Texas House Democrats eventually returned home and were

ultimately unable to prevent the map from passing. The Texas Republicans’ maneuver on behalf of Trump prompted California to enter the fray; California has proposed a ballot measure to allow Democrats to pick up four congressional seats in 2026. Similar plans to redraw congressional maps are occurring in Missouri, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Florida, Colorado, Nebraska, and Indiana. Most recently, Utah’s Congressional map was overturned for it being a partisan gerrymander. A group of Republican Indiana state representatives met with President Trump on Tuesday to discuss holding a special session to pass new maps.

Big Beautiful Bill: H.R.1, President Trump’s “Big, Beautiful Bill” was signed into law this sum-



COURTESY OF NORTHEASTERN GLOBAL NEWS

The summer was chock full of political developments — redistricting, immigration disputes and more.

mer. It is estimated that 11.8 million people will lose healthcare coverage by 2034, and 5.1 million will lose coverage due to policy changes outside the bill. The bill requires work or community service requirements of at least 80 hours a month for an individual to qualify for Medicaid. States will be required to conduct a “look-back” to determine if an individual meets requirements within the three months prior to applying. Medicaid eligibility for any non-citizen residents will be cancelled. This includes people in the United States as refugees or asylum seekers. The Bill also cuts much of the funding for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP). The

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News around the world



COURTESY OF CNN

An aerial view of Wonsan Kalma, North Korea's new resort. In 2019, before the Covid pandemic caused a sharp dip in tourism, North Korea attracted 300,000 visitors.

ELIJAH WETZEL '27
NEWS EDITOR

North Korea

The most recent move of the world's most insular and secretive government? Opening a luxury beach resort. Video emerged this week of North Korea's latest attempt to ease the strain of international sanctions and a smothering authoritarian system of control on the economy: the Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Area. Spanning 2.5 miles of beach and including high-rise hotels, villas, and even a water park, visitors to the park, most of whom are either Russian or Chinese, reported that the food was expensive and copious and the amenities were brand new. While guests were allowed to move freely in the resort, they remarked how staff was never far away, ostensibly simply at hand to cater to their needs. This arrangement — some freedom with a heavy dose of supervision — is a microcosm of North Korea's current approach to economic strategy under the country's dictator, Kim Jong Un. Kim has continued existing and passed new laws that strictly control the behavior of North Korean citizens and the information, products, and media they can access during his rule. International sanctions on North Korea are widespread and stringent, but tourism is one of the few sectors that the sanctions haven't restricted. As a result, Kim has had to loosen his grip on the culture, creating an interesting situation where the world's most reclusive nation of communism is opening its borders to some forms of public capitalism.

Australia

Relations between Australia and Iran came to a grinding halt Tuesday after Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese accused the Middle Eastern nation of coordinating two antisemitic attacks in Australia. The Australian government also expelled Iran's ambassador to Australia and removed its own diplomats from Iran. Australia's top intelligence agency,

the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO), led an investigation that indicated Iran was behind two arson attacks, one on a kosher food company and the other on a synagogue. Australia warned its citizens in Iran, urging them to leave the country due to "a high risk of arbitrary retention or arrest." Iran denied any involvement in the arson attacks and its Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, retorted that the expulsion of Iran's ambassador was Australia bowing to criticism from Israel for its support of a Palestinian state and called Albanese a "weak politician."

Israel

Tragedy continued in the Gaza Strip this week. On Monday, an Israeli air strike hit a hospital in the Strip and killed at least 20 people, including five journalists. Eyewitnesses stated that after the initial missile struck, a second missile followed that killed some people who had rushed to the scene to provide aid. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared the incident a "tragic mishap," and a military spokesperson said that the military would investigate the misplaced attack and "present our findings as transparently as possible." The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that almost 200 journalists have been killed in Gaza since the beginning of the war, almost all of them Palestinian. Israeli security forces have hit hospitals with air strikes at other points of the war as well, and plans to escalate its offensive in the Gaza Strip and West Bank as the war drags on.

United Kingdom

Reform UK, an anti-migration British political party atop many public opinion polls in the island nation, cited "major civil disorder" as the key reason why it would seek to remove human rights laws and consequently enable mass deportation of asylum seekers from the country. Though Reform UK has only four members of parliament, it is increasingly finding

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there were some pretty hefty tax hikes in the endowment tax that would have been really, really tough on Wabash College. Ultimately, what came out of the U.S. Senate was much more favorable for Wabash College and for small liberal arts colleges everywhere. So the bill that was signed into law said you didn't have to pay the endowment tax if you have less than 3000 students, so we can feel pretty good about that.

That's the number one win, and we had some smaller wins as well. Several potential disrupters were in the House — in particular, I was very worried about SEOG [Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants] grants, which many of our students receive. That was all kept, as well as no changes to the Pell Grants for



COURTESY OF @SHAMIRAGELBMAN ON X

Last semester, students from PSC 210 visited the Indiana Statehouse and met with Governor Mike Braun '76 to lobby for Wabash and, in particular, students' continued access to Frank O'Bannon grants.

favor among British voters in opinion polls, capitalizing off of voters' cooling attitudes toward migration, which recently became the top issue voters were concerned about, surpassing the economy as the major point of concern in surveys of the British public. Nigel Farage, an MP and leader of Reform UK, stoked anger against immigration in his announcement of the party's plan to seek Britain's removal from the European Convention on Human Rights and repeal the country's Human Rights Act. "We are not far away from major civil disorder," said Farage. "It is an invasion, as these young men illegally break into our country." While Housing minister Matthew Pennycook dismissed the plan as "a series of gimmicks," only time will tell if the public agrees with his assessment or prefers Farage's hardline approach.

Feller Q&A

us. Perhaps we will have to be a little bit more careful about making sure that students remain full time, but at Wabash College that has not been a big concern. The loss of tax deductions for families for tuition costs and additional new taxes on scholarships and fellowships did not make it into the ultimate bill that was passed. So by and large, we're in a pretty good spot.

Now, I'll shift to the area where I'd say we did lose, and that was in Indiana with the O'Bannon Grants. Ultimately, what was passed by the state legislature left the cuts that had been threatened. It's not great. We will take a budget hit there, probably in the half a million dollar range. But we were able to make adjustments in the college's budget to keep current students whole; basically, I've had to make up the state dollars with insti-

tutional funds. And when I say that, that really means I moved dollars from one place to another. I don't have a printing press to make new dollars, and so money that I would have preferred to invest in some of our maintenance needs — refreshing some of our spaces in academic and living units — I've had to move some dollars from those types of things.

We'll continue to try to work on this. Basically, the two pieces are, do the best with what we have and try to minimize disruption, but then also just continue to make the case that it's an important investment for the state of Indiana to make in these students. There's still work to do.

