



## WABASH COLLEGE

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### *Class Agents Letter*

Alumni and Parent Relations

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### **Class of 2000**

### **Class Agents**

Pat East

Jeff Rice

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Early March 2016

Members of the Class of 2000... happy (almost) Spring!

### **Entrepreneurship Summit**

A month ago, I was on campus to speak at the Entrepreneurship Summit. It's Wabash's 5<sup>th</sup> one and is the largest in the state. It attracted 200 students from 15 colleges and universities. Though it's not just for college students. I've run my own business for 12 years and learned a ton from folks who were significantly smarter and savvier. The speakers the College invited were world class. Folks with a ton of experience across multiple sectors like advertising, venture capital, accelerators, and medical devices. The closing keynote - Stacy Enxing Seng of ev3 Incorporated - built her company in less than a decade and sold it - along with a co-founder - for 2.6b in an all-cash transaction. All of this was courtesy of a very generous alumnus, Jim Dreher '85, a medical device entrepreneur and founder of Option3, a medical device accelerator, who revived this conference and is funding four new workshops later this year.



### **Liberal Arts Plus**

Who would have thought that a liberal arts school would be a state leader in entrepreneurship? It's part of the new president's initiative for "liberal arts plus" - he's very progressive and forward-thinking to recognize that today's students want more preparation for business and he's putting time, effort, and resources behind this. Among other things, he started Wabash's CIBE - the center for innovation, business, and entrepreneurship - and formalized the area of concentration in business to an actual minor. No longer do students have to explain what an "area of concentration" is to their parents or future employers!

## Partnership with Crawfordsville

Wabash is definitely on the radar of government officials, too. In addition to Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann, our classmate and Crawfordsville mayor, **Todd Barton**, gave opening remarks. They're doing some very cool things in Crawfordsville (I know, right?) for economic development. The city has been designated as a "STELLAR" community and is eligible for up to \$17mm in funding from the state. The city is also building an all-in-one facility for economic development called "Fusion 54 Center" that will offer co-working space and house the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Department, and the CIBE, among others. The day before my presentation, the head of small business development for the state was visiting with me in Bloomington. I told him I was heading to Crawfordsville the next day and without missing a beat, he says, "For the Entrepreneurship Summit?" Wabash and Crawfordsville are definitely top of mind with the right people that can give support.

In non-entrepreneurship news...

## The Delts have returned

In our last class agent letter, we announced that the Delts were coming back. It's official now! After a seven-year absence, the chapter was re-colonized officially on February 18. To the right is a pic of their re-colonization ceremony in the Chapel that the Butler Delts attended. More on this from the Delts' national website:



<http://www.delts.org/blog/2015/12/09/expansion/delta-tau-delta-returns-to-wabash-college/>

## How the College continues to improve



To the left is a pic of the dinner the night before the Entrepreneurship Summit. (The executive chef from Bon Appetit is explaining the dishes - he was pretty excited not to make a 100 lbs of mashed potatoes - one of which was lamb from Dean Feller's farm!) No one wanted to sit next to President Hess, so I volunteered and talked his ear off for 90 minutes. Two cool tidbits I learned on what the College is doing to improve even further...

## **International recruitment**

They're focusing on international recruiting and increasing the frequency of travel is towards the top of the priority list. The College has previously only had a single admissions trip outside of the United States, which was to India. And admissions was already on a tear before this initiative started... I think the goal is to have 1000+ students (up from the ~800 when we were undergrads), which will significantly improve finances at the College since most expenses will stay relatively flat. As of a month ago, they generated 600 admits and 300 deposits, which is significantly up from most years (maybe double? - my memory on this is a bit hazy).

## **Freshmen retention**

Freshmen retention has increased from the low 90's to the high 90's this academic year. This is attributed to two main factors. The first is a grant the College received to improve orientation for first-generation college students (that's 40% of our students!) and their parents. If you're a parent of a college student but you didn't attend college yourself, you literally don't know how to help your son through the tough parts. For example, what if you've always thought your son should be an economics major but what if he doesn't have the aptitude for it? Besides helping the students acclimate to Wabash faster, the orientation taught parents how to think through those situations so they could provide the right guidance and support. The second is that the College filtered applications from students with high SAT scores but low GPAs. Those students clearly have the intelligence to attend Wabash but if there's one thing that Wallies need to succeed, it's a good work ethic and a high GPA is more illustrative of those students.

Overall, I came away from my conversations with President Hess (no one wanted to sit next to him at lunch the following day either...) very impressed. Beyond sheer intelligence, he clearly loves the College already, has a vision from where the College needs to head, and has a handle on how to get there.

## **Classmate news**

On January 2, co-owners/brewers Damon Carl '03 and **Matt Kriech '00** celebrated with beer and donuts on the first anniversary of Wabash Brewing Taproom and Brewery in Indy.

After more than a decade in commercial real estate, **Tim Craft** is now the Director of Business Relationships at On Target Health, an obesity management solution company.

Save the date! On 4/21, the IAWM will hold a Leadership Breakfast at the NCAA Hall of Champions. In addition to a presentation on the impact of Wabash on Indiana's economy from President Hess, **Ryan Vaughn** will join a panel consisting of Bob Grand '78, David Lewis '81, and Clay Robinson '97.

Yours in Wabash,  
Pat, Jeff, Tim, and Trevor

P.S. In case you missed them, here are links to our letters from 2015:

[http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class\\_of\\_2000\\_December\\_2015\\_LetterTR.pdf](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class_of_2000_December_2015_LetterTR.pdf)

[http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class\\_of\\_2000\\_Late\\_September\\_2015\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class_of_2000_Late_September_2015_Letter.pdf)

[http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class\\_of\\_2000\\_Late\\_June\\_2015\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class_of_2000_Late_June_2015_Letter.pdf)

[http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class\\_of\\_2000\\_Early\\_February\\_2015\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class_of_2000_Early_February_2015_Letter.pdf)

[http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class\\_of\\_2000\\_January\\_2015\\_Letter.pdf](http://www.wabash.edu/alumni/docs/Class_of_2000_January_2015_Letter.pdf)