

NAWM Spring 2025 Meeting Minutes

Day 1 – Friday, May 16, 2025

Attendees – Todd Vogel, Ron Dostal, Kyle Bender, Ayden Salpietra, Ken Farris, Dustin DeNeal, Kevin Meyer, Chris Carpenter, Jared Lange, Tony Unfried, Jim Hawksworth, Wayne Hentrup, Kip Chase, Mike Simmons, Brian Shelbourne, Dave Zimmerman, Bobby Horton, Harsh Singh, Andy Wilkinson

Visitors – Mike Warren, Ram Kharel, Hugh Vandivier, Emily Vetne, Jonah Billups

Opening Remarks

Jim opened the meeting by detailing today's agenda, highlighting interactions with graduating seniors in the morning and multiple touchpoints with the Board of Trustees throughout the day. Jim recommended the NAWM continue interactions with the Board of Trustees and be more intentional in those interactions, citing that 33% of the Board of Trustees have experience on the NAWM board. Jim also invited the NAWM board to baccalaureate and commencement on Saturday afternoon.

Kip moved to approve the minutes from Winter 2025, Chris seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Jim introduced two students to the NAWM board – Ayden Salpietra '27 as our new student representative and Ram Kharel '28 (Ron's intern for the summer).

Jim and Ron then detailed highlights at Wabash during the segment "Since our Last Meeting." Updates included the beginning of the Sparks demolition, a campus-wide Family Day (with 3x attendance compared to recent history), the two Admitted Students Weekends (next year's April 10-11). Jim discussed the Admitted Students Weekend and recommended some improvements, particularly trying to get more parents to the parents' reception on Friday evening. Jim noted that many parents still have undecided students on where to attend school for higher education, so NAWM can be helpful in providing reassurance for their deposits. Ron also discussed the impact of the Wabash Women's Collective, noting \$95K in impact grants awarded by that group. Bobby then briefly discussed the hiring of Dr. Scott Brown as the new Dean of Students, noting his background and optimism about his fit at Wabash (e.g., has worked at other institutions with high fraternity involvement).

Jim shifted to allow the NAWM Board to discuss "Deeds Noble and Grand" led by members of the NAWM Board. Brian noted the open football practices held by Coach Gilbert and cited a conversation with a parent who marveled at the number of alumni at the practice. Ron and Kip added to Brian's comment, with Ron citing that we're at 290 deposits. The NAWM Board shifted to discussing how to support fraternities, with a discussion about Kappa Sigma having low membership. Mike noted that they need a good advisor, noting that it's been a 10-year struggle to find an advisor. Mike also noted that the attitude of coaches to the fraternity system is improving, but that challenges remain (citing the physical plant issues at many houses). Bobby discussed the upcoming Wabash 101 days in June (June 9, 16, and 20) for deposited students to

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learn about day-to-day life at Wabash and academic advising, and he invited NAWM members to support residence life planning, particularly fraternity promotion. After the fraternity conversation, Kyle noted the Wabash alumni promotion at the Pacers game in April. Chris noted that Dr. Brooks recently passed away; however, before he passed, President Feller and Dean McDorman held a private ceremony for Dr. Brooks to see his grandson John Roberts graduate from Wabash.

Annual Fund Update

Hugh and Emily provided an update on the Annual Fund and the Day of Giving. Hugh and Emily shared a current number (close to finalization) of \$1.822M from 8,271 gifts. Four notes:

- 8th Consecutive Year \$1M raised
- \$2,134 raised per student
- 61 affinity challenges (13 new ones), 27 class challenges, with about 70% of those challenges meeting their goal (Hugh wants that percentage to go up)
- 132 new individual challengers (up 12 from last year)

Emily started by thanking the NAWM Board for 100% participation of the NAWM Board Lead Challenge portion, with a total donation of \$12,042 to the lead challenge specifically. Emily noted that the theme for the day was “Sing Thy Praises” to mark 125 years the lyrics to “Old Wabash”, and she shared that President Feller found the comments/shout-outs to be the most rewarding/fulfilling part of the day. Hugh discussed campus culture on the day, citing the involvement of a group of seniors who helped plan & add more lively events to mark the day (e.g., battle of the bands, tailgate before a baseball game, and a “hat bar”). Emily also noted a new idea implemented about finding plush squirrels to trigger \$100 gifts and highlighted the NAWM Instagram page in promoting the event (877% increase in traffic to the account on the day. Chris noted that we seemed to differentiate from other Days of Giving and asked for what they consider the most poignant dot points as to why we differentiate – Emily promised to provide in the final distillation. Brian complemented the team on how they keep the day fresh and continue to provide great outcomes.

