

May 8, 2020

To the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of Wabash College,

We have reached the end of an unprecedented semester at our College, and I continue to be proud of all of the ways we have rallied as an institution to support the excellent teaching and learning that is our hallmark. None of us could have predicted how this semester would play out when classes began in mid-January. Yet, in spite of COVID-19's continuing grip on our day-to-day lives, Wabash rose to every challenge and finished strong.

Congratulations to our seniors on four incredible years at Wabash. Your individual and collective accomplishments are too numerous to list here. Just know that your fellow students, professors, coaches, and the staff on campus are proud of what you've done and are anxious to see what lies ahead for each of you. As Carroll Ragan wrote in our *Alma Mater*, which was [published exactly 100 years ago today](#), "Thou counsellor in College days – Though guide in riper years." Seniors, please remember that Wabash will always be your home and we look forward to welcoming you back home in the years to come.

We will celebrate our seniors next Sunday, May 17 at 2:30 p.m. I invite everyone who loves Wabash to join the livestream broadcast of our [Virtual Commencement](#). There could be no better way to demonstrate the strength of the Wabash nation than to honor our graduates — "Our epistles, known and read of all men" — by shattering all of our livestream records as we ring out these exceptional young men.

I also would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who supported our admissions efforts this year. As many of you know, our Enrollment Office was on pace to have an unbelievable year — setting records for the number of applicants and admitted students. COVID-19 forced us to cancel all of our spring visit days and put into question all of our good efforts. But again, we rallied around our recruiters in the Enrollment Office and Athletic Department, and the Class of 2024 looks like it will be excellent in every way. Unlike many of our peer schools, Wabash has exceeded its goal and, as of this writing, we have 255 deposits for the fall. That is a remarkable number given the circumstances.

We have continued to plan for a return to campus in the fall with several different groups working on scenario planning and how we can safely re-open our residential community. We will share these plans with our Board of Trustees when they meet next Saturday. Once those discussions have taken place, we will let everyone know the direction we're heading and the various timelines when firm decisions will be made.

As all of you are aware, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb announced a five-stage plan to re-open the state by July 4. Here at Wabash, we are being prudent and cautious as we digest national, state, and local data on the impact of COVID-19 and seek wise advice and counsel.

As of now, we are tentatively planning to re-open the physical campus on May 18 to allow people to walk around the arboretum and through campus for exercise. Outdoor athletics facilities not under construction will also re-open eventually, though we do not recommend that older members of our community or those with risk factors return to campus at this time. As we gradually begin to re-open various aspects of campus in the weeks that follow, including our buildings, we strongly encourage everyone to wear face masks in public settings and observe safe social distancing.

Now that the semester has come to an end, most of the remaining students in residence will be leaving campus. However, there are some international students who do not have options and we will continue to support them here at the College.

I would like to share some very good news from the “COVID-19 and the Liberal Arts” half-credit course we are offering to incoming freshman students. If you haven’t read about the course or seen the [eye-popping list of professors and discussion topics](#), I urge you to take a look. The class, which enrolled over 100 incoming students, began earlier this week. Senior Associate Dean Jill Lambertson, who is helping coordinate the course, gave us a report:

“You might like to know that there were 116 people in our Zoom course Tuesday – most eager listeners and earnest. Three international students were up at 2 a.m. or 4 a.m. to participate. The 116 included 14 preceptors, three Wabash profs who will speak later in the course, and Dr. John Roberts. Professor Scott Himsel knocked it out of the park, which will not surprise you, and the students were eager with questions, keeping Prof. Himsel, Savi Kunze, Hayley Blonsley, and me on the Zoom call until 30 minutes after the course ended.”

What makes Jill’s short summary especially heartening is the fact that about 100 of our entering freshmen participated in a college-level class **while they are still finishing up their high school classes!** If there was any question about the seriousness of the young men who enroll at Wabash, this provides a clear answer and gives us so many reasons to be excited about our future.

In closing, let’s all join together – #WabashTogether – on Tuesday during our annual Day of Giving to share our pride in the mission of our College and the accomplishments of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

At Wabash, we have much to celebrate and we should always remember: Individually we are Little, Together we are Giants.

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

With best wishes,

Gregory D. Hess
President

