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# Rhetoric Newsletter

August 2019



Rhetoric Majors Class of 2019

Back row: Dalton Vachon, Andrew Tandy, Preston Mays, Brad Cullison, George Pippen, Russell Berning. Middle row: Brock Heffron, Tanner Skeel, Kyle McAtee, Jacob Helmer, Jaleel Grandberry, SaVonne Bennette, Ronald Ryan. Front row: Christian Wirtz, Connor Armuth, Myles Johnson, John Janak, Michael Ortiz. *Not pictured: Sawyer Donovan, Cruz Paulino-Salazar, Ryan Reeder*

## Message from the Chair, Sara Drury

Hello, Rhetoric alumni! On behalf of the Rhetoric Department at Wabash College, thank you for your interest and support of the College and our department. My colleagues and I appreciate the opportunity to work with current Wabash students, and as you'll see in this newsletter, there is much to be excited about in our department and on campus. After serving for eight years as Rhetoric Department Chair, **Professor Jennifer Abbott** spent this year as Co-Chair of Division II, Humanities & Fine Arts. Congratulations are due to Professor Abbott, as the College promoted her to Full Professor this spring. **Professor Todd McDorman** spent the spring on research sabbatical leave. **Professor Jeff Drury** returned from his 2017-2018 research sabbatical leave, and we were fortunate to have **Professor Cory Geraths** continue as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Rhetoric this year. As you might have realized from the title of this message, this year after returning from my sabbatical, I stepped into the role of Department Chair.



The Rhetoric Department continues to attract students with diverse interests. At the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, 57 students were Rhetoric majors and 25 were Rhetoric minors. Our department is involved with several of the College's interdisciplinary minors, including Business and Gender Studies. Additionally, the WDPD had 12 students take part as Democracy Fellows, with another 10 students serving as Volunteer Affiliates in the program.

The Department continued sponsoring its traditional events, including Moot Court, the Baldwin Oratorical Contest, and the Brigance Forum Lecture. Additionally, this year, the Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society offered a lunch session for undergraduates focusing on the Rhetoric major, Professor Cory Geraths and Professor Jeff Drury supervised undergraduate research projects, and I led a group of students on a Wabash College immersion trip to study deliberative innovations in Scotland.

My colleagues and I look forward to sharing updates on our work, our students, and our departmental activities through this newsletter. We thank you for your enthusiasm and support, as it continues to positively impact students on campus.

## Brigance Forum Lecture

By Benjamin Manahan '21

On March 21, 2019, Dr. Jeffrey A. Bennett, Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Vanderbilt University, visited campus to deliver the 35th Annual Brigance Forum Lecture. Dr. Bennett has published many book- and article-length projects including *Banning Queer Blood: Rhetorics of Citizenship, Contagion, and Resistance*. During his visit, Dr. Bennett attended lunch with several students and faculty, led a class discussion in a gender studies class, and delivered his lecture, titled "'Equal Dignity' Under the Law: Affective Rhetorics and Civic Belonging in the Obergefell v. Hodges Decision," at the Annual Brigance Forum.

In his lecture, Dr. Bennett thoroughly explained what an ideograph is in the political and social sphere and how "dignity," as an ideograph, plays a role in politics and law. He showed how ideographs, such as dignity, can be found within politics and law, whether it be a tweet from the Vice President or the word choice by a judge in a court ruling. Like other ideographs, such as "liberty" and "equality," Dr. Bennett labels "dignity" as an ideograph that tends to be progressive by nature and reflects an attitude of the times and experiences as a citizen. Dr. Bennett, more specifically, claims that this ideograph is particularly effective in the issue of same-sex marriage rights. He continued on with examples from a recent ruling back in June of 2015 regarding the civil rights case of *Obergefell v. Hodges* that led to the legalization of same-sex marriage. In his conclusion, Dr. Bennett finished his lecture by explaining the importance of this ideograph as liberty and equality are not always the best ideographs for legal cases and issues of personhood. As active members of society, we should be aware of these ideographs, their meanings, and their uses.

As a rhetoric major at Wabash College, I can honestly say Dr. Bennett's lecture was not only informative but eye-opening as well. Much like Wabash College pushing its students to think critically, Dr. Bennett's lecture encouraged the audience to think deeper about the rhetorical power words can often carry in political and judicial discourse. His lecture reminds us that many words and ideographs are often attached to political parties, but some hold more weight and significance in different scenarios and issues. It is on us, as active participants in society, to uncover the intent and sometimes abstract meaning of the words given to us by lawmakers and politicians.

## Lambda Pi Eta

Undergraduate Communication Honor Society

We inducted three new members to Wabash's Alpha Gamma Nu chapter of Lambda Pi Eta (LPH), the national communication honors society: **Zachary Havlin '19**; **John Janak '19**; and **Christian Wirtz '19**. To be inducted into this society, students must meet GPA and rank requirements both in Rhetoric and in their overall undergraduate coursework. **Walker Hedgepath '19** served as the LPH President for a second year. Members of LPH emceed the Baldwin Oratorical Contest and organized two events for the campus. First, they arranged an informal lunch for all interested Rhetoric majors or minors to meet current majors and faculty. This was a great opportunity to mingle and discuss the department's happenings.

The second event was a panel discussion featuring two Wabash alumni, **Mike Myers '11** and **Michael Smith '16**, and one Wabash professor, **Dr. Deborah Seltzer-Kelley**, about the rhetoric of education. This event helped educate current students interested in careers in education about how education professionals use communication in their everyday lives.



New LPH inductees **John Janak '19**, **Zachary Havlin '19**, and **Christian Wirtz '19** with LPH President **Walker Hedgepath '19**.

# 2019 Los Angeles Professional Immersion Experience (PIE) Trip



Students listen to **Brian Confer '01** talk about starting his own business and using marketing strategies to generate customers.

During Spring Break, **Jeff Drury** and **Alejandro Reyna '17**, CIBE Fellow for Professional Development, coordinated a week-long PIE trip for current students to explore careers in marketing. They learned about marketing for two days on campus before flying to Los Angeles to meet with marketing executives in their workplaces.

