22 October 2013

Dear Ladies and Men of the Wabash Class of 1951:

I had intended this letter be one reporting on the recent Wabash Homecoming which I was planning on attending. As a matter of fact I had the car packed and was on my way. I was going a day earlier than usual as I wanted to attend a class or two on Friday as well as the Athletic Hall of Fame dinner Friday evening. Driving through rain, sometimes heavy, I made it to the south side of Milwaukee when my car went into a spin and I crashed into a concrete wall. Fortunately no one hit me nor did I hit anyone as I spun to the wall. My car was totaled and I had cuts on my foot and arm together with a bump on my head and a bruise on my hip. So ended my trip to Homecoming 2013.

I have discovered a great way to stay current with the progress of our Little Giant football team. I just go to the Wabash web page and click on the camera image for the football game at game time on Saturday. The home games are always shown and I even got to see an away game. We are 6-0 so far and something like 13th in Division III. We started the season with about 140 men out for football and now dress over one hundred for home games. So far we have shown a great defense and especially strong running game with four different running backs having 140 plus rushing yard games. Of course the big games against Wittenberg and DePauw are yet to come. Wittenberg is now ranked 14th in Division III.
I believe our class finished the fiscal year in second or third place in participation once again. What a fine record you have established! Here are the Class of ’51 Little Giants who have helped us earn this fantastic record:

Fritz Albershardt       Warren Jackson       Margaret Regnier
Patricia Allman        Stu Jacobs          Janice Rhoads
Wally Allman            Bob Joel            Jack Schenck
Ray Bentley             Holly Lasalle       Jack Schick
Herb Brooks              Ellwood Lewis      Bill Schooler
Ben Calacci             Nick Longsworth, Jr. Tully Shaw
Jim Clark               Bill MacDougall     Don Shepherd
Marianne Cullinan       Don Martin          Doug Simmons
Joe Daszek              Dan McLaren         Jim Slagle
Bill Dunbar, Jr.         Don Mefford        Joe Smith
Bill Ellis               Bob Montgomery      Bill Von Der Lehr
Alan Gise               Bill Orman          Mary Beth Wahl
Chuck Goering            Larry Paikos       Sandy Wright
Dick Griesser            Roger Parsell      Carol Yoder
Elmer Halwes, Jr.        Allen Pierson

Did I tell you that it is the grandson of Bill MacDougall ’51 who is the place kicker and kick off specialist on the Little Giant football squad?

I’ve had several nice phone visits with Bill over the last year and am sad to pass on that Bill’s wife, Mary, died last July. His daughter, Meg sent me an obit which I am passing on with this letter.

Mary Lewis Obear MacDougall, 83, surrounded by family in her beloved home overlooking the lake, went into the arms of her Creator July 1, 2013. Her kind and understanding blue eyes and loving nature, felt by so many, was shared most with her husband, William A. MacDougall. Her devotion to and care for proper grammar and etiquette, she would be happy to know, is appreciated by those most often on the receiving end of her suggestions, her daughters Susan M. Coleman, Margaret L., Allison M. Hamrin, and her sons, Robert M. and W. James. Her life was filled with joy, love and laughter by her parents, James H and Mary M Obear, siblings, James/Jody and Patricia/Ken and those brought to her family through marriage, Neal Coleman (Neal Edgar: Rachel & Claire/Will, Peter, Mary, Gabriel, Elizabeth), Jennifer Gath (Ian, Emma), David Hamrin (Daniel, Katie), the soon to join Paula L. Merline and by friends and family too numerous to be named here. Mary, true to her married initials, M.O.M., was a mother to all. After a BA from DePauw University she taught school for several years, then stayed home with a growing family, while Bill worked tirelessly for MacDougall & Assoc. Her loving presence extended
beyond the home, as she was very active in book groups, PTA, Band Boosters, 4H, Horse Quiz Bowl, Church Choir, Sunday School, the Church nursery and in a later return to substitute teaching at Sheridan Elementary. All while managing an ever-changing herd of dogs, cats, gerbils, fish and ultimately horses while an endless stream of family, friends and children’s friends trooped through homes from Ohio, New York, and Indiana to the lakeside Michigan home she loved so much. She will be missed in the same way Bill always expressed his love to her, a blessing refrain through their earthly 58 years together, “More than yesterday, less than tomorrow.” A celebration of her life can be joined at Sheridan Congregational Church on Saturday, July 6th at 11:00am followed by a luncheon at the Sheridan VFW. In lieu of flowers, we ask that any memorial donations be made to Sheridan Congregational Church or Mid-Michigan Home Care and Hospice. A special thanks to her loving caregivers: Gina, Deb, Shelly, Lauri, Nancy, Regina, Rita, Morgan, Becca, Elsie, and Melissa.

