



Class Agents Letter

Class of 1963

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Hello Classmates:

Wabash conducted a Class Agents Forum on Saturday, September 13th. Al, Bruce and I could not attend but through a couple of allies, and some sleuth work, we have been able to piece together a summary of the forum. Plus the College provides extensive information about the “State of Wabash” so the following might be repetitive to some of you.

There were a number of presenters including new Dean of Students, Scott Brown; Dean for College Advancement, Michelle Janssen; Director of Alumni/Affinity Group Engagement, Ron Dostal; Director of Advancement Initiatives, Susan Dyer; Associate Director of Advancement Initiatives, Hugh Vandivier; and President Scott Feller who commented on the following:

COMMUNITY CENTER

The old Campus Center as we knew it, has been raised. The new building will be substantially larger, e.g. contractors must dig sixty feet deeper than the old foundation. It will take two years to complete. Dining has been shifted successfully, to a facility by the name of “Grub Hollow”.

If you want more information about the project, here is the Community Center webpage.

<https://www.wabash.edu/communitycenter/>

ENROLLMENT

The Freshman Class numbers 270; Total enrollment is 908. Both numbers are solid indicators that Admissions as well as Class Retention are thriving. Campus living quarters are stretched to the max as all students are required to live on the premises.

While enrollment numbers are up, maintaining these figures will be difficult in the future. Around 2010, the birthrate in Indiana dropped creating a “demographic cliff”. Plus, only 45% of Indiana college age males are enrolling in college. This percent used to be 60. Also, Indiana does not have an inflow of people.....the population is aging meaning fewer student candidates. To compensate, Wabash is sponsoring athletic camps and other programs trying to attract high school sophomores. Also, recruiting in states with upswings in population like in Texas and Arizona have



enhanced enrollment. Also, the College has a full-time Admissions employee covering the Chicago area.

ALUMNI FUND

The Annual Fund for the fiscal year totaled \$3,983,898, a record. In fact, for the past 12 years over 40% of alumni have donated. Our class participation was 40.2% . Many thanks to each of you who made a contribution! Overall, 40% from all Classes is highly significant. Wabash peers can expect 20% or less. Nationally, it seems that many colleges rely on major financial gifts to make up for a drop in the number of contributors. This is not the case at Wabash where every dollar is important and appreciated.

ENDOWMENT

Current endowment stands at \$440,000,000....another record thanks to fiscally conservative spending, excellent fund raising and solid investment returns. The endowment has undoubtedly increased in recent weeks from plus gains in the stock market.

COLLEGE RANKINGS

Wabash does not rank high in terms of prestige but does well with publications ranking outcomes. What benefits Wabash the most is its graduation rate and outstanding job/graduation placement statistics. The path for career development, in particular, begins in earnest during a student's freshman year and continues each year to graduation.

MENTAL HEALTH

This is a very sensitive issue. According to a national survey, only 36% of student bodies consider their experience to be positive. The percent at Wabash is greater at 54% but the College Administration is concerned about it to the extent that it is trying better to understand problems of young men and the generational change taking place today.

NEW DEAN OF STUDENTS SCOTT BROWN

Past Dean Greg Redding resigned the position to take his sabbatical as well as resume teaching. Scott seems to be well received. He has more than 35 years in higher education and has been Dean at six different colleges. He remarked at the Forum that (1) the rhetoric is real and that the Gentleman's Rule and Mission are special and abided by; (2) Relationships are hard- wired and the College is student centered; (3) Wabash men exhibit confidence and humility.....and they also exhibit stability, positive restlessness and resourcefulness.

ATHLETICS

Wabash has a robust athletic program competing in Division-3 Baseball, Basketball, Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, Swimming, Tennis, Track and Field, Volleyball and Wrestling. Whew!! Coaches at all levels have a skin in their sport to attract prospective student athletes.

The Football team is coached by newcomer, Jake Gilbert, Wabash '98. He was hand-picked by retired former Head Coach, Don Morel, to succeed himself and to make sure Wabash continued its fine tradition on the gridiron. Gilbert had coached high school football with a great deal of success, most notably at Westfield High in Indiana. The team is now 7-1 having lost to conference leader, John Carroll, by three points earlier in the season. The DePauw game is at Crawfordsville on November 15th. DePauw, 7-1, also lost a close game to John Carroll, 27-31, so the Monon Bell game could be a dandy. Whether you're going to the game, attending a watch party, or streaming it at home, here's where you can find out more information: <https://www.wabash.edu/alumni/mononbell/>

Finally, it is a pleasure to communicate mostly positive news about the status of Wabash, its students and staff. Here's a footnote from the Alumni Office. The College's Founders Day is approaching, November 21, 1832. The Sphinx Club conducted a "Founders' Chapel" on November 6 to acknowledge our founding. What is newsworthy is that students were invited to sing with the Glee Club the Alma Mater, a choral masterpiece that has not been as meaningful to recent classes as it was in our era.

On behalf of Al and Bruce, we wish you the Best.

Tom Billings