Hugh and Emily shifted to annual fund year-end finalization. While numbers are still being finalized, Hugh and Emily foreshadowed that NAWM members will be asked to help meet the number goal (\$3.75M) and the participation goal (40% alumni participation) through outreach to likely targets to give. Emily noted the importance of annual fund contributions to the College’s operating budget and pushing to reduce the endowment draw.

Coffee and Donuts with Seniors

The group held a meet and greet with graduating seniors to network, with Jim Hawksworth providing remarks.

Alumni Engagement: FY25 Q3 Report

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Ron provided his report on alumni engagement trends in the past few months. Ron noted that around 47% of alumni are engaged with the College, which compares equally to the past couple of years. Ron reaffirmed the engagement cliff of 5 and 10 years out from graduation and noted his focus is to drop the slope of disengagement as young alums, which should raise the floor of engaged alumni. Ron shared that taking out nongrads, 61% of degree-holding alumni are engaged with the College. Ron discussed potentially carving out nongrads, but he decided not to pursue this point because it would differ significantly from what other colleges are doing. That said, Ron noted he is going to report on nongrads and graduates separately and focus more on driving engagement of graduates on the whole.

Ron's report transitioned into a discussion about the data collection on engagement, with discussions and questions involving how to decipher data on email open rates, the proper medium to communicate with young alumni, and the potential for using a texting platform. Ron noted that Ram and him will be focused on this question going into the summer.

Ron then discussed alumni voting trends with data from the most recent election. Ron shared that 7.2% of alumni voted in alumni elections for 2025 and 16.8% of alumni have voted in at least one election in the last three years. Additionally, Ron illustrated that the target audience is opening the emails at a 26% rate, with a click rate of 4%. Ron argued that the difference between the open rate and click rate showed a general lack of interest in the voting process. Dustin argued that the click rate and generally low voting numbers may reflect a perception of alumni viewing the candidates as qualified. Brian mentioned the IU alumni voting numbers and how that was cited by Gov. Braun as a reason for more state involvement in determining the composition of the IU Board of Trustees, and he noted that our numbers are much higher than IU.

Kevin asked in light of all the data presented, what does Ron feel is the most useful area to focus on. Ron answered by recommending focusing on the "engaged somewhat" group among the alumni who graduated from Wabash.

Committee Breakouts – NAWM board members joined committee meetings for 90 minutes in the afternoon.

Nominating Committee Topics

Tony presented the work of the Nominating Committee. The topics were as follows:

- Alumni Trustee: Munawar Ali won the vote for a term through May 2029
- NAWM Director at Large Vote: John Castro, CP Porter, and Andy Wilkinson won the at-large vote through May 2028
- NAWM Director at Large Appointments: The Nominating Committee recommended Patrick Kenney, Brian Parks, Byron Lamm, and Sean Lyons. Kevin moved to approve, Todd seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- NAWM Regional Rep. Appointments: The Nominating Committee recommended Brian Clem and Ben Grisemer as regional reps. Kevin moved to approve, Todd seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

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- Honorary Alumnus: The Nominating Committee recommended Cheryl Everett, Phil Kenney, and Clyde Morgan. Kip moved to approve, Mike seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Butler-Turner Student-Alumni Engagement Award: The Nominating Committee recommended Buck Waddell (Wabash Director of Safety & Security) for the award. Mike moved, Chris seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Frank Misch Alumni Distinguished Service Award: The Nominating Committee recommended Jay Allen. Kip moved, Mike seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Jeremy Wright Young Alum Distinguished Service Award: The Nominating Committee recommended Jake German. Kevin moved, Andy seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Fredrick Urbaska Distinguished Service Award: The Nominating Committee recommended Eugene Anderson. Andy moved, Kevin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Clarence Jackson Distinguished Career Achievement Award: The Nominating Committee recommended Chuck Killion. Kip moved, Kevin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Career Services Fellow: The Nominating Committee recommended Alejandro Reyna. Mike moved, Chris seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
- Alumni Admissions Fellow: The Nominating Committee recommended Michael Myers. Jim moved, Chris seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

After approval of the various slates, Jim encouraged the group to submit names for consideration of the various awards. Tony and Kip agreed, with Kip reminding people to not buy into the backlog hesitation and keep the foot on the gas to make “a fat list”. The NAWM Board then discussed the validity of needing to build the list through alumni outreach. Ron also recommended a mindset shift in the Nominating Committee from just processing nominations to thinking who we think is deserving to be awarded.