Q. What is your message to incoming students and returning students alike?

A. If we could all be like Dean Brown and AD Peeples and try to ask a lot of questions. They are asking questions, one so they can learn and two so they can help us interrogate what we do. I think asking good questions is both how we learn and how we figure out what things we do want to change. It is easy to come to the table and say 'I want to change this.' The harder work is to ask questions so that everybody at the table starts to think, 'Maybe we need to change this.' If we could come to the year with a spirit of honest, genuine questioning — both so that we can make our individual selves better and more successful at Wabash and along the way help make Wabash better and more successful as an institution — it would be a great way for us to approach the year as a community. Admittedly, it doesn't seem like the way things are being approached outside of campus, but I'm fine with doing things a little differently here. I don't mind if we are a little counter-cultural.

Summer political roundup



COURTESY OF ROLLING STONE

President Trump holds up H.R. 1, the "One, Big, Beautiful Bill" at a signing ceremony during a Fourth of July picnic. GOP congressional leaders overcame the hesitancy of Republican budget hawks to vote for a bill that will raise the national debt.

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average cut for a family is expected to be \$146 per month. Some economists predict H.R.1 will add as much as \$4.1 trillion to the debt of the next decade. But certain government agencies will see their budgets expanded. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will receive \$170 billion more under H.R.1. Some people will pay less in taxes. Those making over one million dollars will keep 4.3% more. Those in the bottom 20% will see an after tax increase of 0.6%.

Iran/Israel: Back in June Iran and Israel were involved in a 12 day war. This was sparked when Israel launched a surprise attack on key Iranian military targets and nuclear facilities. The United States joined the conflict on June 21 by deploying bombers to attack Iranian nuclear sites at Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan. This was the first time a U.S. president had explicitly joined an attack on an Iranian nuclear program. Iran attacked a U.S. base in Qatar, but no fatalities were reported. Later that day a ceasefire was announced. There has been a large public outcry over the amount of funding that the U.S. gives to Israel. The U.S. allocated \$3.3 billion in foreign military financing and \$500 million in missile defense cooperation funds to Israel, in line with the existing 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two countries that runs through 2028.

Immigration: During the summer, more about the Trump administration's plan to expand deportations was revealed. Here in Indiana, the "Speedway Slammer" is being built with the capacity of a thousand beds. These beds will be available at the Miami Correctional Center. Trump also signed Proclamation 10949,

restricting citizens of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen from entering the U.S. The order also partially bans travelers from Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

Epstein Files: Over the summer, in a debacle that captured the attention of much of the media and public, the Justice Department and the FBI concluded that Jeffrey Epstein acted alone and had no client list. This contradicts what was said by Attorney General Pam Bondi, who, in February, said the files were on her desk being reviewed. The report also stated that Epstein had committed suicide. Additionally, it concluded that there was no credible proof that Epstein blackmailed prominent individuals. With the closing of the Epstein case, many questioned Trump's involvement with Epstein. Releasing the Epstein files was something President Trump had promised to do on the campaign trail last year. Trump and Epstein were close friends until 2007, when they had a falling out. Trump flew on Epstein's plane at least seven times in the '90s. Trump's name is mentioned in the Epstein documents, according to a briefing by Pam Bondi. In July Todd Blanche, the Deputy Attorney General and formerly Trump's personal lawyer, met with Ghislaine Maxwell — Epstein's partner and accomplice in his abuse — in which she was granted limited immunity so the questions that she answered could not be used against her as long as her answers were truthful. However, Maxwell lied about her crimes in the interview. Following the interview, she was moved to a minimum-security facility, leading some people to think Trump may pardon Maxwell.



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FEATURES

A new day, a new Dean



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

New Dean of Students Scott C. Brown speaks to students during his hiring process on February 26, 2025 in Baxter 101. Dr. Brown has previously served as Dean at Colgate University, Northern Arizona University and Dartmouth College.

OWEN VERMEULEN '28
FEATURES EDITOR

Many Wabash students only ever know one Dean of Students in their time here. It's not often that Wabash sees a change of the guard at this particular position. This year marks the departure of Greg Redding '88 as Dean of Students, and thus the beginning of what will hopefully be a long and successful tenure

for Dean Brown. Scott Brown has built a long and impressive resume in higher education, highlights including time spent as Dean of Students at Colgate University and Northern Arizona University, as well as Dean of the College at Dartmouth College. This means that this is the first time in many years that Wabash has hired an outsider as Dean of Students.

"I've known about Wabash for a long time, so my first impressions were wonderfully consistent with what I was hoping for," said Dean Brown. "The students here are incredibly engaged and eager to get involved. When I first came to campus I had a conversation with a group of graduating seniors and I was struck by how close all of them were, being from different areas of campus."

One of the graduating seniors on that panel, Jake Weber '25, had a particularly strong recollection of meeting Dean Brown.

"Everyone who I talked to was highly impressed with how personable he was," said Weber. "He did a lot of the little things perfectly. He seemed genuinely interested in who we were and why we had chosen Wabash. He even read the previous week's copy of *The Bachelor* and commented on an article I had written."

Dean Brown has swiftly begun to endear himself to the students that he interacts with. The fact that he is an outside hire seems to have done nothing to deter him from ingraining himself in the Wabash culture.

"I wanted to learn anything and everything I could about Wabash," said Dean Brown. "It was really important to me that I have a deep understanding and appreciation for the community. I really want student feedback, one of the things I was impressed with was the amount of self governance that the students have

and I want that to continue."

After Dean Brown's extended immersion in Wabash, he is also very keen on keeping the rich culture of tradition alive at the college.

"The fact that traditions are so important is what attracted me to Wabash," said Brown. "Traditions are the thing that bind people together and hopefully the ages before them. Traditions are about meaning and community, so I always want to go back to the inspiration for traditions."

The fact that Dean Brown is an outside hire is not only something not to fear, but something to welcome.

"He is someone who can bring a lot of fresh perspective to Wabash," said Weber. "While we love being our own bubble, sometimes you need an outsider to help reinvigorate the community and identify how we can innovate to be better."

Even though Dean Brown is still getting adjusted to his new environment, he has his eyes on the long term goals of his tenure.

"I want to think about what Wabash's best self looks like, and what [students'] role and responsibilities are in that," said Brown. "Then it's just about working with my team to make sure that we're providing the best guidance, support and services to help you along the way."

Freshmen DOs and DON'Ts

DO get your W at Chapel Sing.

DON'T doom scroll in the library, get your work done!

DO get sleep: You can't keep burning the midnight oil.

DON'T download Hinge: it's dead and so is your dating life for the next 4 years.

DON'T hit reply all to campus emails. Ever.

DO your homework immediately after classes

DON'T walk under the arch, you need all the help you can get on comps.

DO write for *The Bachelor*.



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Alumni reminisce on Sparks heyday



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAMSAY ARCHIVES

"The Sparks Center means so much more to those a generation ago when it was a hub for activities. There were free beer keggers on certain Fridays, Glee club and class photos on it's front steps as well as civil protests. It's time for a facility upgrade. New adventures await the next generation."

