



Class Agents Letter

Class of 1980

Class Agent
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Dear Classmate,

I hope all of you had a great summer.

Fifty years ago this autumn, Jimmy Carter was elected President, Gordon Lightfoot released "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," and we began our journey as Wabash Men. Sometimes it's hard to believe it was that long ago.

Last Saturday several of my fellow class agents and I attended our annual meeting. We learned a lot, and I have much to share with you.

President Scott Feller opened his presentation by announcing that over 880 students are enrolled at Wabash this fall! However, President Feller also added some sobering news. The demographic cliff that we have anticipated is here. Not only will fewer young people be graduating from high school in the coming years, but the rate of those graduates attending college is also dropping. Compounding this is the decreasing ratio of young men going to college; President Feller says that that percentage is lower than it was when Title IX was implemented in the 1970s.

President Feller then spoke about the capital improvements in progress at the College. Construction of the new student center has just started with crews beginning to install concrete footings. You can find out more about the project and see the construction cam at wabash.edu/communitycenter. A new parking lot next to Mud Hollow has been completed, and construction of a new central cooling plant is underway just east of the Little Giant stadium where the smokestack once stood. Renovations to Knowling Fieldhouse (including paint, flooring, sound system, and electrical infrastructure) are fully underway and will be completed later in the semester. The College has a 50-year plan for various projects across campus.

The College's endowment remains strong. Its value is currently \$530 Million. That amount is about double what it was per student a quarter-century ago. We had a 19 percent return on investment in fiscal year 2026, and we added \$25 Million over that fiscal year, which means Wabash put more money into the endowment than it drew from it. However, President Feller cautioned that that amount is less than it was in fiscal year 2008 when adjusted for inflation. He said that if the endowment could grow by an additional \$200 Million, the College could better address issues like deferred maintenance and more



competitive salaries for faculty. He also noted that DePauw (ahem) has received some big gifts recently, but the College has not.

President Feller then set the goal for the College's bicentennial in 2032: to be THE model for a financially stable liberal arts college.

The news regarding the Annual Fund was better. Last fiscal year, the College raised \$4,370,791 - the most we have ever raised! This includes over \$2 Million raised on the Day of Giving, or \$2,354 per student -- by far the most successful Day we have ever had. We had a higher participation rate for that day than most GLCA members had for their entire year! For the coming year, I recommend that you talk to your financial advisors regarding the tax benefits of donating. It was also pointed out that you can donate directly using Venmo.

As always, if you know of any young men who might be interested in attending Wabash, the admissions office is eager to hear from you. A name is great, but it's best if you have a good relationship with a current high school junior or senior. You can refer a prospect for the Classes of '31 and '32 at wabash.edu/refer.

I hope you found this letter informative. I would also like some information from you. As always, I am eager to pass information about what has been going on in your lives to your classmates and the College. So don't be shy about letting me know! Also, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

If fifty years can fly by, so can four. In less than four years we will celebrate our 50-year reunion at Big Bash 2030. It's not too early to put it on your calendar.

Have a great autumn, and remember: WABASH ALWAYS FIGHTS!

Yours in Wabash,
Ken Williams, Class Agent
Class of 1980
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