The four alumni visits included a variety of industries. They met with **Brian Confer '01** to learn about his entrepreneurial enterprise, The Headshot Truck; with **Andrea James '89** to learn about her public advocacy work in the community; with **Chris Mehl '05** to learn about programming at the Disney Channel; and with **Steve Miller '08** to learn about marketing Red Bull in the United States. They also participated in a networking dinner attended by more than 35 alumni in the Los Angeles area! Overall, it was an excellent professional development experience for the students. Read Charlie Brewer's story in the next column.



Students learn from **Steve Miller '08** about marketing Red Bull in the United States

## Charlie Brewer '20

The Wabash College Los Angeles Professional Immersion Experience (PIE) Trip was an experience I will not soon forget. Going into the program, I had very little knowledge of marketing and how it worked with communication; after completion, I was much more versed in the marketing world. To start the program, we had a classroom portion of the trip where we learned many basic marketing strategies such as The Four Ps Model (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) and looked at case studies. After the couple days of classroom work, we boarded a flight to Los Angeles, California to meet with four Wabash Alumni at three different businesses (The Headshot Truck, Red Bull, and The Disney Channel) to talk about how they market their businesses. While we were only in Los Angeles for a couple of days, we got to experience a lot of different views when it came to marketing and communication. It was great that we had the chance to look around the city to experience first hand how different companies communicate with their customers. Upon completion of the PIE Trip, I felt more confident in understanding what exactly marketing was and how it works.

Being a rhetoric major at Wabash, marketing had always been an interest of mine even though not having any real professional experience. My major has prepped me very well for hopefully a career in marketing by teaching me to take a closer look at all forms of rhetoric. Reasoning and Advocacy, and Persuasion (both Rhetoric courses at Wabash) lead me to be able to understand marketing easier. Both these courses played a significant role in my experience over the PIE Trip. I repeatedly called back upon the material I learned to make a more effective marketing plan or to help myself or someone else better understand a topic. Overall, the Los Angeles PIE Trip was a great eye-opening experience to me and allowed me to learn what exactly the marketing field is and how complex it can be.

I want to thank Wabash College and many others who have contributed to allowing students to have these experiences.



One of the headshots Charlie received at the Headshot Truck

## Moot Court

Each October, **Professor Todd McDorman** coordinates the Wabash College Moot Court competition, a partnership between the Rhetoric Department and the Indianapolis Association of Wabash Men, in which teams of two argue a mock appellate case. 2018 was a landmark year for Wabash College moot court as it represented our 25th competition. Over the years several hundred different Wabash students have participated as well as scores of alumni and many faculty who also have served as judges. In fact, the program has matured to the point that many of today's judges were themselves once participants in the competition and many past participants have gone on to distinguished careers in not only law but other fields as well. In addition to the students at the center of the competition we have been fortunate to have the support of Wabash College and, in particular, individuals such as program co-founder **Matt Griffith '89**, **Seamus Boyce '03**, **Tom Fisher '91**, **Jane Ann Himsel**, and **David Timmerman** (who organized 14 of the competitions). A special note of thanks goes to **Scott Himsel '85**, who in many respects co-directs the competition; **Rick Pitts '83**, who for many years wrote the cases used in the competition; and **Jon Pactor '71**, who always puts together our excellent program and recruits the alumni judges for the Saturday preliminary rounds.



2018 Moot Court Participants

The 2018 Wabash Moot Court problem was a variation on *Johnson v. United States*, a recent Seventh Circuit case. The case considered the circumstances in which police can reasonably approach and search a parked car based on a suspected parking violation. It raised interesting questions related to the Fourth Amendment, probable cause, and reasonable suspicion. In this instance these questions intersected with social issues in regards to the neighborhoods or locations in which such seizures generally take place.

We had a strong field of competitors again this past year with 37 students in the preliminary rounds. Our finalists represented all four class years: **Nathan Gray '20**, **Erich Lange '19**, **Kwaku Sarpong '22**, and **Jake Vermeulen '21**. Kwaku Sarpong was named Top Advocate, marking only the second time in program history a first year student has won. It was another outstanding competition, with the alumni organizing committee and the alumni and faculty who serve as judges during the competition providing an excellent experience for the students.

You can see the final round on the College's [YouTube channel](#) and read more about the competition on the College's [website](#).



2018 Top Advocate **Kwaku Sarpong '22** with finals round judging panel of Professor of History **Stephen Morillo**, Indiana Court of Appeals Senior Judge **Carr L. Darden**, Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice **Loretta H. Rush**, and Mr. **George T. Patton '84** of Bose McKinney & Evans LLP.



## Joseph O'Rourke Prize



Senior Ronald Ryan presents his research on Donald Trump and LeBron James

**Ronald Ryan '19** won the 2019 Joseph O'Rourke Prize. The faculty in the Rhetoric Department award the prize each year to the best senior project. The prize is a gift to the department in honor of longtime speech professor Joseph O'Rourke. Ronald's essay, "Language and Society: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Versatility of Language Using Donald Trump and LeBron James," was a careful and striking analysis about black masculinity, humor, and political argumentation through social media. Ronald also shared his work with campus, presenting the essay this past January as part of the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work.

## 2019 Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, & Creative Work

This year, Rhetoric Department seniors gave six presentations as part of the 19th Annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work. Each January, Wabash College celebrates the accomplishments of students' research projects through an afternoon event of presentations from all three divisions. In addition to **Ronald Ryan '19** presenting his senior project in rhetoric, four other students presented theirs: **Brock Heffron '19** ("Empathy and the #MeToo Movement: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Case of Aziz Ansari"), **John Janak '19** ("Donald Trump: A Rhetorical Enemy or a Rhetorical Genius?"), **Kyle McAtee '19** ("A Critical Look at Brokeback Mountain: How it Shifts Society's Thoughts Towards Equality"), and **Christian Wirtz '19** ("A Local Legend: Lew Wallace and the Significance of Small Museums"). Given these interesting topics, it is no surprise that several of these presentations had standing room only for the audience! Congratulations are due to all five seniors who represented the department and offered compelling critical takes on a variety of rhetorical artifacts.

The sixth presentation was a collaborative research project by Rhetoric majors **Jacob Helmer '19** and **Christian Wirtz '19**, and Rhetoric minor **Oliver Page '19**. These three students co-presented their research, undertaken with **Professor Cory Geraths**, entitled "Remembering a Queer Worldmaker: The Rhetoric of the Andy Warhol Museum." You can read more about this collaborative research on page 7.



Students, faculty, staff, and friends of the College listen attentively to presentations at the Celebration.