-Eugene King '78



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAMSAY ARCHIVES

"When I did my interview with President Sheldon Wettick to be Dean of Students in the 90's, he asked me 'what skill would you say is most important for the new Dean of Students to have?' I told them that 'the new Dean of Students should be able to drive a bulldozer so that he can drive it through the Sparks Center.'"

-David Hadley



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAMSAY ARCHIVES

"The Scarlet Inn in the basement of Sparks was a campus hub. Faculty would frequently hold sway at a big round table and hold amazing discourses with one another. Another favorite place for me in the basement of the sparks center was the office of The Bachelor. Staffers would gather there to plan the coming week's newspaper. It was dark, dank, and meetings usually ran until the Scarlet Inn had closed."

-John Kerezy '77



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW FORRESTER '11

"Although the smell of the basement, the bookstore, and Scarlet Inn all hold memories for me, one of my favorite memories is of the second floor conference room. I wasn't up there much, but when I was, I was up there for hours. We would use it for our Audit and Finance Committee "War Room" sessions. Most of my sessions lasted 5 hours or longer. The space was perfect because there was a big table with our laptops, a chalkboard, and not much else to look at or distract" us."

-Andrew Forrester '11

Where in the world were Wallies?



PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK GAUSE '29

"This summer I went on a mission trip with my parish to Honduras! We stayed at an orphanage where I helped build a bathroom and our group redid one of the homes for the children! Was one of the best experiences I have ever had and will absolutely be going back next year!

-Jack Gause '29



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK SCHOETTLE '29

"I hiked some trails and saw some sights in Colorado"

-Patrick Schoettl '29



PHOTO COURTESY OF SIDNEY THOMAS '29

"Snorkeling between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates in Iceland!"

-Sidney Thomas '29

BACHELOR
301 W. Wabash Ave.,
Crawfordsville, IN, 47933

X: @bachelorwabash
IG: @bachelorwabash

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
James Wallace • jpwallac26@wabash.edu
MANAGING EDITOR
Nathan Ellenberger • nvelleb26@wabash.edu
NEWS EDITOR
Elijah Wetzel • ejwetzel27@wabash.edu
OPINION EDITOR
Evan Bone • ecbone26@wabash.edu
FEATURES EDITOR
Owen Vermeulen • ohvermeu28@wabash.edu
SPORTS EDITOR
Sean Bledsoe • smbledso26@wabash.edu
PHOTO EDITOR
Will Duncan • wjduncan27@wabash.edu

The purpose of *The Bachelor* is to serve the school audience, including but not limited to administrators, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, community members and most importantly, the students. Because this is a school paper, the content and character within will cater to the student body’s interests, ideas, and issues. Further, this publication will serve as a medium and forum for student opinions and ideas.

Although an individual newspaper, the Board of Publications publishes *The Bachelor*. *The Bachelor* and BOP receive funding from the Wabash College Student Senate, which derives its funds from the Wabash College student body.

Letters (e-mails) to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. They will only be published if they include name, phone, or e-mail, and are not longer than 800 words.

The Bachelor reserves the right to edit letters for content, typographical errors, and length. All letters received become property of this publication for the purposes of reprinting and/or redistribution. Profanity may appear in the publication, but only in cases of direct quote or if profanity is necessary to the content of the story. Please do not confuse profanity with obscenity. No article or picture of an obscene nature will appear in this publication.

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Education and excellence through experience



Student Body President
Austin Pickett ‘26

Reply to this opinion at
acpicket26@wabash.edu

Throughout my three years here at Wabash, I have been fortunate enough to be a member of the Student Senate in each iteration and have come to understand that the Student Senate is and needs to be more than just a place where people gather to discuss how we allocate our budget to put on campus events; it needs to be a place where we discuss the issues and changes that we wish to see on campus so that the elected cabinet can advocate on behalf of all students on campus to our administration and be the catalyst of change.

This is what we hope to bring to the table; we want to strengthen the Wabash brotherhood, community and inclusivity by breaking up the small, medium and large events across both semesters that the clubs and organizations that we fund put on, so that every weekend that has an event going on at Wabash will pull people out of their rooms and get active with their brothers. We plan on working with our committees, clubs and organizations to bring new events to campus that might appeal to a broader range of individuals so that there are events for everyone, whether that is musical artists, paintballing, a videogame tournament, a cultural fair or anything else the student body wishes to see.

We also want to bring accountability and transparency into the Senate so everyone knows what we are deciding on and can express their input. We plan on doing this by having weekly posts of the Senate schedule that let people know when committees are meeting, as well as working with clubs to post a

weekly schedule of the events they are hosting on campus and linking to their Instagram pages so that everyone can learn more about the events. We plan on posting all the Senate notes so that everybody can see what was discussed in the Senate and learn how we plan to address the issues brought up to us. Finally, we plan on having a feedback box in the library. Every month we will go to each of the living units on campus to talk to each of you who is interested so we can figure out what you have enjoyed, what we need to do better, and address any questions and concerns you have. We hope to be the best advocates for you and to implement the changes you hope to see on campus by expressing your wants and needs to the faculty, administration, and alumni. I also hope to use my connections gained by working in the Mayor’s Office this spring to foster a better connection with the Crawfordsville community by making some of our events available to the wider Crawfordsville community. We hope they can learn more about Wabash and what makes it special, but we also hope to give a platform for events happening in Crawfordsville to allow for our better integration into the Crawfordsville community. We strive to make not just Wabash feel more like home, but Crawfordsville as well.

This cabinet feels that it is our duty to serve you all faithfully and loyally by being your biggest advocates across campus and ensuring that there are always events on campus to attend that can appeal to everyone’s liking. We hope to provide you with educational opportunities and excellence through experience and to be the advocates and public servants that you all deserve. With this we can mold Wabash into what we want it to be for us all.

HI-FIVES

FIVE THINGS WORTHY
OF A HI-FIVE THIS WEEK

NEW UPDATE JUST DROPPED

Hi-five to Wilhelm for recreating Dusty Divot where Sparks once was. Reports say it is a hot drop!

FOR OLD TIME’S SAKE

Hi-five to Cracker Barrel for deciding to keep their classic logo after announcing they would “modernize” it. And it only took \$100 million in losses and public outrage!

REPLY ALL

Lo-Five to the all campus email replies. Freshmen, check out the Do’s and Don’ts before hitting send.

RETURN TO SENDER

Hi-Five to Campus Services for handling so many unknown packages. Thank you for all the hard work you do!

