

WABASH **COLLEGE**



Class Agent Handbook
August 2008

Table of Contents

Brief History	1
Mission.....	1
Roles	2
Expectations	4
Selection Process.....	5
Terms of Service	5
Executive Committee.....	6
Annual Awards.....	7
Appendix I – Staff Directory and Web Site Information.....	i
Appendix II – Annual Plan for Four Letters.....	ii
Appendix III – “Where Are You Now?”	v



September, 2005 – 50th Anniversary of the Society of Wabash College Class Agents

THE SOCIETY OF WABASH COLLEGE CLASS AGENTS

Brief History

The Society of Wabash College Class Agents traces its beginnings to 1955 when the newly appointed director of alumni affairs, Myron G. “Phil” Phillips ’27, started the Society. Phillips had a vision of keeping graduates connected to the College in a meaningful way through the efforts of a group of class agents. Each agent would be the conduit for information, on the College and on fellow classmates, communicating with every member of the class regardless of how far he or she had moved from the College or how long ago they had graduated.



Myron Phillips '27

Phillip’s early efforts have matured as **The Society of Wabash College Class Agents** with over 120 class agents and a governing executive committee directly linked to the board of directors of the National Association of Wabash Men (NAWM). Each graduated class has one or more class agents and collectively these men comprise the Society. The executive committee, in coordination with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, provides oversight for the Society and two of the committee members, who serve as co-chairmen of the committee, also serve on the NAWM board of directors.

Mission

The Society is an element of the College’s initiative to engage alumni as a strategic advantage. The Society exists to keep Wabash in contact with her alumni body and to gain alumni support of and participation in the ongoing efforts of the College.

Today there is more communication between the College and its alumni body than ever before. From the College’s web site to the *Wabash Magazine* to the Trustee Newsletter to Annual Fund periodic information pieces, Wabash alumni receive a myriad of communications from the College. In addition, the number of alumni events, on- and off-campus, has risen tremendously over the past several years.

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However, these information pieces and events, as good as they are, can’t replace the personal touch of a class agent when writing a letter to his classmates or building interest in the next class reunion. It is that personal nature of class agent communications that makes them an effective force.

Roles

Class agents carry out the following roles:

1. **Communicate with classmates.** The class agent stays in touch with his class primarily through the writing of periodic letters¹. Class agent letters are a fundamental part of the overall College communications plan. The class agent selects the content of the letters based upon whatever information he deems important. *Past experience has shown the best class agent letters offer a combination of updates on the personal and professional lives of classmates and a report on College news from a personal standpoint.* To help, the Alumni and Parent Relations office provides an entire system of information and support:



- a. **All letter formatting, production, and mailing done by Alumni and Parent Relations.** The class agent simply needs to send the letter to Alumni and Parent Relations. A staff member takes care of formatting, reproducing and mailing /emailing² the agent's letters. To aid in production, the office prefers electronic copies of letters in *Microsoft Word*. Once the class agent writes the letter and sends it to the Alumni and Parent Relations office, his work is done!
- b. **Class Agent Alerts.** When there's breaking news on campus, the Alumni and Parent Relations Office will email a "Class Agent Alert" to all class agents.
- c. **The Bachelor.** The *Bachelor* provides the class agent with current information on Wabash from the student's perspective. Most class agents get the *Bachelor* online at <http://bachelor.wabash.edu>. This allows them to receive the newspaper the same day it is published on campus.
- d. **Other class agent's letters.** All recent class agent letters are available to alumni on the Wabash web site: (www.wabash.edu/alumni/class_agents/recent).
- e. **Monthly classmate updates.** The Alumni and Parent Relations office provides all class agents with periodic updates on the latest classmate news³.
- f. **Alumni eServices.** All Wabash alumni have access to



¹ Some agents also make it a point of emailing and phoning their classmates, often to ask for updates on the personal and professional lives.

² Class agent letters are typically emailed to all alumni with an email address and mailed to the remainder of the class. If a class agent wants the letter mailed to everyone, all he needs to do is ask.

³ See Appendix III, "Where Are You Now?" This is the form you can have mailed to all of your classmates along with your class agent letter.