Senior **Christian Wirtz '19** presents his senior project on public memory in local museums.

# Baldwin Oratorical Contest

by Ryan Horner

originally from [Wabash College News](#)

At the beginning of February, **Joey Lenkey '19** was helping curate the speakers for TEDx at Wabash College—and two weeks later it showed during his winning speech at this year's Baldwin Oratorical Contest.

"I wanted it to be like a TED talk, where the audience leaves the event thinking in a whole new way, as opposed to leaving with a simple list of things to do," Lenkey says. According to the event judges, he did just that.

The contest's four finalists were asked to respond to the theme "Wabash's Future" by advocating concrete actions to improve the College as we look forward to its 200th anniversary in 2032.



The contestants and judges for the 145th Annual Baldwin Oratorical Contest

Their ideas didn't fall on deaf ears. The judges for the contest this year were three administrators with power to change the College's path: **Kendra Cooks**, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer; **Scott Feller**, Dean of the College; and **Marc Welch**, Associate Dean of Students.

"It says something special about this place that key administrators take the time to hear from student contestants about how we move forward as a College," says **Dr. Sara Drury**, who chairs the Rhetoric Department and helped coordinate the event. "We're very thankful to the judges for giving their time and energy to judge the contest."

Lenkey's outside-the-box thinking impressed the judges. His speech, "How Could Data Improve Our Diminishing Social Life?" tied his experiences tracking patient outcomes at an internship with IU Health to the potential for tracking data on the College's social life.

**Ian Gale '22** and **Benjamin Manahan '21** both advocated for new approaches to mental health on campus and came in second and third place, respectively. In fourth place was **Dalton Vachon '19**, who explored options for a new student union on campus.

"We appreciated Joey's approach," Feller said during the presentation of awards. "He asked us to consider measuring what we don't always think of as measurable in order to find ways we can make Wabash better."



Joey Lenkey '19, Ian Gale '22, Dalton Vachon '19, and Benjamin Manahan '21

Lenkey is a Global Health Initiative fellow and a member of Phi Gamma Delta who is looking at medical or graduate school next year. In the meantime, he says, he'll stay busy. "I've still got homework to do tonight!"

In its 145th year, the Wabash College Baldwin Oratorical Contest began in 1873 as a gift from the late **D.P. Baldwin**, a longtime trustee of the College, who endowed an award to be given each year to the Wabash students who "compose and pronounce the best orations."

Just as they did in 1873, the top three finalists received a cash award and the complete works of William Shakespeare.

# The Lasting Impact of RHE 101

By Chris McNally '21

*Rhetoric Department Note: Several years ago, we reoriented our Public Speaking (RHE 101) class around the themes of civic engagement and democratic participation. We assign a persuasion speech that requires students to address a community problem. Occasionally, students continue to pursue that issue beyond the class. Chris McNally is one such student, so we asked him to share his story.*

Since I was young, I have always desired to engage with my community actively. In the second semester of my freshman year, I took Rhetoric 101, which proved to be extremely beneficial. When **Dr. Abbott** assigned us to a civic engagement persuasive speech, I finally had the opportunity to pursue an issue within our community. After meeting with Mayor Barton numerous times, I decided to dig into the Section 8 Housing problems in Crawfordsville. Section 8 Housing refers to federal aid or housing assistance for low-income, disabled, or elderly people.

Once I completed the speech, I realized there was so much more that could be done as I realized how serious Section 8 Housing Subsidies were to our community. A few weeks later, I met with **Roland Morin '91**, Director of the CIBE at Wabash College, who allowed me to further this project. I spent my sophomore year researching and interviewing people in the community, alongside **Andrew Gonczarow '22**, to learn more about the issue and to suggest ways to improve the current problems with subsidies.

Without taking Rhetoric 101, none of this would have been possible. Although I am not a rhetoric major or minor, I have utilized this field of study to engage with my community actively!



Chris McNally '21 and Andrew Gonczarow '22

# Andy Warhol & RHE 388

In Fall of 2018, **Professor Cory Geraths** teamed up with **Professor Karen Quandt** (Modern Languages/French) to offer an independent study with three Rhetoric students: **Jacob Helmer '19** (Rhetoric major), **Oliver Page '19** (Rhetoric minor), and **Christian Wirtz '19** (Rhetoric major). The independent study was focused, broadly, on the intersections of rhetoric, art, archives, and sexuality. More specifically, however, the class explored the public memory and queer legacy of Andy Warhol. The goals of the independent study were to both explore the topics above and, also, to make progress on a co-authored analysis of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This project has long been of interest to Professor Geraths, since his days as a graduate student at Penn State. However, due to required work on other projects, he had not yet been able to complete it. And, in a moment of serendipity, he discovered that Professor Quandt possessed both a personal interest and academic background on Warhol and his art. And so the idea of an team-taught and interdisciplinary independent study was born!

In order to make progress on the co-authored essay, students met twice a week with Professor Geraths to discuss literature on public memory and queer identity and to collaboratively write the analysis. Students also met once a week with Professor Quandt for lecture and discussion on Warhol's biography, artistic contributions, and legacy. While financial and other constraints prevented the group from travelling to Pittsburgh to see the museum itself, students had full access to photo archives (containing over 1,000 images of the museum's layout and exhibited pieces) from Professor Geraths' previous visits (one of which was funded by a Wabash Coss faculty development grant). We all did, however, take an excursion to visit a Warhol exhibit at the Lubeznik Center for the Arts in Michigan City, Indiana (funded by the Dean's Office, see image below). This allowed the students to see Warhol's work up close and to consider how his legacy was rhetorically positioned for audiences in a museum space. Work on the essay continues, and Professor Geraths is grateful for the invaluable contributions of Jacob, Oliver, and Christian as well as the work of his friend and colleague, Professor Quandt! The independent study was a remarkable experience, and Professor Geraths' project on Warhol is better off for it!



Professors **Geraths** and **Quandt** with **Oliver Page '19**, **Christian Wirtz '19**, and **Jacob Helmer '19**.