TAY-TAY AND KILLA TRAV

Hi-Five to the hottest power couple in American pop culture for getting engaged this past week. Even though the Eagles won the Super Bowl, at least the Swift-Kelces can rock a consolation ring

Dueling opinions: IFC vs. IMA

The appeal of fraternity life: Belonging and competition



IFC President
Lucas Carpenter ‘26

Reply to this opinion at
lhcarpen26@wabash.edu

Dearest Freshmen, Welcome to Wabash College, your home for the next four years – and if all goes as it should, a place you can look upon fondly for life. While it’s not technically necessary, I would argue that to ensure your Wabash experience is as positive as it could be you should think about joining a fraternity. While Wabash at large is a brotherhood in and of itself, the connection and sense of belonging that fraternities make available provides a unique and more positive perspective both on the traditions of Wabash as well as the student body as a whole. No better example of this can be found during homecoming week, when freshmen across campus participate and compete in some of Wabash’s oldest and most cherished traditions. While the opportunity to engage and enjoy these traditions is made available to independent students as well, the nudge and competitive spirit felt by the fraternal body is frankly unmatched.

Speaking from experience, it’s not easy walking into a new place and immediately finding where you belong within that environment. However, I was fortunate enough to have been nudged in the right direction and found a true home within my house: Beta Theta Pi.

This nudge came in the form of a phrase I’ve truly seen come to life since I’ve found my place here at Wabash. When I was a freshman, a brother of Beta said to me, “I had a group of best friends in high school but the friends I’ve made here will undoubtedly be the groomsmen at my wedding.” This seemingly overstated sentence came from a man only two years older than me but in an entirely different place in his life. While I was initially skeptical, as most

would be, I decided to test the water and accepted my bid, something I never thought I’d do. Coming into Wabash I was planning on living a quiet life at Wabash as an athlete and more or less flying under the radar like I had in high school. However, my Wabash experience could not have possibly ended up further from that primarily due to my joining a fraternity.

Houses at Wabash provide an environment that not only encourages, but borderline requires active engagement in other clubs and organizations at Wabash. In that same light, they provide a support system that holds each individual accountable for their grades, social lives and health. This is no better indicated than with quite possibly the two most important figures when discussing whether it’s better to be involved in a fraternity or live as an independent student at Wabash: GPAs and retention rates. Every semester when comparing fraternity and independent students’ grades, both freshmen and upperclassmen involved in fraternities score higher grades on average which can be attributed to the aforementioned support systems provided within Greek organizations at Wabash. Similarly, students after their freshmen year are significantly more likely to return to Wabash the next year in large part due to the sense of belonging and nudge to be involved elsewhere on campus that fraternities provide.

I’d like to reiterate that there’s nothing wrong with being an independent at Wabash. Some of my better friends here are independent students and they’re some of the most active and involved people I’ve met. For some, Greek life just is not for them. However, I would encourage each and every person on this campus to at the very least go check out houses and do their best to get out and find a group of people with whom they can feel at home and at peace.

Independent, not alone: The Benefits of the Independent Men’s Association



IMA President
Sammy Saunders ‘26

Reply to this opinion at
srsaunde26@wabash.edu

At Wabash College, fraternity life has long stood as one of the pillars of campus culture. With over half of students joining one of the many fraternities, it’s easy to assume that Greek life is the only path toward belonging and community. Yet, the Independent Men’s Association (IMA) continues to show that living independently—whether in a residence hall or town house—offers its own set of unique benefits, opportunities and traditions.

The Independent Men’s Association was founded to provide support, programming and representation for students who chose not to affiliate with fraternities. Though independents are sometimes jokingly referred to as “GDIs,” the reality is far from the stereotype. Wabash independents find their own belonging through a path they create, not by one micromanaged for 12 weeks.

The IMA hosts social events, intramural sports competition, philanthropy opportunities and leadership development activities. These events not only connect independents to each other but also integrate them into the broader Wabash community. Unlike fraternity members, independents are not tied to the rules or expectations of a national organization, allowing them more freedom in how they balance academics, athletics and personal interests.

For many, this independence fosters personal growth. Without a built-in network of “brothers,” GDIs learn to seek out friendships across residence halls, classes, athletic teams and clubs. This builds resilience, independence in

the truest sense and the confidence to engage in difficult conversations. These attributes directly transfer to what real-world relationships are founded on.

While fraternity houses come with deep-rooted traditions, residence halls provide a more relaxed, open and diverse living environment. Living in a hall means exposure to students from a wide range of backgrounds, interests and hometowns. That variety can create friendships that might never emerge in the tighter social circles of fraternity life.

Residence halls also often come with practical benefits: trained Residential Assistants (RAs), structured quiet hours and closer proximity to campus resources. For students who value privacy and academic focus, the halls can offer an environment more conducive to studying and personal downtime. Wabash has a culture of diversity, and the IMA represents this better than anyone on campus. Wabash preaches the idea of being different and to live by the means which makes you the most successful.

Additionally, residence halls are often where students encounter some of their closest friendships, like all the late-night conversations with their roommates. These bonds, while less formal and public than those in fraternities, can be just as strong, and if not stronger.

The IMA’s growing presence ensures that independents are not overlooked in Wabash’s fraternity-heavy culture. By offering programming that mirrors some of the best parts of Greek life—community service, leadership development and social events—while still allowing for individual freedom, the IMA proves that there’s more than one way to live “the Wabash way.”

For current and prospective students alike, it’s important to remember: Wabash men are united not just by Greek letters, but by the shared pursuit of excellence, honor and brotherhood in all its forms. Whether you live in a fraternity or a residence hall, you’re part of the same Little Giant tradition.

Balancing school and athletics

Shad Wilson '27

Reply to this opinion
sawilson27@wabash.edu



Being an athlete is an important part of many students' lives at Wabash. We spend a lot of time each day focusing on improving our skills and performance, but it is important to remember that we can only be athletes because we are students first. For all of the Freshmen and even returning athletes it is hard to maintain a balance between the two aspects that take up most of our time. So here are some tips that helped me through the past two years as an athlete in two majors: consistency is key, start everything early, do a little extra work and ask for help.

Building a consistent schedule is what will allow you to manage your time between athletics and school, so by consistently studying at the same time and place each day you will naturally build better study habits and have more control over your time. Day one of every class you are given a syllabus, so use it to create a schedule where you can set those times to study. Also, with the syllabus you know when and what assignments you will have, so get a head start. What I did in my freshman year was complete easier assignments on canvas up to three

days early, so I had more time to do the larger tasks like writing papers and studying for exams. By doing work early and not procrastinating you will find a lot more free time in your life. Do the little things – I'm talking about taking extra credit when a professor offers it. Even if it requires a little extra time out of your schedule and you might not need it right at that moment, go do it! When finals come at the end of the semester you'll wish that you had every one of those small points.

