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Phi Beta Kappa brings academic freedom expert David Rabban

OWEN VERMEULEN '28

NEWS EDITOR

Academic Freedom is a major point of contention in the United States political landscape. With the Trump administration threatening to detain, deport and revoke visas of academics that were critical of his foreign policy, particularly pertaining to Palestine and Israel, free speech has been tested on college campuses. Not only this, but with the Trump administration working to remove Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs throughout federal institutions, many states have found themselves introducing legislation that restricts the use of DEI language. Professors and teachers across the nation have had to rework syllabi and courses in order to comply with federal and state mandates. Many professors are too afraid to publish academic work because they are worried

"Higher education institutions are often the breeding grounds of democracy in America."

- Chris Runyon '26

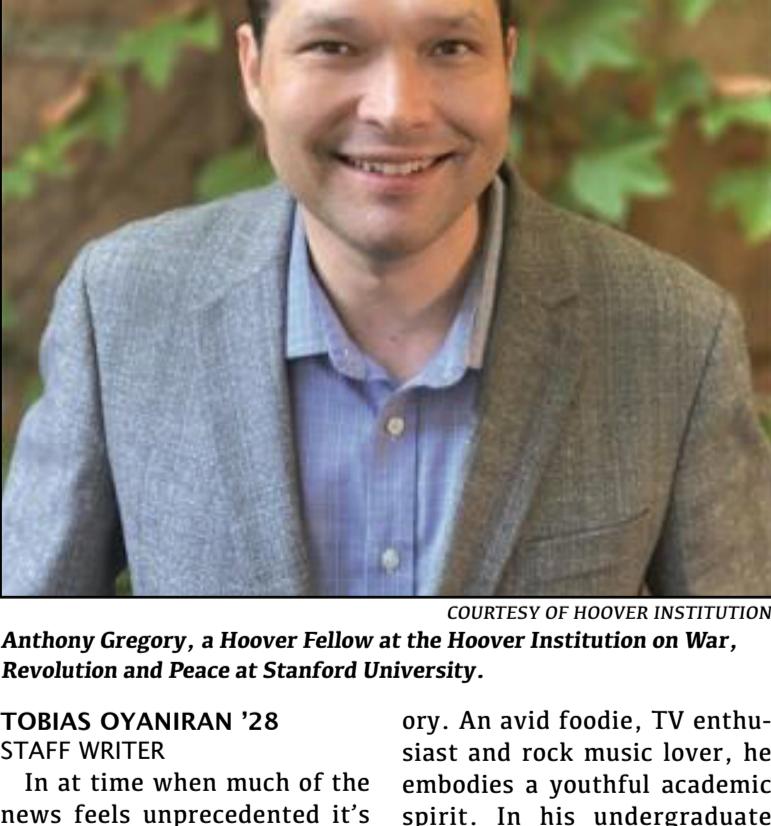
about political retribution.

Wabash's latest speaker, David Rabban, the Chair of Law at the University of Texas School of Law, is coming to Wabash in order to educate students and faculty on how their First Amendment rights apply to academic freedom.

"Rabban has dedicated his career to considerations of how the law, especially the First Amendment, applies to colleges and universities," said Secretary of the Wabash College Phi Beta Kappa Chapter, Jeff Beck. "His goal is to help the Wabash Community explore the rights and responsibilities as well as the breadth and limitations associated with academic freedom." Phi Beta Kappa Chapter, Jeff Beck. "His goal is to help the Wabash Community explore the rights and responsibilities as well as the breadth and limitations associated with academic freedom."

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Stephenson Institute hosts Hoover Fellow Anthony Gregory



COURTESY OF HOOVER INSTITUTION

Anthony Gregory, a Hoover Fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University.

TOBIAS OYANIRAN '28

STAFF WRITER

In a time when much of the news feels unprecedented it's even more important to reflect on the history that has brought us to this point. On Tuesday, the Stephenson Institute for Classical Liberalism hosted Anthony Gregory of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University to do just that. Gregory earned his doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley and has published multiple pieces on national security and legal the-

MXI prepares for Black History Month



COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Members of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies with the 2026 MLK speaker, pastor Kenneth Sullivan.

JERRION ROSE '29

STAFF WRITER

This past January the annual Celebration of Student Research contained many good moments and recognized many hardworking students for their work in research. Now students are turning their attention to keeping the momentum going as we celebrate Black History Month here on campus with the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXI).

This February will be packed with opportunities to celebrate African American excellence, accomplishments and contributions with the MXI. Opening up with a week of art and expression, the Rams Horns, or the leadership of the MXI, Chairman Quinn Sholar '26, Vice Chairman Maximus Rosa '26, Secretary Hayden Lewter '26 and Treasurer Javon Garrey '27 will each give a Chapel Talk on February 5. On February 6, The Voices of Black Art Showcase and Open House, an African American Artist Exhibition, will be at the MXI starting at 7:00 p.m.. Tour guides will be available as Wabash men present their art.

