



October 22, 2020

Men of Wabash,

I acknowledge the frustration that you may feel at having a year of your life at Wabash disrupted by COVID, and I know the sacrifices you are making. I feel it, too. I have a son not much older than you. While seeing you on campus brings me a lot of joy, I think every day about the fact that I have not seen my son and other family members in six months because of the pandemic. My parents are both deceased, but I have an uncle who is very important to me. He has stage four cancer and I struggle every day with the possibility that I may never be able to see him face to face again. And every day I speak with members of this community who are making much greater sacrifices than me.

I can't get the concept of sacrifice out of my mind. Today's Chapel speaker, Anthony Douglas '17 (soon to be Dr. Douglas), is my former student. As excited as I was to have him back on campus, I kept thinking about what we are sacrificing. I wasn't able to give Anthony a hug or even a handshake to demonstrate my love for and pride in him. The sense of loss and sacrifice extends to Anthony's family. His father, Anthony, Sr., is a great friend of our College and I miss seeing him as much as I miss his son. Last week, I had to tell the Douglas family that they could not come to campus to see their son give his Chapel Talk.

Young alumni like Anthony motivate me every day to provide the life-changing experience of a Wabash education to young men like you.

So, I want you to know that I understand the sacrifices you and your families have been asked to make. I admire and appreciate what most of you are doing. But not everyone is making all the sacrifices necessary for us to stay together. And, because of the surging COVID-19 case numbers in our state, the actions of some are putting the rest of us at risk. Weekly case numbers in our region have doubled since you began the semester, and any risks that endanger this community are no longer acceptable.

When you arrived in August, I asked you to act responsibly and the majority of you have. I asked you to hold each other accountable and most of you have stepped up. But today, we are at a tipping point: the decisions of some individuals are unfairly taking away opportunities for others. As many students have reminded me, the College has a role in this accountability. Therefore, until you are informed otherwise, the following expectations must be met by every student at all times:

1. Masks must be worn at all times indoors unless you are in your sleeping room alone or with your roommate. If another student is in the room, everyone must be masked. Masks must be worn outside in any case where physical distancing cannot be assured. Do not congregate to eat or drink when masks could be down.
2. Physical distancing of six feet must be maintained at all times in all situations.



Wabash.

3. If more than one person is in a vehicle, masks must be worn and the windows rolled down.
4. No off-campus guests may enter a Wabash building. Despite Dean Redding's explicit prohibition of guests, I have seen evidence of violation of this and have authorized the expulsion of two students who allowed guests on campus last weekend.
5. Any student leaving Crawfordsville [must notify Dean Welch](#) by email with the location and purpose of your travel. Under no circumstances should any student visit another college or university campus. Any student leaving campus must commit to the guidance in the first three bullet points.
6. No student should visit an indoor dining or drinking establishment. To-go options remain a good way to treat yourself or for someone else to do something special for you. Crawfordsville will be visited this weekend by thousands of fans and participants for a large motocross race, which makes this a particularly risky situation.

These guidelines are in direct response to tracing investigations that identified Wabash students who caught COVID from a family member, a girlfriend, or at an off-campus location. Unfortunately, it is not just those students living with the consequences of their actions. At this point, nearly 100 of your Wabash brothers are in quarantine or isolation because of the poor decisions of a few. All of you need to know that we are dangerously close to an early end to our semester of residential education.

In summary, while I understand the need for human interaction, you must tighten up the Wabash bubble. For the remaining few weeks of the semester you may need to find those interactions from a phone call, a text, a meal over Zoom, or a brief, physically distanced and masked meeting outdoors.

When we look back at history, we see that previous generations have made sacrifices, both during their time on campus and in their generosity to support future generations of Wabash men. While sacrifices are rarely fun, they are necessary. History is watching us, and it is our time to prove that this generation of Wabash men is up to the challenge.

Wash your hands. Wear a mask. Watch your distance. Weigh your choices.

This is how we fight.

President Feller