Wabash's on-line alumni database through **Alumni eServices**. This database is updated every day and provides a number of different search options – class year or years, locations, majors, fraternities, etc. Each alumnus has an individual user name and password available from the Alumni and Parent Relations office.

- g. **Class rosters.** The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations can provide updated information on all classmates including address, phone number, email address, and other class specific information. This information is typically distributed as a *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet.
 - h. **Color printing/campus photographs.** The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations has the ability to include color photographs and illustrations in letters. In addition, staff members have digital cameras and can include campus photographs if desired.
 - i. **All the help and support needed.** The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations and the Society of Wabash College Class Agents will help class agents with guidance on writing letters and with useful information that might be included in the letters.
2. **Communicate with the College.** Classmates place special value on the communications they receive from their class agent(s). The same value applies to communications emanating from the class. A class agent has the unique opportunity to hear from several members of his class and to occasionally “take the pulse” of his classmates. Any time the class agent hears or senses information that might be of value, he should immediately direct those communications to the College. The class agent should start with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations – the staff is ready to assist in every way possible.
3. **Help with class reunions. *The class agents' primary role is to raise awareness of the reunion and to urge classmates to attend.*** The Alumni and Parent Relations Office is primarily responsible for planning and running the **Big Bash**, Wabash's yearly reunion weekend⁴. Class agents do not need to worry about menus, venues, or any other details. **The only effective way to generate good attendance is through a contact person in each living unit – more details can be found in the publication *Roadmap for a Reunion* available from the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations.** The College, as mentioned earlier, has several resources that make the reunion buildup simple and easy:
- a. **Planning booklet.** The College provides a continuously updated *Roadmap for a Big Bash Reunion* that provides guidance on the entire reunion weekend as well as some helpful suggestions.



⁴ Held the first weekend of June.

- b. **Class rosters.** These rosters (in *Microsoft Excel* format) facilitate contact between classmates. They are emailed, whenever possible, to allow the list to be sorted by state, College living unit, etc.
 - c. **Alumni reunion web site** (www.wabash.edu/alumni/reunion). The alumni web site offers detailed information on the **Big Bash** weekend and an easy, on-line registration form for reunions. In addition, the web site lists members of each reunion class who have indicated they plan on attending the reunion.
 - d. **Staff support.** The director of Alumni and Parent Relations serves as a focal point for reunions. In addition to class agent letters, the office staff can mail special, class-specific “Save-the-date” and reminder cards.
4. **Assisting the College’s fundraising efforts.** The class agent can actively support the on-going efforts of the College by: his leadership and example of giving to the College; communicating with his classmates about the goals of the College and the status of current fundraising efforts; and by reporting on your class’s contributions. Quite simply, without the continued support of the alumni body, Wabash will not be able to grow and prosper. Most class agents integrate a report on the class’s “honor roll” (listing of those class members who have given in the current fiscal year) into their class agent letters. To assist the class agent in that endeavor, the Annual Fund office provides periodic updates on giving percentages as well as donors sorted by class. This allows the class agent to get a comparison of his class’s participation as compared to other classes and his classes performance the previous year.

WABASH COLLEGE
ANNUAL FUND

Expectations

The Society of Wabash College Class Agents expects the following from its members:

1. **Leader and Role Model.** The Society expects its members to be positive leaders and role models who are actively engaged in the life of the College. Class agents are in a unique position – they have the potential to be “informed insiders” and to share that knowledge and insight. Class agent letters should provide a balanced dialogue and be presented in a responsible, factual fashion. A class agent’s efforts, on behalf of Wabash, within the College community and with external audiences, have a tremendous impact on the College’s ability to remain independent and to grow and prosper.
2. **Periodic Communications.** Each class should hear from one of their class agents on a periodic basis. Appendix II contains a sample four-letter plan developed by a class agent. For classes with more than one class agent, the writing duties can be divided in whatever way is easiest for the class agents themselves.