"Black History Month, above all else, especially for college students, should be much more complex than facts, figures and inventions," said Assistant Director of the MXI Kim King '99. "Instead, it should bring into focus systemic questions and conversations. At

root, I want students to wrestle with how Blackness in America, historically and currently, exposes everything beautiful and ugly about what it means to be American (socially, politically, and economically)."

Throughout the whole month of February, a collection of decorated and celebrated speakers will have lunch Tuesdays with the Institute in the MXI Horace Turner Classroom starting at 12:00 p.m., starting February 3 with Associate Professor of English and Black Studies Timothy Lake. Associate Professor of English Julian Whitney will be giving a lunch talk on February 10 followed by Kim King on February 17. The last talk will be given on February 24 by Director of the MXI Steven Jones '87.

These upcoming weeks will have chances to pursue knowledge about African American culture, along with connecting to people with incredible skills and information. The MXI invites all to immerse themselves in history and be comfortable as you witness black achievement.

On February 4, brothers of the MXI will travel to Crawfordsville High School (CHS) and give talks about Black History and Culture.

This stems from the partnership between the MXI and the CHS Culture Club. Presentations will begin at 10:15 a.m.

On February 19, the MXI will

host Red Velvet, an artistic expression show with various performances at the Fine Arts Center in Salter Hall starting at 7:00 p.m., including an act from the Chicago based comedian Meechie Hall.

"This year, through the people we have for lunch talks and other events at the institute, they're not just for fun but also for education," said Rosa.

As a Rams Horn and lead coordinator for Black History Month, Rosa is excited to put African American history and culture on display in a fun and interactive way. Focusing on campus culture, Rosa also wants to foster community through education.

"The more people are educated about the black experience, the more comfortable they feel in spaces such as the MXIBS and even more comfortable in places like urban Indianapolis," said Rosa.

This is a time for people to be appreciative and understanding of each other. There are only twenty-eight days in February, however, there will be 306 more days left in the year to recognize and acknowledge Black America.

The last event will take place on February 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the MXI. A final special moment to conclude the month with a Celebration of Black History.

Crawfordsville to campus philanthropy competition

PHILLIP HARVEY '29

STAFF WRITER

The Crawfordsville to Campus Committee has officially inaugurated a semester-long philanthropy competition, specifically designed to encourage various student organizations to demonstrate their steadfast commitment to the local community through additional service initiatives. This strategic initiative aims to bolster student volunteer efforts by offering attractive prizes to the most prolific student bodies at the conclusion of the semester.

Fraternities, independent living units, and even diverse campus clubs, such as La Alianza and shOUT, are invited to participate as their own distinct teams; the primary caveat for eligibility is maintaining a roster of more than 20 active club members. Within the scoring framework, every individual service hour is worth five points toward the overall competition standings. Ultimately, the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and the Crawfordsville to Campus Committee (C2C) will serve as the final judges of the competition, possessing the authority to raise point values for instances of excellence and making the definitive decision on what does or does not constitute qualified service work.

To ensure the integrity of the competition, additional strict rules have been implemented. First, no single hour of service can be counted twice. Organizations that have participants at the same event cannot both receive the same total of points, unless they state how the hours will be divided. Additionally, photo evidence is required for all service hours. Qualifying events include campus-wide cleanups and service at any local outreach location. Activities that solely benefit the organization itself—such as sober driving for social events—are strictly excluded. While the specific prizes for the top three teams remain under wraps, the C2C has promised an announcement next week. The committee is, however, attempting to secure a championship belt for the winners.

"I'm excited for what this com-

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that are derived from such a sizable state are particularly relevant.

"I, and many Americans, have a distrust or dislike of ICE; and this represents a pre-New Deal suspicion of federal power," said Rabban. "ICE will not exist in its current form after a few presidential cycles. Democrats, after gaining power, have a bad track record of rolling back Republican policies they vociferously opposed when Republicans held control of the government."

Gregory compared the US's current situation to the post-9/11 War in Iraq that George Bush started and Barrack Obama continued for a time, despite his campaign's vehement opposition to military action in that country. The Obama administration reengaged militarily in Iraq with controversial airstrikes and covert drone operations in 2014.

Gregory's book, titled "New Deal Law and Order: How the War on Crime Built the Modern Liberal State," is out and available in multiple formats. The Stephenson Institute's next event will be on February 3rd, noon in Baxter 101; featuring Dr. Brian Cutsinger, an assistant professor at Florida Atlantic University with his talk titled, "Rethinking the Fed's Framework: Lessons from the Post-Pandemic Inflation."