Day 2 – Saturday, May 17, 2025

Attendees – Ron Dostal, Dustin DeNeal, Ken Farris, Brian Shelbourne, Kyle Bender, Chris Carpenter, Jared Lange, Andy Wilkinson, Jim Hawksworth, Kevin Meyer, Dave Zimmerman, Todd Vogel, Bobby Horton, Tony Unfried, Wayne Hentrup, Kip Chase, Jonah Billups, Mike Berry

Visitors – Mike Warren

Jim opened the meeting by discussing last night’s dinner with the Board of Trustees. Chris felt there was momentum for the groups to work together on “complementary efforts”. Wayne and Todd agreed, with Todd promoting the idea of a leadership summit between both groups and the Women’s Collective on a less frequent basis. Kip reminded the group that we also have a responsibility to help maintain and foster regional club engagement, and we should not lose sight of our responsibility to support that development when examining how to network with the trustees and making NAWM a pipeline for the trusteeship. Brian commented that Ron can help liaison us with the trustees from the perspective of “what can we do to support their work” in ways that are fitting for our body. Ron agreed and shared that the NAWM’s focus giving-wise is

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more long-term (next campaign and the campaign after that), while the trustees are more focused on current needs for their philanthropy. Ron views NAWM's role in part as helping foster the engagement and connectivity to build the base for future philanthropy and volunteer efforts on behalf of the College.

Dustin shifted the discussion to how we balance service to the college with being visible leaders among the alumni body. Dustin noted that we should be the "tip of the spear" on much of the regional groups. Wayne agreed, specifically emphasizing the need to focus on the young alumni and coordinating with the regional groups on the hand-off of contact information to leaders of the regional groups.

Committee Reports

Data Review – Chris started the report out by arguing that we need to continue reviewing engagement data sources, identification of gaps in our engagement data, and understand how to leverage the data. Chris noted that Brad Weaver has not been super helpful in working with the committee between meetings, with Chris acknowledging that Brad's day-to-day work likely prevents him from prioritizing working with engagement data examinations (and thus being a champion for this work on campus). Chris did highlight LinkedIn single sign-on adoption as an accomplishment to help gather more and better data, with the recognition that this simple solution reflects the antiquity of alumni eServices. Chris and the committee noted the next step is LinkedIn single sign-on on the phones, as the committee feels that a phone number (for texting purposes) will be key to connect with young alumni. Ron argued that data is not the issue itself; what the bigger issue is centers on a willingness of alumni to self-report changes in contact info. Jared argued that we should be less focused on gaps in the data and more focused on using technologies to send targeted communications on optimal methods (e.g., texting platforms knowing phone numbers don't change often).

The committee recommended two action items: (1) continued refinement of processes to data hygiene; and (2) work with the data of members in Segment 3 to discern incremental gains to shift them into Segment 4.

Comms & Visibility – Todd discussed how the committee met with Kylie Stine in Advancement and focused on social media visibility. Todd noted that the NAWM Instagram account grew significantly during the Day of Giving (800%+ engagement), and that we should continue to bring new content on the page.

Two main asks for the group: (1) like AND comment on NAWM instagram posts; and (2) develop cross posting with groups that connect for various affinities (e.g., Big Bash with the Redpack affinity group). Todd reported Kylie's sentiment that there's plenty of content out there to collab, but it often needs to be distilled into something more palatable for Instagram. Although unable to make this month's meeting, Todd noted that NAWM board member CP Porter will continue to bring positive insights and suggestions to work on these action steps. Bobby noted that the coffee and donuts with the seniors on Friday might be the most visible and impactful event NAWM held this weekend.

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Recognition of Retiring Directors and Transition of Officers

Jim presented all retiring directors with a plaque of recognition and gave remarks of appreciation. Retiring members:

- Jonah Billups
- Wayne Hentrup
- Mike Berry
- Ken Farris
- Kip Chase

Ron then thanked Jim for his tenure as NAWM President and presented him with a commemorative gavel as a symbol of his service. Jim gave brief remarks as a reflection on his tenure, emphasizing the honor in serving as President of an institution he adores and working with each member on NAWM. Jim then transitioned the Presidency to Tony and allowed him to give brief remarks.

Dustin moved to close the meeting, Kevin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.