3. **Support the College Financially.** Each class agent is expected to make a financial gift to the College annually – preferably early in the fiscal year. This allows the class agent to demonstrate his leadership. As with any fund-raising initiative, the key is annual participation. Wabash can and will operate from a position of strength if the alumni body supports the effort every year. As leaders and role models, the Society expects class agents to lead that effort.
4. **Support Recruiting Efforts.** The Society expects its members to play an active role on recruiting students for Wabash. By sharing admissions information with the class, class agents can have a wide-ranging impact on Wabash's overall Admissions efforts.
5. **Return to campus.** Class agents are expected to return to campus when they are able. A campus visit provides the agent with an opportunity to see what's new on campus and to observe what remains the same. A campus visit also provides an opportunity to renew bonds with faculty, staff, and students. One way to accomplish this is to return whenever possible to the **Class Agent Forum**. The Forum is held on campus the weekend of the first home football game. Planned and administered by the executive committee and the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, the Forum is designed to bring the class agents together, to provide updates on the College and to share common interests and concerns. The Class Agents' Awards Dinner is held in conjunction with the Forum and includes the presentation of the annual class agents' awards.



Selection Process

Class agents are, first and foremost, volunteers. They give of their time and talent to keep their fellow class members in touch with the College and each other.

For class agents of graduating classes, the staff of the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, working in conjunction with the Dean of Students Office, identifies proven student leaders and offers the role of class agent to the best possible candidates. The goal is to select two class agents for each class.

Class agents for matriculated classes, those replacing a departing agent or joining others on the role, emerge as a result of a call for volunteers from the College and/or from the class itself.

Terms of Service

There is no such thing as a normal term of service for a class agent. Some class agents have served the College and their class for over 50 years! Others begin their service several decades after their graduation. In some cases, class agents resign their posts because of the demands of

their personal and/or professional lives. The College and the class will always accept a class agent's resignation – no questions asked.

There's really only one planning factor to take into account when considering serving as a class agent – the timing of the next class reunion. Class reunions happen every five years and a class really has an advantage when their class agent has been in place and “up to speed” before the reunion planning timeframe begins. Conversely, the best time to make a class agent change is right after a reunion, when memories are fresh (lots of new material for the class agent letter) and there's ample time to build upon connections renewed at the reunion.

Class agents who consistently are not performing their roles to the level of expectation may be asked to step down by the executive committee or the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations. This action is only taken when all other attempts to help the class agent are exhausted by both the executive committee and the College.

Executive Committee

The Society started the executive committee in 1991 to oversee the performance of the class agents and serve as an advisory board for the College. Elections to the executive committee are held each summer in accordance with the *Constitution of the National Association of Wabash Men*. The following guidelines apply to the executive committee:

1. Its executive committee in concert with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations shall direct the business and affairs of the Society.
2. Executive committee members shall be alumni and class agents as defined by the College.
3. The officers of the committee consist of two (2) co-chairmen who shall serve for a term of two (2) years. The executive committee selects the co-chairmen and their terms should be staggered for continuity. The co-chairmen will preside at all committee meetings, have the right to vote on all questions, appoint sub-committee chairmen and co-chairmen, determine the composition of any sub-committees, and otherwise serve as spokesman for the Society. The co-chairmen shall serve as ex-officio members of all sub-committees of the executive committee and have other duties as the executive committee may prescribe from time to time.
4. The executive committee consists of:
 - a. Officers of the committee as defined above:
 - b. Five class agent representatives, three (3) to be elected in each even-numbered year and two (2) to be elected in each odd-numbered year by the Society. Each representative shall serve for a term of two (2) years;

- c. The director of Alumni and Parent Relations, *ex-officio*;
 - d. The director of the Annual Fund, *ex-officio*;
5. Each executive committee member shall hold office until his successor shall be elected.
 6. A committee member shall not be able to succeed himself after serving two (2) full terms, but shall be eligible for re-election after a lapse of a period of one year from the expiration of his last term of service.
 7. The terms of office of the committee members as prescribed above shall commence on July 1st and run through June 30th in the year in which the term expires.
 8. Interim vacancies among the executive committee shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the committee.
 9. All committee members serve at the pleasure of the executive committee. A member may be removed from office by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the executive committee members then in office.
 10. Each committee member shall have one (1) vote.