# Researching Wabash Admissions Messaging

By Brad Cullison '19



Over the course of the past semester, I had the opportunity to do an Independent Study within the rhetoric department with **Professor Jeff Drury** over the admissions and marketing strategies of Wabash College and the Office of Admissions. Prior to this semester, I was looking for a project that could combine my future career field with my passion for Wabash

College and its perception to the immediate community and beyond. When diving into different options for my project, I had choices in mind such as the new marketing campaign of the College, marketing strategies of small colleges in general, opinions of the Wabash experience or a survey of pre-Wabash expectations versus post-Wabash reflections. But something that ultimately stuck out to me throughout this decision-making process was a booklet from the Office of Admissions that Dr. Drury asked me to reflect upon during the oral portion of my rhetoric major Comprehensive Examinations. It made me question my perspective of the admissions process that ultimately led to me coming to Wabash and how it has changed in the past few years. With this idea in mind, I decided the best course of action was to look at how a vast majority of those in the Wabash community first experience the College: The Office of Admissions.

The purpose of this assignment was to be a rhetorical study into Wabash College's tactics of branding a small, traditional institution in an ever-changing social and academic climate to prospective students. Meant to be a research project into the various statistics, targeted demographics, themes and persuasion typical of small college admission processes, I was

grateful to receive one of every physical material (pamphlets, mailers, postcards, infographics) currently in rotation within the admissions process here at Wabash. I set to work researching articles about the controlled and organized image, individual student outreach and the perception of choice that students receive in the admissions process that institutions of higher education hope to construct. From student-run blogs, the creation of positive emotion on campuses to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, I took all of this research and began analyzing and annotating every material that I obtained from the Office of Admissions.

Upon the completion of the study, I was granted the opportunity to present my findings to **Matt Bowers** in the Office of Admissions. I understood going into the presentation that much of the information that I would relay may be common knowledge to those within the office, but it was also intended to be a learning experience for myself to see how this whole business model works and to take this experience into my professional life post-graduation. I intentionally did not interview anyone within the Office of Admissions as to come to my own conclusions and then hopefully receive feedback from their perspectives of my research.

This independent study was nothing short of a fantastic and positive experience and even helped further my love for Wabash and the College's determination to find the next team of hard-working Wabash Men. I want to thank Dr. Jeff Drury for mentoring me throughout this project and the rest of the rhetoric department faculty for guidance over the past four years within my major. I would also like to thank Matt Bowers and the Office of Admissions for providing me with the artifacts needed for the study and for taking the time to attend my presentation and give me feedback that will no doubt help me as I enter the "real world" and begin my career.



The Wabash College Admissions Office is located in Trippet Hall

# Rhetoric Immersion Learning in Scotland

This spring, **Professor Sara Drury** taught a course on rhetoric and deliberative innovation. The course included a week-long immersion trip to Edinburgh, Scotland. Professor Drury had spent the previous academic year at the University of Edinburgh, and so this trip was a perfect opportunity for Wabash students to benefit from the connections, opportunities, and knowledge she gained while there. All students in the course were underclassmen—8 freshmen, 1 sophomore, and 3 juniors—and selected so that they could share their knowledge with the campus in the years to come.



Freshman **Robert Gosset '22** presents on Scottish democracy and devolution at the Vigil Cairn, Calton Hill, Edinburgh.

Prior to the trip, students spent time learning about the communication theories relating to deliberation (small group processes designed to create collaborative and productive decisions about governance and community), Scottish history and politics, and Scottish deliberative innovations. Throughout the trip, the course exemplified active, collaborative learning. For example, early in the trip, students took turns presenting on historical and cultural sites throughout the city of Edinburgh. Prior to traveling, the students had written research papers on their topic, and then used those papers to create presentations given on-site at the various locations throughout the city. The resulting tour began at Edinburgh Castle, traveled down the Royal Mile and up Calton Hill, past the Scottish Government building, and concluded at the “Stones of Scotland,” a public art piece that overlooked the Scottish Parliament building and represented the democratic voices of Scotland gained through devolution. Later in the trip, students interviewed Scottish NGOs and government officials. The students, divided into teams, then wrote entries for the online resource Participedia, which catalogues participatory democracy activity around the globe.

Additionally, students met with representatives from the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, and Involve-UK

(one of the largest deliberative organizations in the United Kingdom). The trip also included a train excursion to Glasgow to meet with city government officials there, and a trip into the Highlands to experience more of Scottish landscape, geography, and culture.



Wabash students and **Professor Sara Drury** in the City Chambers, Glasgow.

For several of the students, it was their first trip outside the United States. All of the students felt that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience Scottish democracy first hand.

Professor Drury and the students are extremely grateful for the generosity of alumni and friends of the College who support immersion learning. **John '69 and Diane Schroeder's** Giant Steps gift will guarantee that every Wabash student has the opportunity for a fully funded immersive learning experience.



Wabash students meet with Alistair Stoddart, Public Participation Specialist at Scottish Parliament.

## WDPD Update

The 2018-2019 academic year was the fifth for Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse Initiative (WDPD). Program Director **Professor Sara Drury** returned from her year on sabbatical conducting research on deliberation in Scotland to lead WDPD's 12-person team. Also joining the team this year was **Hayley Blonsley, M.A.**, as Program Associate. Ms. Blonsley comes to Wabash with a wealth of experience running community engagement and deliberation processes in Nevada and Colorado. WDPD's team conducted 28 projects this year, 22 of which took place on campus and/or in the Crawfordsville community.

In the Fall semester, WDPD hosted the annual on-campus Freshmen Mental Health Dialogues. In addition, the WDPD collaborated with the Sugar Creek Youth Players, a youth theater troupe run by Wabash alum **Zachary Anderson '18** in Crawfordsville, to hold a small community conversation about youth and mental health.

WDPD continued partnerships with the Biology and Chemistry departments to engage students on issues ranging from gene editing to contamination and pollution. Additionally, WDPD joined with Biology **Professor Amanda Ingram** for an Indiana Humanities supported program "Cultivate Our Gardens," focusing on biodiversity and botany. The grant sponsored two public science lectures, followed by a WDPD-facilitated dialogue.

Throughout the year, **Charles Frey '19** and **Joshua Janak '21** led Free Speech Reading Groups, weekly gatherings of students and faculty looking to discuss differences between discomfort and danger, "fake" news, hate speech, and more. The pair branched out by inviting **Dr. Matt Carlson** to discuss intersections with philosophy and the role of truth in free speech.