All three of these points will greatly benefit you in your own ability to take control of your education while at Wabash. This last point is the most important: ask for help. I'm not ashamed to admit when I got here I had a class that was probably too hard for my current level of understanding, and luckily I had someone who I was in the class with to rely on for assistance with a lot of our assignments. Every professor at Wabash is willing to help you if you have questions. There are also plenty of other people around who are willing to help. If you live in a fraternity I'm sure there is someone in your house who has already taken the course you are struggling in. For independents you have classmates and people in your dorms who might know how to help. Most one hundred level courses have supplemental instruction, so you could ask them for help. The point is: wherever you go at Wabash, there will be someone who is in or was in the same position as you, and all you need to do is ask.

Advice from a sophomore

Paul Hawksworth '28

Reply to this opinion at
pdhawksw28@wabash.edu



Welcome to Wabash, class of 2029! We're glad to see all of you guys here and starting your Wabash journey. Most of you knew going to college would be a major adjustment before moving in on Ringing In Saturday or starting fall camp, but in that adjustment lies a lot of uncertainty that can easily be overwhelming. As a student who just finished his freshman year here at Wabash, I want to offer some advice that hopefully helps you adjust to college life.

As classes are starting and many of you are getting settled in your living units, I'm sure many of you are starting to feel homesick. It hits some worse than others, and for some, like me, it can be a major roadblock to building new friendships at college. My first piece of advice to you is don't be shy to call your parents, guardians, or friends from back home. Remember that when you're missing your family or friends that that feeling isn't a one-way street. Those people are going through their own adjustment of not having a friend around or their kid in the house too. As you start to feel at home on campus and form great new friendships, those feelings of homesickness will subside. Time will heal those wounds, but you have to be patient.

My second piece of advice for you is to be proactive both academically and socially. Arguably the single best change I made in college for my mental health was getting my coursework done as soon as I possibly could. Doing my work early had a couple of big benefits: 1) I had more time to get help and feedback from professors without having to rush through work and 2) completing work early meant I had true relaxation time during the day where I wasn't worried about an assignment I still needed to complete. Additionally, I set a personal

deadline not to do any work after a certain time unless urgent. That way I could effectively decompress at the end of every day.

When it comes to being proactive socially, I really just mean getting out of your room and attending some campus events. You'll meet people from different living units and build relationships that don't just revolve around school or sports. You'll feel like you belong on campus much more when you involve yourself with the campus and student body.

The last piece of advice I want to leave you with is to find whatever system works best for you. In the end, you know yourself better than anyone else does, and you know how to best manage your own time and energy. While I am encouraging you to be active socially and vigilant academically, you won't see great results if you overwhelm yourself. Even if it takes some trial and error, I trust that you are smart and mature enough to find your way to be successful. After all, you're off to a great start by choosing to attend Wabash College.

As you progress further into your freshman year, you may run into more challenges and confusion, but please don't be afraid to ask those older than you for advice. We're all part of the same brotherhood at Wabash and those around you want you to succeed. You're more than capable of being successful at Wabash and you have all the resources around you to help you be successful.



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“Earn Your Point” mentality pushes Track and Field to 2025 NCAC Outdoor Title

SEAN BLEDSOE '26
SPORTS EDITOR

Going into the 2025 North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) Outdoor Track and Field Championship, the Wittenberg University Tigers were the favorites, but the Little Giants stole the show on May 2 and 3 to earn their eleventh NCAC outdoor title.

How was the win possible? According to the athletes, it was Head Track and Field Coach Clyde Morgan's mindset that he preached for the weekend. Three simple words, "Earn your point!"

"It's simple: we believe every point counts, from first place, which earns ten points, down to eighth place, which earns one point," said Morgan. "We celebrate every contribution. If you fight hard for each point, they will add up."

Wabash fought for every point, and in the end the Little Giants racked up 172.5 total points. Denison University finished in second with 137.5 points, and in third place was the nationally ranked pre-championship favorite, Wittenberg University, with 130.5.

The team faced numerous challenges earlier in the season, but the group battled their way through adversity, making Coach Morgan exceptionally proud of their efforts.

"Our team culture really shone through with our motto: M.O.W.N.B.U. (Men of Wabash, Nothing Breaks Us)," said Morgan. "I knew we would give our all because we didn't compete

as fiercely as usual at the indoor championships. I encouraged the team to be free, tough, have fun and apply some pressure to create opportunities and they certainly delivered."

Dominance was the name of the game as Brayden Curnutt '25 won the 5,000-meter run and shattered the NCAC outdoor championship record by five seconds with a time of 14:40.54. Curnutt also took home NCAC Men's Distance/Mid-Distance Runner of the Year honors.

"I am fortunate to have a phenomenal coaching staff... They prioritize being life coaches first and track and field coaches second."

- Head Track and Field Coach Clyde Morgan

Three Little Giants claimed top four spots in the 800-meter run. Will Neubauer '25 won the event with a time of 1:52.84. Haiden Diemer-McKinney '26 and David Adesanya '27 came in second and fourth places, with Diemer-McKinney's performance good enough to earn all-conference honors.

Owen Smith '27 finished in second place in the 400-meter hurdles to receive all-conference honors, crossing the line in a personal-best effort of 54.83. Carter Leininger '28 came in fourth place in the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.77 and

was followed by Tanner Brooks '27 in eighth place, running 11.00.

Evan Furuness '26 was named the NCAC Men's Field Athlete of the Year after he won the shot put, placed third in the hammer throw and fourth in the discus.

Five other Wabash throwers secured top eight spots in the discus. Quinn Sholar '26 topped the list with his second-place finish with a distance of 45.83 meters that earned him all-conference honors. Teammates Jordan Tate '28, Jakob Van Pelt '28 and Jake Oostman '25 finished fifth, sixth and seventh, respectively.

Ryan Papandria '25 scored a fourth-place finish in the javelin throw with a launch of 51.61 meters, while Oostman finished sixth with a toss of 49.92 meters.

Kannon Chase '26 came in fourth place in the high jump with a season-best performance, clearing a height of 1.9 meters. Oostman placed sixth with a jump of 1.85 meters.

Mike Holsclaw '26 leaped 12.65 meters in the triple jump to come in seventh place.

All of the team's success was guided by the coaching staff comprised of Coach Morgan, Associate Head Coach Tyler McCreary and Assistant Coaches Emile Conde, Mitchell Kessler, Dillon Frederickson and emeritus coach Robert Johnson. Together, they were named the NCAC Men's Outdoor Track and Field Staff of the Year.

"I am fortunate to have a phenomenal coaching staff," said Morgan. "They prioritize being life coaches first and track and field coaches second. We genuinely care about developing the young men in our program. We believe in tough love, but for our scholar-athletes to trust that we care, they must first understand how deeply we are committed to helping them grow in toughness and resilience."

The championship in the spring marked Wabash's second consecutive outdoor title, but the focus now shifts to fall training, as the Little Giants set their sights on capturing their first indoor crown since 2023.