Crawfordsville to Campus philanthropy competition



COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Students clean up a garden in a nature reserve during a Crawfordsville to Campus event in Spring of 2025.

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petition between the fraternities will be," said IFC treasurer Colton Cooper '28. "The thought behind it is that everyone loves to compete, so let's harness that towards something our community so desperately needs."

Student leaders have until the final conclusion of the academic semester to rack up points through service and community engagement. The final winners will be declared on May 1. We will find out which campus bodies

truly embody the virtues of standing tall together and proudly.

"I've talked to members of various houses on campus who say, 'Yeah, we have a strong community.' Our fraternity leaders are always pushing us to go out and participate in the events we're getting emails about," said Ike O'Neil '27. "Hearing things like that makes me feel confident that Wabash is being well-received. My hope is that this competition will also give fraternities—especially those that may have been slower toward philanthropy in the past—a

route to dive in a little deeper."

Anyone currently wondering as to where to start their efforts should check out the Montgomery County Leadership Academy (MCLA). They partner with United Way of Montgomery County, Montgomery County Community Foundation, Wabash College, City of Crawfordsville and the city of Crawfordsville. They consistently identify local needs and have a Facebook group for anyone wanting opportunities to engage and serve.

Phi Beta Kappa brings academic freedom expert David Rabban



COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

David Rabban, the Dahr Jamail, Randall Hage Jamail and Robert Lee Jamail Regents Chair in Law, joined the Texas Law faculty in 1983.

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Texas, where Rabban teaches, has faced an onslaught of challenges pertaining to academic freedom on college campuses throughout the state. Texas Tech sent out memos restricting the discussion of nonbinary, transgender and other gender identities, with some faculty being told to remove pronouns from their email signatures. The University of Texas has made attempts to restrict on campus protests by abolishing elected faculty senates and replacing them with appointed advisory mechanisms.

"I think this talk will bring an extremely important dialogue to campus," said President of the Wabash College Pre-Law Society, Chris Runyon. "Academic freedom rights have been in the news all across the country in recent years. People on both sides of the aisle feel as though they're being silenced from freely speaking their minds inside the classroom. I think this a major problem, and I love that Professor Rabban will be coming to campus to help outline what academic freedom is and the rights that come with it."

Indiana is not immune to the issues of restricting academic freedom. On January 8, a federal judge ruled that Indiana University had violated the First Amendment rights of pro-Palestinian protesters it banned from campus in 2024 for participating in candlelit free-speech vigils. Indiana has also passed legislation curbing DEI in public school institutions.

"Academic Freedom is a perennial, core principle that underscores the rights of members of the Wabash Community to think and to express themselves freely," said Beck. "In recent years, there have been attempts in Indiana to restrict expression of certain ideas by proposed or enacted legislation or policies impacting institutional funding, individual employment, and viewpoint expression and content in the classroom and libraries."

Phi Beta Kappa was very thoughtful of the current state of academic free speech when they chose to bring Rabban as a guest speaker.

"Every year, the Wabash Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and the Film and Lecture Committee consider a slate of prestigious Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholars," said Beck. "Among the many different disciplines and topics, Dr. Rabban stood out as an expert well-timed to discuss a host of issues related to Academic Freedom on college campuses."

Professors are eager to hear what Rabban has to say. This is an opportunity for not only students to expand their knowledge, but faculty as well.

"We live in a time when many disputes are arising about the free speech rights of students and professors," said Associate Professor of Political Science, Scott Himes. "So Professor Rabban's noon talk on Thursday, student rights, and Friday, faculty rights, are both very important and very timely. I urge everyone to turn out and to participate by asking questions."

Our freedom of expression is something that many may take for granted. It's during times like these where it's vital to remind ourselves of how important these rights truly are so that we can appreciate what we have, and fight for what we might lose.

"I think academic freedom is a cornerstone of the First Amendment," said Runyon. "Higher education institutions are often the breeding grounds of democracy in America. Without Academic Freedom, professors cannot challenge their students with ideas that will push them to learn and grow. Especially at a school like Wabash, a lack of academic freedom takes away one of the key pieces that make up a Wabash man. Namely, the ability to grapple with new ideas and logically think through opposing arguments and viewpoints."

2026 Leadership Breakfast



February 26, 2026

Ivy Tech Culinary Center, Indianapolis



Ty Benefiel '08



Sec. Suzanne Jaworski



Andrew Wells '06

Honoring Dr. Rick Warner H'13 WCI Man of the Year



Register at
[wabash.edu/apps/events/
 LeadershipBreakfast2026](http://wabash.edu/apps/events/LeadershipBreakfast2026)

News around the world

Protests in Iran suffer under the regime, global elections are up and a winter vortex covers North America in snow



COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iranian protesters took to the streets throughout Dec. 2025 and January 6 in a stance against the political, economic and social policies of the Iranian regime.