Tom Cole wrote that he is well at 83 and wondering what happened to Tom Hamilton. If anyone knows anything of Tom, you can pass it on to Tom Cole at franzie122@comcast.net. He’d like to hear from you.

It seems that everyone I talk with wants to know what I think of our new president, Gregory Hess. I had planned on meeting him on my ill-fated trip to Homecoming. I just received an email from Tom Runge with an article from the Lafayette Journal Courier which gives some good insight into Greg and his plans for Wabash.

I want to thank all of you for granting me the privilege of being your class agent all these years. You’ve been great and you deserve all the credit for the splendid record our class has established. It is getting harder and harder for me to get good letters to you as I age. Thank you to all the Class of 1951 family for the support you’ve given me. You are all very special and your friendship is cherished.

My best to all,

Richard H. Griesser ’51

Class Agent
Wabash College president outlines vision, says admitting women 'not on the radar'
Written by Hayleigh Colombo
Oct. 20, 2013

About Wabash College

Location: Crawfordsville, (25 miles south of Lafayette) Founded: 1832 Type: Private, independent, four-year liberal arts college for men, granting bachelor of arts degrees. Enrollment: 906 Endowment: $320 million as of June 30 Tuition and fees: $35,650

Sources: Wabash College, U.S. News & World Report

College's gender-specific enrollment policy.

Despite animated discussion in higher education about the need to equip future generations with job-ready technical skills, Wabash College's newly inaugurated president says the all-male liberal arts college remains committed to arming graduates with "the ability to act, to see and to speak."

“Our true academic mission — to liberally educate each and every student — is a timeless reminder of the lives we change here at Wabash College, one young man at a time,” Hess said at the Oct. 11 inauguration attended by more than 600.

“For while the problems facing higher education and the world are complex, the solutions need not be. Amidst the jostle and the fray and the haranguing static and noise that often surround our academic endeavor, stands our foundation: the simple gifts of the liberal arts."

Hess officially joined Wabash College on July 1, coming from Claremont McKenna College, where he was vice president of academic affairs and dean of the faculty. Hess, who has a Ph.D. in economics from Johns Hopkins University, succeeded Patrick E. White, who announced he would step down in May 2012 because he wanted the college to transition into a new era.

Hess said his ultimate mission is to prepare students for life after college — not just a particular career.

“In almost any profession you go into, the most important thing is to ultimately ask the right question and find the right answer,” Hess said. “Students with a liberal arts education ... are taught about ways to look at things broadly and from all angles. That’s where the success lies.”

An agenda for the new president already is emerging.

In an interview with the Journal & Courier, he laid out his priorities, which include fundraising, flipping classrooms, strengthening partnerships with nearby higher education institutions and improving student...
"We're going to try to play some offense in terms of creating new programs that allow students to do what I call 'liberal arts plus,'" Hess said. "We're going to find some ways to continue to provide opportunities to improve leadership development and help them connect more to the outside world.

"I don't mind trying some experiments and pilots to see what works best."

**Single gender focus**

One thing Hess won't experiment with, however, is the college's all-male status. Wabash is one of three all-male liberal arts colleges remaining in the United States, and he sees no reason to change. Indeed, he thinks the reasons for maintaining the status quo are greater than ever.