Final round frustration to first-year firepower

WILL DUNCAN '27
PHOTO EDITOR

After a rather disappointing end to the spring semester, the Wabash College Golf Team is ready to come back stronger than ever. Wabash finished fifth overall in the 2025 North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) Golf Tournament, after dropping from third towards the end of the tournament.

Now, the team is focused on redemption and hungrier than ever to prove themselves. Led by two seniors returning from the 2025 conference roster, Sean Bledsoe '26 and Liam McAllister '26, the team will look to lean on their veteran leadership on and off the course. Bledsoe finished runner-up at the 2025 NCAC Golf Championships in the men's final standings, while McAllister tied for 26th.

McAllister spoke about how he plans to demonstrate senior leadership throughout the year.

"I plan on working hard and practicing effectively," said McAllister. "If we can focus hard during the later practices, we can keep the upward trend that this program has going."

A big part of the upward trend has to do with the arrival of this year's recruiting class that Head Coach Justin Kopp '21 brought in. With the Class of 2029 already breaking recent records in terms of class size, the golf team hopes they too can benefit from the influx of young talent.

"I'm excited to see how our underclassmen can develop through

out the year," said McAllister. "We have a lot of talent and potential in these younger classes, and it'll be a lot of fun to help them progressively get better."

With nine incoming freshmen and only four upperclassmen, the team is extremely young, but the talent is absolutely there.

Coach Kopp optimistically spoke on the freshmen talent.

"This is the most talented freshmen class I've had as a coach, and I'm very excited for their development both as golfers and young men," said Kopp.

Though the talent and potential of the team is intriguing, the team is confident they can still compete with the best teams right now.

"We need to shift towards a tournament mindset," said Kopp. "Things like using course management strategies along with playing smarter golf will be the keys to our success."

Despite the team's youth, the combination of veteran leadership and promising newcomers gives Wabash every reason to be optimistic. With talent all across the board and a renewed sense of purpose and competitiveness, the team isn't just building for the future, they're ready to win now. That mindset will soon be put to the test as their season tees off on Saturday, August 30th, in Lexington, Kentucky at the Transylvania University Invitational.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NCAC

The Wabash College Track and Field Team after their 2025 NCAC Outdoor Championship victory.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NCAC

Head Golf Coach Justin Kopp '21 and Sean Bledsoe '26 walk off the 10th hole tee box on May 4, 2025 at Otter Creek Golf Course during the playoff for individual medalist at the 2025 NCAC Golf Championship.

New strides for the Redpack

SEAN BLEDSOE '26
SPORTS EDITOR

The Wabash Redpack will begin to set their pace next weekend in Shelbyville, Indiana at the Franklin College Grizzly Invitational, but they will have a drastically different group leading the way. After the departure of four key seniors last year in Brayden Curnutt '25, Will Neubauer '25, Justin Santiago '25 and Jacob Sitzman '25, the Redpack will see new senior leadership in Haiden Diemer-McKinney '26 and Thomas Price '26.

Head Cross Country Coach Tyler McCreary is excited to have two seniors that have already contributed so much to the program in their first three years.

"Our seniors are going to be instrumental in terms of leadership both culturally and how our program operates," said McCreary. "The guys who have been here for four years have seen incredible transitions as well as the highest of highs and lowest of lows. They get to help our young team see the path to being as good as we can be early."

The senior duo will look to maintain the caliber of expectations established by Curnutt and company. It's safe to say that Curnutt, who shattered multiple Wabash and NCAC records last year, set the bar for what the future of distance running at Wabash should look like.

"The seniors from this past season set a standard — one that's built on consistency, discipline and grit," said Diemer-McKinney. "My goal is to carry those values not just for this season, but for years to come."

Those concepts may seem like they apply to the physical side of things when it comes to running long distances, but in all reality, they apply to the mental side more.

"Running is more mental than people realize, so getting our guys to

unlock their potential by just telling themselves they can is just as powerful as the hours and hours of training we put in," said Diemer-McKinney.

The team has seven freshmen this season to instill those morals into, and for McCreary, it is all about communication.

"Our freshmen come from many different areas and have a wide range of training backgrounds," said McCreary. "Meeting the freshmen in terms of where they are in training and mentality is so crucial. We don't throw anyone into the fire and demand anything they aren't truly ready to handle. Each one of them will have a different trajectory to find out how good they can be and our open lines of communication drive that."

As for Diemer-McKinney, he sees himself as the kind of senior that leads by example but also with an open line of communication.

"I want to set an example and be a positive light and energy that the underclassmen can go to when they're struggling," said Diemer-McKinney. "Getting acclimated to the college lifestyle as a student-athlete can be difficult, so I want to be a resource for the freshmen to make the transition as stress-free as possible."

For both the veterans and new-comers, however, McCreary wants to emphasize taking small steps to develop throughout the duration of the season.

"We used the idea of 'How do you eat an elephant?' — one bite at a time — to get the idea of focusing on the process each day," said McCreary. "Doing the little things to become more professional in our craft in order to get to where we want as a team and individually."

The Redpack will take one stride (and bite) at a time as they look to become a force to be reckoned with in the NCAC.

Welcome to Wabash!



The Wabash Club of Indianapolis sponsors events and projects to support Wabash.

Here are just a few examples:

Community Service: W.A.B.A.S.H. Day

Connection: Monthly After-Work Get-Togethers

Education: Moot Court and Faculty-Alumni-Staff Symposium

Fun: Bash Before the Bell and Mitchum Crock Golf Outing

Recognition: Leadership Breakfast and Scholar-Athlete Award

Support: Admissions and Career Services

Welcome: Back to School Bash and New Faculty Reception

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Humble and hungry: The Jake Gilbert '98 era begins at Wabash

HAIDEN DIEMER-MCKINNEY '26
STAFF WRITER

There's a fresh energy buzzing around Little Giant Stadium this fall, one that starts with a familiar face. Head Football Coach and Defensive Coordinator Jake Gilbert '98 is here to lead the program he once suited up for. Gilbert isn't just bringing his playbook; he's establishing a culture built on mentorship and toughness.

