

April 17, 2020

To the students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni and trustees of Wabash College:

We will continue our stay-at-home order until May 1, and will await further guidance from state and local policy makers and public health officials. Beyond that, there have been no significant developments in the College's response to the COVID-19 pandemic this week, so I'd like to use this letter to share some good news and updates.

For the third straight week our community has been treated to a thoughtful Chapel Talk. Political Science Professor Shamira Gelbman spoke Thursday and asked us to reflect on our own traditions – even as we postpone or cancel those traditions that matter most to us. I encourage you to watch her talk on our [YouTube](#) channel if you didn't catch it live. At a time when so many of us are at a loss for words, our spirits have been lifted by these weekly Chapel Talks, which have brought us together – albeit virtually – to think critically and reflect on our current predicament.

Congratulations to Charlie Easterline '21 and Dane Smith '22 on their election as president and vice president, respectively, of the student body. All of us are grateful for the thoughtful leadership provided by outgoing President Mohammed "Dayem" Adnan '20, Vice President Corbin Landrum '20, and their team. Charlie has already reached out to Dean Feller to begin planning for the coming year as we continue to improve the experience for all students.

I was pleased to see the announcement that the Smash Bros virtual tournament competition will start this week. No, I've never played Smash on Nintendo! But I am so happy that our students are staying connected in such creative ways. Our students' deep sense of brotherhood and all of the relationships we forge here at Wabash will get us through this crisis – stronger and more resilient than ever.

Similarly, hat's off to the creative people in the Communications and Marketing Office, whose social media posts have engaged and entertained us. From Spirit Week to [Brain Breaks](#) and even Quarantunes, these light, interactive posts have kept us connected through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. We are also grateful for the [inspiring stories](#) written about our staff, faculty, and students that are posted on our website.

Next Thursday, April 23, we'll celebrate our annual Awards Chapel. This is one of my favorite events of the year – a time when we pause to recognize outstanding academic achievement. While we will not be able to gather in the Chapel, I urge you to join our [live streamed event](#) during which Division Chairs, Deans, and I will honor outstanding academic, athletic, and teaching excellence.

The Enrollment staff and coaches continue to recruit the Class of 2024. As of this morning, the College has received 177 deposits for this fall – that's 15% more than on the same date last year and significantly higher than the prior two years. Plans are being finalized for Wabash 101

programs, which this summer will be held in a virtual format. Entering students will get assistance with advising, course selection, and student support services on June 12, 19, and 26.

More good news: Wabash will offer a free, half-credit discussion-based course to incoming freshmen that will provide a liberal arts prospective on the global pandemic. [“COVID-19 and the Liberal Arts”](#) is a seven-week, multidisciplinary course taught by 14 professors and several student preceptors. Entering students who have deposited at Wabash by May 1 are eligible for this course, which will feature thoughtful lectures followed by discussions of short essays and films. The discussions will touch on healthcare, policy, ethics, and compassion. I extend my appreciation to the faculty who brought forward this idea and to Registrar Jon Jump, Dean Scott Feller, and Senior Associate Dean Jill Lamberton for putting this exciting program together so quickly.

I have fielded (no pun intended) a lot of questions about the construction of Little Giant Stadium. As you are aware, the Governor has indicated that the construction trades are essential. Our construction partner, F.A. Wilhelm, is well-known for its strong safety record and we have been assured that workers are taking necessary precautions. For those who have not been around the campus recently, seen photos, or checked out [the webcam](#), the old stadium turf has been removed (much of it will be recycled and/or re-used). Masonry work on the main concourse walls and restrooms is well underway. And structural steel is being assembled. The project remains on schedule – with thanks to Adriann Rhoades, who oversees planning and construction for the College, and Athletics Director Matt Tanney.

Finally, I want to close by thanking our partners Bon Appetit and Sodexo. Food service employees are serving three meals a day to our students in residence and essential employees. Campus Services personnel are keeping our buildings clean and safe, and have begun working to clean student living units. Thank you to the leadership and staff for making a real difference for our College.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay home. I promise you, in return, Wabash will stay strong.

Gregory D. Hess
President