In November, Dr. Drury, Hayley Blonsley, and three WDPD Fellows traveled to Denver, Colorado to attend the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation Conference. The Fellows were able to network and interact with peers from other universities across the US and listen to presentations from various scholars and leaders within the field of deliberative dialogue. They were able to bring back ideas about different processes and expand

our knowledge of how people are conquering a variety of issues with this work. Together, they presented during four workshops on rural engagement, difficult conversations, democracy hubs, and turning deliberative talk into deliverable data.

Though WDPD remained busy on campus, this school year brought many new, exciting partnerships and travel. As part of our new collaboration with the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program, WDPD teamed up with four pastors from around the state of Indiana to address issues occurring in their communities: racial reconciliation, systemic hunger, community planning and growth, and systemic poverty. These projects took place in South Bend, Brazil, Mount Comfort, and Seymour, Indiana. WDPD is excited to continue our relationship with the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program throughout 2019-2020 academic year working with their 6th cohort of pastors.

In the spring, WDPD had the opportunity to hold a forum for the Indiana State Bar Association's Leadership Development Academy. During this event, WDPD overviewed deliberative theory and facilitated a discussion using polarity polarity models to dialogue about criminal justice reform: cutting cost vs. cutting crime. WDPD also welcomed a new relationship with EnFocus in collaboration with the City of Elkhart to run the engagement portion of a planning and revitalization project for a housing area in the city.

WDPD is expanding opportunities for students on campus. Working with Admissions, this coming fall WDPD will welcome its first cohort of Direct Admit freshmen. This August, 16 freshmen have been selected to take part in exclusive WDPD leadership development programs, including Public Leader seminars, immersion learning focusing on professional development, and future opportunities in WDPD.

You can find out more about WDPD by visiting [Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse](#). You can also follow WDPD on Twitter [@wabashdpd](#) and on instagram [@wabashdpd](#). If you have interest in partnering with WDPD to have a public conversation around a difficult issue in your community, please [email](mailto:drurys@wabash.edu) Dr. Sara Drury (drurys@wabash.edu).



WDPD students facilitate a dialogue on racial reconciliation in South Bend, Indiana.



WDPD students and students from RHE290 Deliberation had a packed room for a deliberation about housing strategies in Elkhart, Indiana.

## Faculty Updates



This past year was full of “firsts” for Professor Jennifer Abbott. It was the first time she served as Co-Chair of Division II (with her husband, Michael Abbott) for one year. Her time in this position gave her an even greater appreciation for the work our faculty do and for the attention our administrators give to the faculty. It was an intense and fascinating experience. While she and Michael enjoyed their new

responsibilities, they were happy to turn the job over in July to **Professor Brian Tucker**, who returns from sabbatical this fall.

In May, Professor Abbott learned she was promoted to full Professor, another first! ☺ She enjoyed reflecting on her time at Wabash, as part of the application process, and considering how her teaching strategies and emphases have changed with increased experience. She particularly appreciates the support she received from her colleagues (especially Sara Drury, who supervised the promotion as department chair) and from alumni who wrote letters of support. Thank you so much!

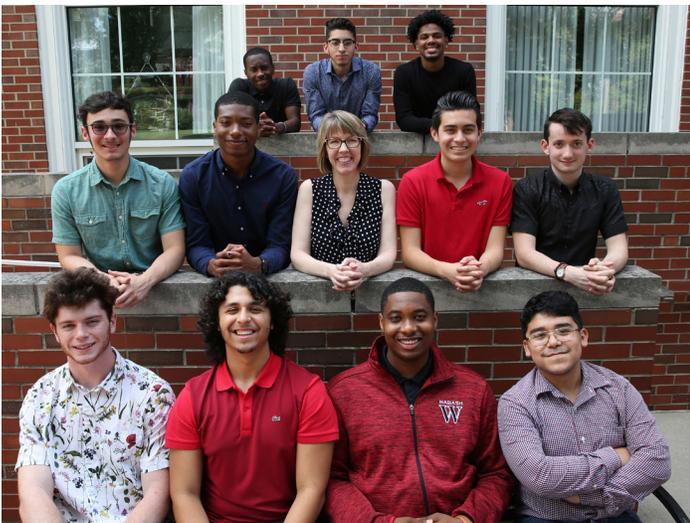
Going back in time to last October, Professor Abbott presented a co-authored essay with her department colleague, Visiting Assistant Professor Cory Geraths. It was the first time they co-authored or co-presented work (at the Midwest Popular Communication Association/Midwest American Culture

Association Conference). They are revising their manuscript—a gender analysis of the ABC television sitcom *Modern Family*—and hope to send it out for potential publication soon.

Departing from the theme of “firsts” briefly, Professor Abbott re-taught several classes this past year, including the Rhetoric of the News Media in Spring 2019. This time in the media class, however, students explored such current hot topics as “fake news” and the role of the news media in a democracy (“enemy of the people?”), and they compared and contrasted international and U.S. news media. She also allowed students to choose the focus of their final group project. Consequently, one group assessed *The Bachelor*; one group designed a journalism simulation game; and two groups produced their own campus news media. While all projects impressed, the game was particularly fun to play.

Finally, this summer held two more “firsts” for Professor Abbott. She headed to Japan for the first time! She travelled there in June for two weeks with her husband and daughter. They visited Tokyo, Hakone hot springs, and Kyoto. Highlights included visiting beautiful temples and shrines, taking a cable car up Mt. Hakone, and attending an Orix Buffaloes baseball game.

In July, Professor Abbott taught a section of Public Speaking for the college’s Wabash Liberal Arts Immersion Program (WLAIP). She designed this special section to focus on the themes of speaking up and staying silent (or being silenced). She enjoyed working closely with a small group of incoming freshmen for a month and helping to facilitate their transition to college.



Professor Abbott smiles with her Rhetoric students in the Wabash Liberal Arts Immersion Program.



The Abbott family stands outside Kinkakuji, a Zen temple also known as the Golden Pavilion, in Kyoto, Japan.

## Faculty Updates



After returning from his sabbatical year, Professor Jeff Drury jumped right back into the swing of things at Wabash during the 2018-2019 school year. This began on Freshman Saturday as he assumed a new group of freshman advisees (in Professor Todd McDorman's tutorial) and then taught them in the spring in Enduring Questions.