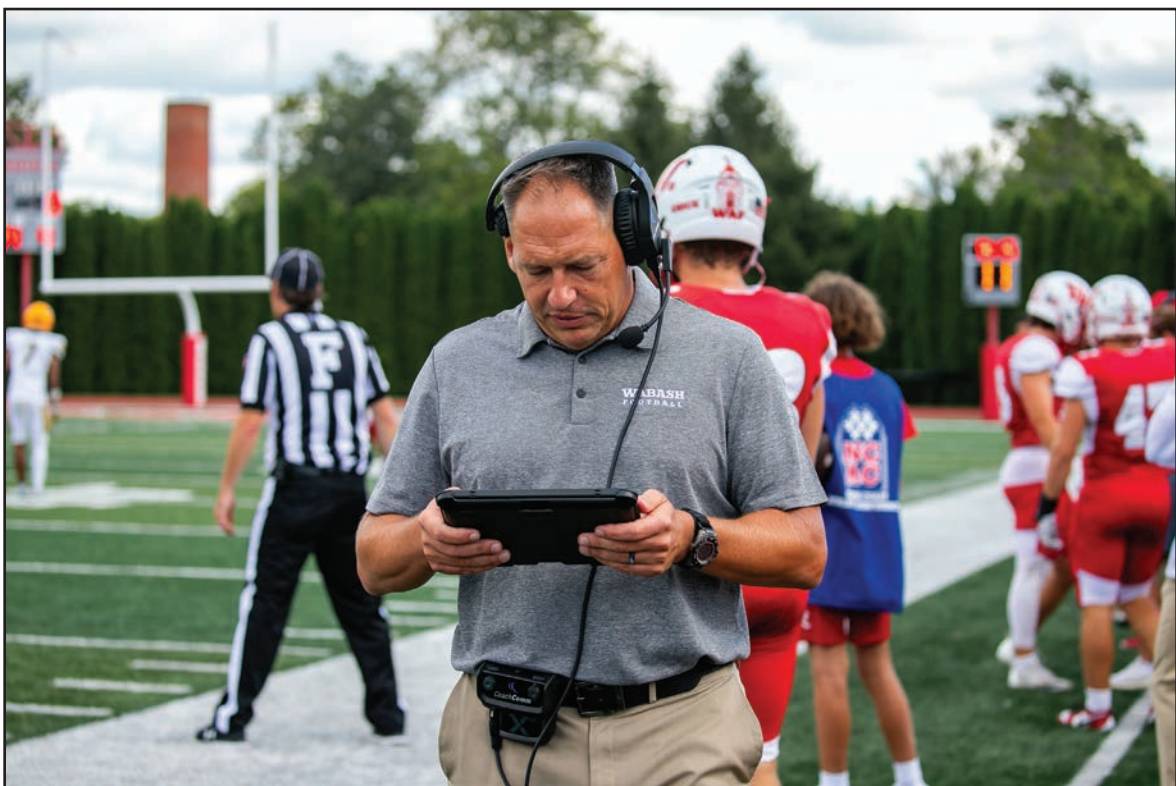
Picked second in the NCAC pre-season poll, the Little Giants sit just behind defending champion DePauw, despite not receiving a single first-place vote. After an 8-3 season in 2024, Wabash enters 2025 ready to prove the projections wrong, even in the competitive North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC).

Wabash brings back an offense that moved the ball and lit up the scoreboard last fall. The Little Giants piled up 1,801 rushing yards, 46 total touchdowns and 33.5 points per game in 2024, all good for second in the NCAC and finished third in total offense with 4,034 all-purpose yards.

At quarterback, Brand Campbell '27 enters his second season under center after being thrown into the fire last September when Blake White went down with an injury in Week 2. Despite missing those early reps, he finished with 1,939 passing yards and 19 touchdowns — third best in the league. In 2025, he'll benefit from gathering new perspectives from new offensive coordinator Casey Gillin working in a fresh scheme. Now with a full offseason of conditioning and film study, Campbell has the chance to elevate the passing game even further.

"My confidence has skyrocketed since last year," said Campbell. "I took my diet and conditioning a lot more seriously this offseason, and I feel like twice the athlete I was last year. I feel faster and mentally stronger, not only from a football perspective, but an emotional one as well."

"I think Brand put in the best



Head Football Coach Jake Gilbert '98 examines his tablet during last year's season opening game on September 7, 2024, at Little Giant Stadium against St. Norbert College.

summer he's ever had, and his body is in better shape than it's ever been," said Coach Gilbert. "He clearly had a more disciplined summer with his conditioning. He looks faster, and I'm more excited about him in the run game than I was in the spring. I feel great that he took that level of leadership and commitment."

The ground game should remain the foundation of the offense thanks to the fierce one-two punch of Xavier Tyler '26 and Cole Dickerson '28 in the backfield. Tyler, the NCAC's rushing champ, led the conference with 1,091 yards and was the only back to eclipse the 1,000-yard mark in 2024. Alongside him, Dickerson piled up 401 yards and seven touchdowns on the ground, the latter of which was second among freshman backs in the conference. Together, they give Wabash one of the most exciting running back duos in the league.

Up front, the offensive line will look a little different. The Little Giants lost three All-NCAC selections from last year's unit, but the leader remains in Quinn Sholar '26, a three-time first-team All-NCAC tackle and 2025 D3football.com Preseason All-American. Sholar will guide a group that mixes youth with key transfers, including Lucas Copenhaver '27 from Marshall University.

"From all three years I've played here, this is definitely the least size we've had on the offensive line, but it's the toughest we've been as a unit," said Sholar. "I think we're going to play more, hard nosed, downhill, straight-to-the-football type plays. We're not trying to get around anyone, we're going straight through the middle gaps and right up the hash marks."

If there's one thing opposing teams know about facing Wabash, it's that moving the ball won't come

easy. The Little Giants return nearly all of their defensive core from a unit that finished near the top of the conference a season ago, piling up 35 sacks, 15 interceptions and seven fumble recoveries.

The secondary is anchored by Mike Holsclaw '26, a first-team All-NCAC selection whose four interceptions tied for second in the conference. At linebacker, the Little Giants boast a loaded group led by Gavin Ruppert '26, who earned second-team honors after tallying 96 tackles—third most in the NCAC. He's joined by fellow linebacker Sam Ringer '26 and defensive end Jerry McBee '26 off the edge, both second-team selections last fall.

"I think we should have the flexibility to go do a lot of different things on defense," said Gilbert. "With great players at each level and most of them in the second year of the system, I expect improvement."

With experienced seniors at every level and depth behind them, this defense expects to set the tone and field one of the most feared units in the NCAC.

"What makes this group special is how long we've been doing it together," said Ruppert. "Most of us have started since freshman or sophomore year, and we have seen all the ups and downs and gone through it together, which builds a high level of trust. Our closeness comes from three years of holding each other accountable and truly wanting everyone to succeed."

Every season has its checkpoints and the 2025 schedule is loaded with opportunities to make statements. The journey begins with a trip up to St. Norbert, a team the Little Giants shut out 31-0 at home last fall. In Week 2, the Little Giants host Case Western Reserve, who'll be making its first visit to Crawfordsville since 1948. There's also a new chapter to write in University Heights, Ohio, squaring off against John Carroll in the Blue Streaks' debut season as an NCAC member. Denison comes to town for Homecoming, a team Wabash has split its last six meetings with. And then, of course, the School Down South makes its 29-mile trip to Little Giant Stadium on November 15th for the 131st Monon Bell Classic. 2025 will be filled with its hills and valleys, but the Little Giants are poised to learn from the adversities of 2024 to attack the challenges that await them this fall.