"The co-education discussion is not on the radar here at Wabash ...", he said.

"While clearly there are paths to more empower women in higher education (particularly science) — I have one daughter in college and one who is a senior in high school — there is also a sense that many young men are falling behind in higher education.

"College participation rates, particularly for liberal arts colleges, are significantly lower for men. Completion rates, too. The same is true for high school. Wabash is the type of institution that is specifically designed to counteract these social trends, as we build an environment of responsibility for men, where hard work, educational attainment, leadership and consideration of others are valued and collectively reinforced.

Hess is coming to Wabash at a time when the college's financial situation is improving. After the endowment plummeted from $390 million after the 2008 financial crisis to $256.9 million, it has slowly increased to about 80 percent of its former value.

In 2012, Wabash College reported a $317.9 million endowment balance on its federal 990s, a financial form all not-for-profit institutions must fill out.

"We're in the same boat with everybody else," Hess said. "We think there's some blue skies out there, but we're still keeping our eye out. The overall higher ed business model is under pressure for all institutions."

He said he anticipates fundraising will be a priority and a challenge during his tenure.

"It's a pretty competitive environment right now ... on the philanthropic side. If you can demonstrate to people your success in terms of what your alums have been able to do, it makes life a lot easier."

As Wabash seeks to improve to pre-recession financial stability, Hess said cost savings are a priority.

"People know the financial environment is pretty fragile," Hess said. "We keep an eye on keeping our costs down and using our resources well. All institutions are going to face some hurt if something financially happens again."

**Upgrades planned**

Hess hopes to increase the number of flipped, or hybrid, classrooms, a goal he shares with nearby
Purdue University, where President Mitch Daniels recently announced an initiative to redesign about 300 of the land grant university’s courses by 2017.

In a flipped classroom, students receive their lecture material before class, then spend time in class applying that information to discussion, projects or exercises.

“Purdue has made some good choices that way,” said Hess. Wabash College expects to flip about six classes in the short term. “We are doing some experimenting with technology and how that can improve classroom performance.”

Another priority for Hess is ramping up relationships with nearby colleges.

Since 2011, Wabash students have been able to take advantage of a dual-degree program in engineering with Purdue, which allows them to earn a bachelor of arts degree and a bachelor of science degree, and specialize in either mechanical, electrical and computer, chemical or multidisciplinary engineering.

This year the college signed an agreement with Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business to formalize “a pipeline program that will guide Wabash students through the prerequisites for admission” to Kelley’s master’s program in accounting.

Under Hess’ leadership, the look of Wabash College could change significantly if he succeeds in making what he believes are important improvements in student life.

“We have some building projects we’ve talked about for a while,” he said. “We’re going to try to get those plans going. We need some additional housing and some higher-quality teaching space.

“Our student center was built in the 1950s, so it probably needs a refresh pretty soon.”

What others say

Stakeholders from across the Crawfordsville campus expressed optimism about Hess’ tenure.

“People talk about first impressions being incomplete ... (but) I’m very impressed with the picture I gain of this man so far,” said Richard Bowen, assistant professor of music and director of Wabash’s glee club. “We have what I would call outsized expectations for our president. We really believe a few good men can change the world. That’s a pretty high expectation.”

Bowen said it is “probably not coincidence” that the search committee selected a candidate with expertise in economics.

“Any institution, particularly private institutions, has to be concerned about their bottom line,” Bowen said. “Prices keep going up, and it’s not just as simple as ‘We’ll keep increasing tuition.’ ”

Stephen Bowen, chairman of Wabash College’s board of trustees, said he was confident that Hess would be a good leader in a challenging time for higher education.

“(Wabash) has a rich history of accomplishment,” he said at the inauguration. “It will rise to any challenge. What (matters) is that we go forward from this place with a renewed commitment to our mission, that we
put to good use the power of this community, and that we dare to believe that the best days of this great college are yet to come."

Student body president Jeremy Wentzel called Hess "a man with a pointed and precise focus on holistically shepherding Wabash College to become the liberal arts college for men."