In addition to EQ, Professor Drury taught core courses in Public Speaking (RHE 101), Argumentation and Debate (RHE 140), and Reasoning and Advocacy (RHE 201). He also taught a 300-level special topics class on rhetoric and identity. This was an exciting class because it drew on established theories of rhetoric and identity to explore contemporary controversies, such as the rhetoric surrounding immigration, the "Me Too" movement, and competing visions of national identity.

Outside the classroom, Professor Drury worked on his new textbook about argumentation, *Argumentation in Everyday Life*. It was released in February 2019 with SAGE Publications and addresses strategies for understanding and responding to arguments we encounter in our personal, professional, and public lives. He spent his sabbatical year writing the book and is excited to see it in print! He also pursued other research

projects related to teaching argumentation and debate. He created a workshop on strategies for teaching about fake news and echo chambers at the International Communication Association conference and presented on the troubling portrayal of argumentation in *Hamilton: An American Musical* at the International Society for the Study of Argumentation conference. He also co-wrote (with Nicholas Paliewicz at the University of Louisville and Professor Sara Drury) an article for the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy* about content recommendations and strategies for teaching courses in argumentation and debate.

Professor Drury again taught the Marketing Immersion Program but with some changes. This year, the program was combined with a Professional Immersion Experience (PIE) trip to Los Angeles, sponsored by Career Services. The students learned about marketing for two days on campus and then traveled to Los Angeles to learn from alumni who have careers in marketing. It was a great experience for the twelve students who participated in the program. For more information, see the report that rhetoric major Charlie Brewer wrote for this newsletter.

He and Professor Sara Drury had the opportunity to travel quite a bit during 2018-2019. When living in Edinburgh, Professor Drury visited Italy, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland, France, and the Netherlands. He also recently traveled to Sydney, Australia, and drove across both islands of New Zealand. While these were amazing travel opportunities, he looks forward to a summer at home in Crawfordsville!



The Drury family in Queensland, New Zealand



Professor Drury at his book reception in April

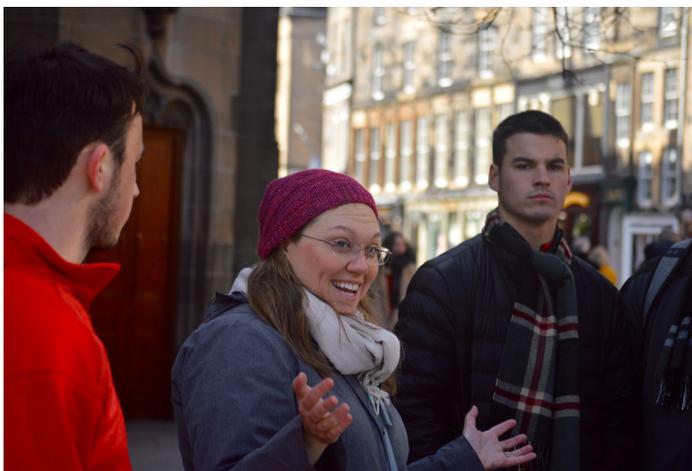
## Faculty Updates



This academic year, Professor Sara Drury returned from sabbatical to begin her first year as Department Chair of the Rhetoric Department. She also continued in her role as Director of Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse. During the fall semester, she co-taught RHE497 Senior Seminar with Professor Todd McDorman and Professor Jennifer Abbott. With 22

seniors, she really enjoyed the variety of ways that seniors applied their rhetoric knowledge towards diverse topics, from politics to hip-hop music, from religious sermons to contemporary argumentation on Twitter. Professor Drury's other course this fall was RHE101 Public Speaking, and she was incredibly inspired by how her students chose topics that mattered to their own lives. For example, one of her students chose to speak about homelessness in Indiana, sharing experiences from his own life that moved many in the class to consider this issue in new ways.

In the spring semester, Professor Drury turned her teaching attention to two courses closely aligned with her own research program in democratic deliberation. Students in RHE290 Deliberation learned the theories of democracy and deliberation and the skills of facilitation, and then applied these to create productive community and campus conversation programs. For the fifth year in a row, the RHE290 students led the annual Sophomore Deliberation, an event held by the Dean of Students' Office where Rhetoric students facilitate a discussion about how to improve campus for the better with all current sophomores. The results of this conversation are reported to the Dean of Students, who then uses that to inform future campus projects and activities. Professor Drury also taught an immersion-learning course this spring, Rhetorics of Deliberative Innovation in Scotland. Students in the course had the opportunity to travel to Edinburgh, Scotland over the March spring break, and learn first-hand from Scottish government officials, community



Professor Drury teaches Scottish history and culture on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, Scotland

organizations, and academics about advances in democracy that are occurring in the Scottish government. The students also engaged in collaborative research projects with several organizations, and have co-authored entries for Participedia, a website focusing on participatory democracy around the world. After returning from Scotland, students then used their skills in rhetorical analysis to consider political rhetoric in their own communities, with particular attention to participation and inclusivity in democracy.

Professor Drury has also continued her research on deliberation and political rhetoric. This past year, she published an essay in *Journal of Communication Pedagogy* (with Professor Jeff Drury and Nicholas Paliewicz at the University of Louisville) focusing on teaching argument to undergraduate students. She also published two essays on presidential debates: "Appearance Trumps Substance: The Legacy of the Great Debate of September 26, 1960" in the edited collection *Networking Argument*, and the opening chapter, "The Traditions and Expectations of Presidential Debates," for the edited two-volume book *Televised Presidential Debates in a Changing Media Environment*.

In May, Professor Drury traveled to Australia to research deliberation and dialogue in international settings. This trip is part of Wabash College's recent International Innovation Fund grant, supported by the Great Lakes Colleges Association and the Mellon Foundation. Professor Drury's trip helped her to learn more about how Australia is using participatory democracy to address city planning and environmental issues, and she will share these lessons with students at Wabash to continue broadening their global perspectives on rhetoric and deliberation. She also had the opportunity to present her research on deliberation and argumentation at the University of Canberra, and was invited to become an Associate of the Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance.



Professor Drury presents her findings in Australia thanks to Wabash's International Innovation Fund grant

## Faculty Updates



Professor Cory Geraths is glad to have spent a second year teaching, researching, and enjoying life at Wabash. He is looking forward to another exciting year at the college in 2019-2020!