"Coach Gilbert has reinforced to lean back on the habits we build when we need them the most," said Campbell. "When we go into those big games like John Carroll or the Bell game, we'll lean back on what we did in the off season and what we've learned in the meeting rooms as well."

The Little Giants open the season at St. Norbert on Saturday, September 6, an opportunity to silence a hungry opponent and launch 2025 with a statement victory.

Peeples hired as new Athletic Director

SEAN BLEDSOE '26
SPORTS EDITOR
HAIDEN DIEMER-MCKINNEY '26
STAFF WRITER

There is a sense of optimism in the Wabash College athletics department as they welcome a fresh era of leadership. The College has hired Jim Peeples as its new Director of Athletics and Recreation following the departure of Matt Tanney '05 earlier this summer in June 2025. Peeples officially began his tenure on August 11 and is eager to create a vision for growth and excellence for all 12 athletics programs.

"Part of the attraction to this place are the unique things that make Wabash special and the unique traditions," said Peeples.

With a strong background in athletics leadership at the Division III level, he is stepping into the role with excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead.

Peeples earned his bachelor's degree from Westminster College in Pennsylvania before completing a master's degree in athletic administration at Slippery Rock University. Interestingly enough, he was the first person in his family to earn a college education.

"My mom was a single parent trying to figure out how she was going to put two boys through school," said Peeples.

Wabash prides itself on the number of first-generation students that are enrolled, but Peeples didn't realize that until he was en-route for his on-campus interview. Coming from a high-financial need background, he understood the pressure that rests on the shoulders of first-generation men at Wabash, and he feels the connection with those who share a similar script. Peeples' academic foundation laid the groundwork for a long career in both coaching success and administrative leadership within collegiate athletics.

He began his coaching career as an assistant in both football and baseball at Wesleyan University before serving as an assistant baseball coach at Methodist College for nine years. In 2001, Peeples was named the head baseball coach at Piedmont University, where he led the program for 15 seasons.

In addition to his coaching duties, he also served as Piedmont's assistant athletic director



Athletic Director Jim Peeples speaks to freshmen student-athletes on August 25, 2025, during Freshmen Athletic Orientation in Salter Hall.

throughout his time there. Peeples also held key leadership positions at the national level. He served as chair of the NCAA Division III Baseball Championships from 2015–17 and was chair of the NCAA Division III Baseball South Region from 2013–17, roles that highlighted his commitment to advancing the student-athlete experience across Division III athletics.

It's safe to say that Peeples possesses a mindset that prioritizes athletes.

"The coaches within the search committee had our students in mind when we were looking for our next leader of the athletic department," said Head Basketball Coach Kyle Brumett. "Peeples' ability to relate to students that are similar to the ones that choose Wabash and the way he was able to build the programs he led as a Division III coach allowed him to stand out."

But you may be wondering how Peeples found an interest in an all-male college in the middle of Indiana, and the answer lies no further than Wabash's Head Baseball Coach and former interim-Athletic Director, Jake Martin '03. After the Division III Baseball Championship wrapped up in early June, Peeples received a phone call from Coach Martin. During that conversation, Coach mentioned the Director of Athletics and Recreation position opened up and asked Peeples to throw his name into the hat. Before Peeples could give an answer, he asked Coach Martin a

question.

"Jake, you were doing a really good job at DePauw when you took over as the head coach," said Peeples. "You were starting to elevate that program, why did you leave to go back to Wabash?"

As Coach Martin was explaining his experience as a Wabash man and the college's head baseball coach, Peeples began to realize how remarkable the institution is. From there, Peeples applied and the rest is history.

Now at Wabash, Peeples seeks to guide an athletic department that blends tradition with ambition. His priorities center on supporting student-athletes, strengthening programs and continuing the College's mission of excellence in both academics and athletics.

"We see his passion is supporting the staff and being the coach of the coaches," said Brumett. "But he's also looking to be coached and have that collaboration with us. Having someone to talk through the obstacles and support through the highs and lows is a trait that sold a lot of people at Wabash."

The most important goal for Peeples, however, is simple: to learn.

"I have to put myself in a mindset of learning every day and be really intentional about learning new processes and learning new traditions," said Peeples. "I want to make sure along the way that hopefully I'm being respectful of all those things as I am trying to learn."

Soccer shoots to send a message

ANTONIO GRANDINETTI '28
STAFF WRITER

As we approach another start to the fall sports season at Wabash, a majority of the focus leans towards the football team as they prepare another campaign on the gridiron. Some of the focus, however, should shift to the pitch where the Little Giant soccer team aims to improve from a 10-6-2 overall record (3-4-1 NCAC record) last year.

The NCAC Preseason Coach's Poll had Denison at the top with 78 points, including six first-place votes. Kenyon followed up in a close second place with 71 points and two first-place votes. As for Wabash, they came in sixth place with 33 points, two spots lower than last year's preseason poll. It is safe to say the coaches in the conference maintain low expectations for this Little Giant program, but we can always count on every player wearing the sacred scarlet and white to fight.

This lack of faith from conference foes, however, raises an intriguing question: Who will step up? Will all the pressure fall on the five seniors who were starters last season? Could it come from juniors that already have significant experience? Or maybe it is time for rising sophomores or even a couple of freshmen to break the script and lift a team that, under the leadership of Head Soccer Coach Chris Keller, has seen better days.

But Keller has plenty of optimism and confidence, especially with the team's mindset. "We aren't hungrier to get more results, but we are hungrier to play the game well, execute our jobs, and bring the blue collar Wabash soccer

back. That will bring the results."

Wabash opens its season with two matches at Fischer Field on August 29 and 31 against Franklin College and Manchester University. The Grizzly Cubs are coming off of a winless season that resulted in a 0-14-4 record. They look to turn the tide as they attempt to earn their first win since September 30, 2023. The Spartans enter this season after a 4-7-5 performance in 2024, which saw them struggle to a 1-4-4 record in conference play. So on paper, Wabash looms large as the favorite in both contests.

Jose Escalante '26, a senior and reigning captain, mentioned that he is "excited for the start of the season and to lead this team. With the talent we have, we'll be fighting at the top of the conference."

Soccer is not Escalante's only focus, which is reflected by his nomination for the Inaugural All-State/NACDA Good Works Team — an award that recognizes student-athletes across all collegiate sports and divisions for their leadership in community service, academics, and athletics.

"I am very grateful to Wabash and Crawfordsville for the support we received in our community activities," said Escalante. "For me, it was truly rewarding to see parents happy and kids excited to play soccer. We shared food, cultures, and most importantly, the love for the community — guiding the children to understand what it means to love sports."

Escalante, alongside his fellow seniors Myles Bernat '26, Niall Gavin '26, Jesse Martinez '26 and Angel Vazquez '26 are ready to prove that Wabash should not be counted out this season.



Myles Bernat '26 surveys the field as Niall Gavin '26 watches on September 18, 2024, during last year's match against Hanover at Fischer Field.