Annual Awards

There are three awards designed to recognize the contributions to the College and the alumni by high performing class agents. The executive committee makes the selections and the awards are presented at the annual Class Agents' Awards Dinner held each fall.

1. **The Warren Wright Shearer Hall of Fame Award** is the most prestigious of the three. In 1991 the National Association of Wabash Men established this award in honor of a great Little Giant: a student, teacher, Dean of the College, Acting President, and Class Agent extraordinaire. It is awarded in recognition of extraordinary performance by a Class Agent in all roles and duties including: class communications, class financial contributions, recruiting, and Little Giant spirit over a period of time, not necessarily a year.
2. **The Myron G. Phillips Most Outstanding Class Agent Award** was established in 1963 by the Alumni Board in memory of this outstanding Wabash student, Professor, Assistant Director of Admissions, and Director of Alumni Affairs. It is awarded annually to the Class Agent who performs most significantly in his roles of communicating with his class, encouraging class financial contributions, recruiting new students, and exhibiting Little Giant spirit.
3. **The R. Robert Mitchum Most Outstanding Young Class Agent Award** was established in 1979 by the Alumni Board to honor a long-time Director of the Wabash

College Glee Club and Director of Alumni Affairs. Established to encourage classes graduating in the last ten years, it is awarded to the Class Agent who has demonstrated outstanding performance in discharging his duties as Class Agent in the areas of class communication, class financial contributions, new student recruitment, and Little Giant spirit.

Appendix I – Staff Directory and Web Site Information

Office of Alumni and Parent Relations

Staff

Director - Tom Runge '71
765-361-6371, runget@wabash.edu

Associate Director - Mike Warren '93
765-361-6053, warrenm@wabash.edu

Coordinator of Alumni and Parent Communications - Michele Tatar
765-361-6369, tatarm@wabash.edu

Administrative Assistant for Alumni and Parent Relations - Heather Bazzani
765-361-6360, bazzanih@wabash.edu

*You can also contact the Alumni and Parent Relations Office at
alumni@wabash.edu*

Location

The Office of Alumni and Parent Relations is located in The Bill and Ginny Hays Alumni Center on the north side of Wabash's campus. The address is 418 W. Wabash Ave. We are open weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Feel free to drop in for a visit!

Web References

Wabash Alumni - www.wabash.edu/alumni
Big Bash Reunion – www.wabash.edu/alumni/reunion
Class agent related information - www.wabash.edu/alumni/class_agents
Bachelor – <http://bachelor.wabash.edu>

Appendix II – Annual Plan for Four Letters

Yearly Plan – Four Letters

September letter

1. College news
 - a. Class Agent Alerts/*The Bachelor*/personal observations
 - b. Information on newest freshmen class
 - c. Report on last reunion (if applicable)
 - d. News from Class Agent Forum (if applicable)
 - e. Homecoming fast approaching
 - f. Football schedule
2. Recommendations
 - a. Ask classmates to identify candidates for induction into the Wabash College Athletics Hall of Fame. The NAWM Board of Directors will select Athletics Hall of Fame inductees at their upcoming January meeting (every even year-2004, 2006, etc.)
 - b. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office
3. Classmate updates
 - a. Provide updates on classmates
 - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information
 - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
4. Admissions
 - a. Recap last year's statistics
 - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
 - c. Recommend senior referrals
 - d. Recommend campus visits
 - e. Report referral statistics for the class
5. Annual Fund (GWF) information
 - a. Overall results from previous year
 - b. Class performance – your class and years before and after
 - c. Mention all donors for previous fiscal year with special mention of last year's 1832 Society donors

Late November-early December letter

1. College news
 - a. Class Agent Alerts/*The Bachelor*/personal observations
 - b. News from Class Agent Forum (if applicable)
 - c. Monon Bell Results
 - d. Updates on winter sports
2. Recommendations
 - a. Ask classmates to identify candidates to be awarded an alumni award of merit (for contributions to the College, their community, or their chosen profession). The