This year, Professor Geraths had the pleasure of teaching several courses in the Rhetoric Department. In addition to multiple sections of Public Speaking as well as

the department's required upper-division course in Classical Rhetoric, he developed new elective courses in both the fall and spring semesters. The former, Digital Rhetorics (RHE 270), introduced students to a diversity of approaches to mediated and technological communication in our modern era. Students engaged with key texts in this sub-area of the discipline, including John Durham Peters' *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*. Peters helped us to consider the ways that our modern mediascape can be understood through an attunement to nature and how it is infused into our understandings of technology: including everything from the Internet, which has a nautical foundation to it, devices such as the Amazon *Kindle* and *Fire*, as well as the idea of the Cloud itself. Students also engaged with the rhetorics of and within social media networks, with projects focused on platforms such as Twitter, Twitch, Facebook, and YouTube. This course also featured guest discussions with Wabash **Prof. Colin McKinney** (Mathematics/Computer Science) and **Nathan Tompkins** (Physics) on net neutrality and the physics behind information transmission, respectively.



Professor Geraths and his niece Quinn in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

In the spring semester, Professor Geraths (metaphorically) ventured with students around the world via an exploration of the cross-cultural foundations of rhetoric in his Global Rhetorics (RHE 370) course. This course opened with an examination of key theories and approaches to understanding communication across cultural lines,

ethnic and racial identities, and geo-political borders; these classes included discussions of ideas such as code switching, colonialism and imperialism, borders and borderlands, Orientalism, as well as American exceptionalism. The course then moved to a number of case studies on current and pressing rhetorical topics from around the globe. Examples of these case studies included discussions of former Prime Minister Theresa May and her attempts to negotiate a Brexit deal with the European Union; the refugee crisis in Syria; the attacks on Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's response; the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Syria; and the rhetorics of the World Cup and Olympics. This course also featured guest discussions with Wabash **Professors Cara Healey** (Modern Languages/Chinese) and **Heidi Walsh** (Biology) on censorship in modern China and global health initiatives in Peru, respectively. We also were fortunate to welcome Professor Jeffrey A. Bennett of Vanderbilt University (this year's Brigrance Forum speaker) to class for a discussion of HIV/AIDs and rhetorical responses to disease and pandemic around the world.

This summer, Professor Geraths is working hard on multiple research projects. He is currently finishing a pedagogical essay on the utility of the ancient concept, *ekphrasis* ("description"), in public speaking classrooms. This essay builds on his first speech assignment in RHE 101 at Wabash, which tasks students with selecting and vividly describing artifacts in their communities that have civic significance. He is also working toward the release of a public-facing essay on the queer reception of Mary Magdalene in media such as music videos and memes. Beyond these projects, Professor Geraths is working to complete a book chapter on *agnôstos* (that which is unknown or unknowable), an essay on Mary Magdalene's rhetorical reception in contemporary art, as well as a co-authored project on *Modern Family* with his Wabash colleague, Jennifer Abbott.

Looking ahead to next year, Professor Geraths is excited to be working with the department's rising seniors in Senior Seminar, continuing his research, traveling home to California to visit his family, and enjoying life at Wabash and in Indiana!



Professor Geraths on the Andy Warhol Bridge in Pittsburgh

## Faculty Updates



During 2018-19, Professor Todd McDorman taught in the fall and was on sabbatical during the spring.

In Fall 2018, Professor McDorman co-taught Senior Seminar with Professor Sara Drury, and Professor Abbott also supervised three projects as they worked with the largest group of rhetoric seniors in the department's history (22). They were a good group with a diverse set of interests. Three of them were in Professor McDorman's 2015 Baseball and American Identity tutorial and he served as academic advisor to six of them. He was proud of the growth and development of all of the seniors, and even emerged from sabbatical to attend commencement. Professor McDorman also taught a new tutorial entitled "Harry Potter and the Liberal Arts." The engagement of the students in the course was fantastic and it was one of the best class experiences Professor McDorman has had.

In Spring 2019, Professor McDorman worked on several projects while on sabbatical. He spent most of his time working on his ongoing Pete Rose project, making an effort to pull his various essays into a potential book. As of the conclusion of sabbatical he is at about the midway point and reasonably happy with the progress, but there is more to do (that is also because Pete Rose is still out there making news, including release of another autobiography in June 2019, *Play Hungry: The Making of a Baseball Player*). Professor McDorman overviewed his project in an April presentation for the Oscar Charleston (Indianapolis) SABR

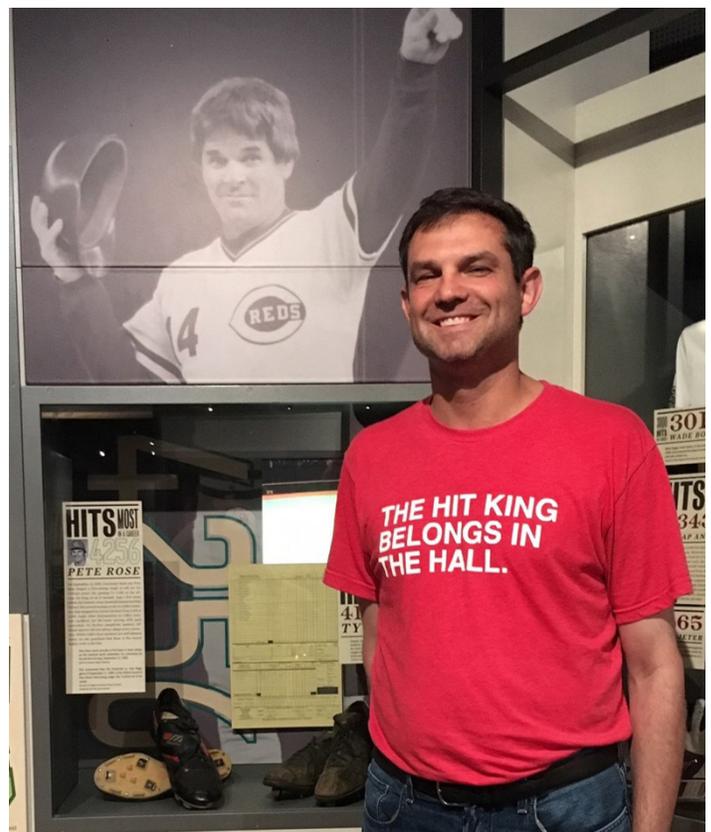


Professor McDorman, his wife Kelly, and children Carter and Lily at the Field Museum in Chicago.

