



May 21, 2020

To the students, faculty, and staff at Wabash College,

Congratulations on navigating through the most unusual academic semester any of us have ever known. I was amazed at our community's grit and determination in the face of COVID-19, and the #WabashTogether attitude we demonstrated to make sure our young men could be successful – even in a virtual classroom.

A few updates since my last communication with you:

- By now you know that we celebrated 177 young men on Sunday in our 182<sup>nd</sup> Commencement Ceremony. While the only student present in the Chapel was the speaker, Artie Equihua, our live-streamed virtual ceremony was watched by thousands. It was gratifying to see through social media all the ways the families of our graduates celebrated their hard work and perseverance.
- As a follow-on, the Schroeder Center for Career Development reports that 74% of our seniors have secured first destinations in graduate or professional schools, jobs, or service opportunities. In this environment, that's a remarkable figure and we know it will continue to grow.
- Thank you to everyone who supported our #WabashTogether Day of Giving on May 12. It was heartening to see so many students, faculty, and staff contribute to our efforts, issue and meet affinity challenges, and share our excitement across social media. As you know, we set records for gifts (over 6,000) and funds raised (more than \$1.2 million).
- The Board of Trustees met last Saturday in a series of Zoom meetings. While we had some reservations about how the virtual experience might be embraced by our Trustees (who love to come back to campus), the meetings were a resounding success. We had 100% participation by our Board members and another dozen Emeritus members also joined the meetings. Board Chair Jay Allen '79 will send his regular post-meeting newsletter next week.
- I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who worked behind the scenes over the last few months to enable our virtual classrooms, create a wide range of virtual events, and execute flawless activities like the Day of Giving and Virtual Commencement. There are far too many people to name here, but I give special thanks to Violet Bengé, Aaron Elam, Brent Harris, Adam Phipps, Julia Phipps, and Brandon Rush for their exceptional efforts.
- We've asked Tom Kearns to discontinue his daily updates from the Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD). In the future, Tom will communicate COVID-19-related topics that pertain specifically to Wabash, as well as other important safety and security information. For COVID-19 updates, please consult [Indiana's state website](#) or the [MCHD website](#).

Now that the academic year has concluded, all of our efforts must shift to further developing plans for the safe return to campus by our faculty, staff, and students. We have groups working through the Healthy Campus Task Force, COVID-19 Response Team, and Academic Policy Committee, and we are in regular



conversations with key leaders at Purdue and in the GLCA, NCAC, and Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI). While our focus is on Wabash, it is helpful to learn what other schools are planning and how we might partner to be more efficient. As an example, the ICI is coordinating mass purchasing of personal protective equipment (PPE) for member schools, which lowers the cost. We are, of course, seeking redundancy in all of our purchasing.

We continue to encourage most employees to work from home for the time being. Plans for reopening specific offices are being developed by supervisors. For now, if you do not need to be on campus to work, please stay home and stay safe. We have re-opened our outdoor spaces and removed all of the barriers and signs. However, all exterior doors of campus buildings will remain locked. If you need to visit a building in which you do not work, you will need to make an appointment to have someone grant you entry. We anticipate operating in this mode until about July 1, but of course this date could move in either direction.

It remains our intention to resume on-campus instruction in the fall pending the recommendations from our various campus teams and state and local governments. We hope to announce any changes to the fall semester calendar and/or campus residency between June 15 and July 1.

We are continuing to plan for the gradual, though not immediate opening of some of our public-facing buildings such as the Allen Center and Lilly Library. Building managers, working with the Healthy Campus Task Force, will identify best practices, obtain a reliable supply of PPE, and develop a staffing plan before we re-open those buildings to our community. We will communicate target opening dates as those tasks are completed.

Finally, and I want to be very clear on this point: If and when you come to campus, you must maintain safe social distancing. We are also recommending that everyone wear a mask or face covering when in public spaces on campus, especially in those areas where safe social distancing cannot be assured – hallways, restrooms, etc.

We have accomplished remarkable things in the last 10 weeks: closing down residential operations; launching virtual classrooms; executing live events; smashing records on our Day of Giving; keeping the budget balanced against overwhelming odds; bringing in an exciting new class of Wabash men; and sending an exceptional group of young men out into the ranks of our alumni.

Thank you for all that you have done. We will need to continue to meet the challenges that lie ahead with the same vigor and enthusiasm represented in our motto, Wabash Always Fights, and we'll do these things collectively, #WabashTogether, with the interests of all members of our community in mind.

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

Best wishes,

Gregory D. Hess