- NAWM Board of Directors will select these award winners at their upcoming annual spring meeting in May. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office (alumni@wabash.edu)
- b. Ask classmates to identify candidates for the award of the Alumni-Admissions Fellow. These awards are given to alumni for extraordinary effort in recruiting students for Wabash. Recommendations should be sent to the Admissions office (admissions@wabash.edu).
- 6. Class mate updates
 - a. Provide updates on classmates
 - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information.
 - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
 - 3. Admissions
 - a. Recap important statistics
 - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
 - c. Recommend campus visits
 - d. Recommend junior and senior referrals
 - 4. Annual Fund (GWF) information
 - a. Class performance to date
 - b. Remind of tax year end giving
 - c. Mention donors for the year with special mention of all 1832 Society members

Late January – Early February letter

- 1. College news
 - a. Class Agent Alerts/*The Bachelor*/personal observations
 - b. First semester review
 - c. Updates on winter sports
- 2. Recommendations
 - a. Ask classmates to candidates to be awarded an alumni award of merit (for contributions to the College, their community or their chosen profession). The NAWM Board of Directors will select these award winners at their upcoming annual spring meeting in May. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office (alumni@wabash.edu)
 - b. Ask classmates to identify candidates for the award of the Alumni-Admissions Fellow. These awards are given to alumni for extraordinary effort in recruiting students for Wabash. The NAWM Board of Directors will select these award winners at their upcoming annual spring meeting in May. Recommendations should be sent to Chip Timmons in Admissions (timmonsc@wabash.edu).
- 3. Classmate updates
 - a. Provide updates on classmates
 - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information
 - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
- 4. Admissions
 - a. Recap important statistics
 - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
 - c. Recommend campus visits

- d. Mention push for Honors Weekend
 - e. Recommend junior referrals
- 5. Annual Fund (GWF) information
 - a. Class performance to date
 - b. Mention donors for the year with special mention of all 1832 Society members

Late May – early June letter

- 1. College news
 - a. Class Agent Alerts/*The Bachelor*/personal observations Commencement recap (if applicable)
 - b. Updates on winter/spring sports
- 2. Recommendations
 - a. Please identify candidates to serve as Alumni Trustees and members of the NAWM Board of Directors. The NAWM Board of Directors will select candidates for election at their upcoming fall meeting (held annually at Homecoming).
 - b. Recommendations should be sent to the Alumni Affairs office (alumni@wabash.edu)
- 3. Classmate updates
 - a. Provide updates on classmates
 - b. Remind them to always keep the College updated on contact information
 - c. Push next reunion (if applicable)
- 4. Admissions
 - a. Recap important statistics
 - b. Cover upcoming deadlines (applications)
 - c. Recommend campus visits
 - d. Mention push for Honors Weekend
 - e. Recommend junior referrals
- 5. Annual Fund (GWF) information
 - a. Class performance to date
 - b. Remind of fiscal tax year end giving
 - c. Mention donors for the year with special mention of all 1832 Society members

Appendix III – “Where Are You Now?”

“Where Are You Now?”

Wabash Class of _____

While you are holding this in your hands, take a moment to fill it out and send it to: Wabash College, Alumni and Parent Relations office, PO Box 352, Crawfordsville, IN 47933. While you’re at it, why not contact a fellow alum or professor you haven’t talked to in a while?

Name _____ Home Phone _____
Home Address _____
Business Address _____
Business Phone _____ Business Fax _____
E-mail _____ Home Page _____

Interested in serving your class as a class agent? Yes _____ Maybe _____ Not yet _____
Interested in helping the College with fund raising? Yes _____ No _____

Family Information

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Partnered
(Spouse/partner’s name) _____ Anniversary (if applicable) _____
☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed
☐ Father of (kid’s name/s) _____ Birthdays _____

Latest Employment and Education Information

☐ Unemployed ☐ Self-employed doing _____
☐ Employed (where) _____ Occupation _____
☐ Looking for work ☐ Retired
☐ In school at (where) _____
☐ Working toward a (degree) _____ in (field) _____
☐ Writing a book on _____

I’d really like to hear from (classmate/s) _____

Any other interesting news? _____