Chapter. SABR is the Society for American Baseball Research while Oscar Charleston was a famous Negro Leagues player from Indianapolis. In his day Charleston was referred to as the black Ty Cobb and the black Babe Ruth. Professor McDorman also returned to the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture where he presented on a project started several years ago with **Donovan Bisbee '12**, "Nobody's Perfect": Armando Galarraga's (Im)Perfect Game and Instant Replay." The project uses Kenneth Burke's ideas of perfection, tragedy, and comedy to critique media reaction to Galarraga's near perfect game from 2010, lost when an umpire made a mistaken call on the would-be final batter, and baseball's subsequent adoption of expanded instant replay.

Away from campus, Professor McDorman and his family made a spring break trip to Chicago where they saw *Hamilton* and visited several of the city's most prominent museums. In the summer there were the usual trips to Cincinnati to see the Reds and visit Kings Island.

As the summer heads toward its close, Professor McDorman is preparing to serve as Acting Dean of the College during the fall semester before returning to the classroom in spring 2020.



Professor McDorman at the National Baseball Hall of Fame, standing in front of a display featuring Pete Rose's record breaking hit while wearing an Obvious Shirts design from rhetoric major **Joe Johnson '11**

# Alumni Updates



**Adam Burtner '17**, Rhetoric major, started a new role this year as Manager of Policy and Political Affairs for the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. After 2 years in nonprofit management as Executive Director of local hunger relief organization HATCH for Hunger, Adam returned to the Indianapolis civic and policy arena joining the Indy Chamber in January. His role on the Business Advocacy team at the Chamber includes leading the Business Advocacy Committee (BAC), increasing effectiveness in political action for upcoming elections and working with business leaders and community partners to develop a progressive legislative agenda to ensure the continued success of the Indy Region. Living in Downtown Indianapolis, Adam also serves on the Board of Directors for the Sapphire Theatre Company, Indianapolis Association of Wabash Men, Indianapolis Zoo Council, and Junior Chamber International.



**Steve Campbell '92**, a Political Science major and Speech minor, is vice president of communications for the Indianapolis Colts. Since graduating from Wabash, he has held a series of executive positions in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Most recently, he was founder and president of Campbell Strategies, an Indianapolis-based communications and strategy firm. Steve also spent 16 years in public service, serving as Deputy Mayor of Indianapolis and as a top media advisor to two Indiana governors and the state attorney general. An active community volunteer, he currently is serving as co-chair of the Indianapolis Bicentennial Commission.



**Peter Fouts, '15**, Rhetoric major, is an associate attorney for Trapp Law, LLC. After earning his degree from Wabash, he graduated from Indiana University McKinney School of Law in 2018. Peter's practice is focused on criminal defense and family law litigation in the Indianapolis area. Acting as second chair, he won his first major felony jury trial in March 2019. Peter resides in downtown Indianapolis. This year, Peter is looking forward to attending many of his Wabash Brothers' weddings.



**Jim Suess '17**, rhetoric major, serves as the special assistant to Governor Eric J. Holcomb. Shortly after graduation, Jim started in the Governor's Fellowship program where he worked closely with the executive director for drug prevention, treatment and enforcement, implementing a strategic communications plan and developing the [Next Level Recovery website](#). Following this work, Jim moved into his current role as special assistant to the governor where he travels throughout Indiana and provides aid to Gov. Holcomb. A proud Hamilton County resident, Jim enjoys spending time getting to know the community and makes frequent trips to Topgolf.



**Barry Tyler Jr. '06** was a Political Science and Speech double major. After graduating, Barry returned to his hometown (Hammond, IN) and began coaching high school football at his alma mater, Hammond High School, where he still serves today. He is a former United Steelworker and has worked for a variety of nonprofit organizations throughout Chicago and Northwest Indiana, including The First Tee of Lake County (Hammond), Legacy Foundation, and Teach for America. He currently serves as the Senior Director of Secondary Partnerships at OneGoal, a post-secondary access organization that prepares and supports students through high school and college. Most recently, Barry decided to run for public office and defeated a 16 year incumbent in the Democratic primary election for 3rd District Hammond City Council. Barry and his wife, Erin, reside in Hammond and are enjoying their first year of marriage.

## Alumni Updates



**George S. Vinihakis '15** serves as Corporate Counsel at Amer Sports Corp., a holding company whose portfolio of brands includes Wilson Sporting Goods, Louisville Slugger, Salomon, Arc'Teryx, Suunto, and Precor among others. Based in Chicago, George's responsibilities have a great deal of breadth; from drafting and negotiating all endorsement contracts (including MLB, NFL, NCAA, tennis) to advising internal clients in the portfolio of brands on all legal matters. After graduating from Wabash (Political Science major, Rhetoric minor), George attended DePaul University College of Law and served as the Managing Business Editor of the DePaul Business & Commercial Law Journal while interning for Wilson Sporting Goods at its Chicago headquarters.



Last year, Professor of Speech Emeritus Joe O'Rourke relocated to Iowa to be near family. Joe would love to hear from speech alumni and can be reached at:

**Joe O'Rourke**  
Wesley Acres  
3520 Grand Ave  
Room 236 - John Stoddard Health Center  
Des Moines, Iowa 50312



**William Norwood Brigance**  
Professor of Speech  
1922-1960

## Wabash College's Day of Giving

We would like to thank the many of you who contributed to the Wabash Day of Giving on 4.10.2019. On that day, the College received more than 5,200 gifts and raised \$1,165,444 in 24 hours! Of the many affinity challenges offered that day (these are fundraising challenges issued by one or more people to a targeted group of people who all share an affinity), one was especially meaningful to us: The Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse Affinity Challenge.

### WDPD Affinity Challenge

**Number of gifts: 101**  
**Amount raised: \$4922.24**

Thank you for so generously supporting the college and our work.

## ALUMNI: YOU'RE WANTED!

We will continue to include updates from our Rhetoric and Speech alumni in future Rhetoric Department newsletters.

It's a wonderful opportunity for our current students to see where a Rhetoric major and minor can take you!

Please send updates to [phippsj@wabash.edu](mailto:phippsj@wabash.edu), subject line "Rhetoric/Speech Alumni Update."

### Rhetoric Department

Professor Jennifer Abbott  
Professor Jeff Drury  
Professor Sara Drury, Chair  
Professor Cory Geraths  
Professor Todd McDorman

# Wabash.

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