PHILLIP HARVEY '29

STAFF WRITER

IRAN

Protests erupted across Iran on Dec. 28 2025 and have yet to cease. The protests had centered on economic hardships for the country and the failing currency there, however, they took on political and social elements given poor conditions can be squarely blamed on the authoritarian theocratic republic. Now the government has blacked out the internet and silenced all communication in an attempt to mask its brutal and violent crackdown on protests. The event has been the largest uprising since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

In just the last half a year, the Iranian rial has suffered an around 60% loss of value and subse-

quent 50% boom in inflation. Exchange rates have shot up to approximately 1.4 million rials for every U.S. dollar. International sanctions, restrictions on oil sales, isolation in banking and a lack of trade have all caused a loss of confidence. Now people are rushing to convert savings into dollars or gold, making everything worse.

The movement started when bazaars — a cultural touchstone as well as marketplaces for Iran — closed down and markets went silent. Mass strikes by workers and students added to things, and the movement was broadly peaceful with marches in cities. Soon, however, security forces responded with heavy force. Protesters began to chant anti-regime slogans and

attack symbols of the government and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Immediately, reports came in of live firing, mass arrests, detentions and injuries. The movement was somewhat directionless until Reza Pahlavi, a dissident and political activist in exile in the United States, called for unified protests. He urged a peaceful transition of power and a referendum to reform Iran's political system.

Following this, on Jan. 8, 1.5 million protesters came onto the streets of Tehran and on Jan. 9, an estimated 5 million protesters marched nationwide. At this moment, though, all went silent. On Jan. 8, the twelfth day of the protests, authorities imposed a near total shutdown of the internet. The nation has been cut off from the rest of the world and even internally has cut communications.

Iran has historically halted the internet in order to suppress protest movements. The regime did so in 2019 and 2022, when in the latter year it banned WhatsApp. In the former year, a six-day internet blackout masked the mass murder of protesters. The full picture has been covered up now, but the death toll could have been between 30,000 and 36,500 on Jan. 8 and 9

according to Iranian news.

International governmental groups like the European Union have publicly condemned the Iranian regime's use of lethal force against protesters. The diplomatic pressure has been light so far, however. U.S. officials have suspended diplomatic meetings and organized military assets in the region as deterrence. President Trump threatened a strong response in early January if a deadly crackdown proceeded. Now that it clearly has, the ball is now in the United States' court to make good on its word.

NORTH AMERICA

A colossal 1300-mile snow and ice storm has stretched from northern Mexico all the way to western Canada. Over 230 million people were under weather alerts at the peak of the storm. Tragically, at least 62 people have died across North America due to hypothermia and storm-related incidents. The damages could cost up to \$115 billion dollars.

Instead of snow, the South got hit by a crippling ice storm. Major power outages swept Tennessee and Mississippi because of the storm. The sheer weight of the ice has had tornado-like effects on any infrastructure incapable of bearing the pressure.

Turning to the Great

Lakes and Canada, Toronto recorded 18 inches of snow — the greatest amount in a single day ever recorded.

Meteorologists attribute this event to a shift in the Northern Hemisphere's polar vortex, which pushed Arctic air further south than is typical.

As the storm went further east, it turned into a normal "Nor'easter" storm. New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania each reported over 20 inches of snow.

WORLD ELECTIONS

2026 could see a relatively high average of elections if expected snap elections are held. As many as 45 countries could hold elections this year. The total represents a combined approximately 1.6 billion voters.

A potential region for a standout shift could be Latin America, where the United States capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has polarized the region. Those include Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Barbados and Haiti. There may be a pink tide given recent events.

In East Africa, South Sudan looks to have its first vote ever. South Sudan is the youngest in the world and has never had a general election. The region is now gambling on the possibility of peace after years of civil war.

Normal years see around 25 national elections around the world. The utmost peak was actually in 2024, when 65 countries had national elections.



COURTESY OF UNMISS

South Sudan gained independence in 2011, but since then it has endured years of civil war and political tension.

Elections are scheduled for December 2026.

FEATURES

NAWM engages alumni and students alike

NATHAN ELLENBERGER '26
MANAGING EDITOR

For as tight-knit of a community as the Wabash student body is, it is easy to forget that there are innumerable more Wabash men that have passed under the arch and into the world beyond Crawfordsville. Composing this body of Wabash men out in the world is the National Association of Wabash Men (NAWM), the alumni association of Wabash College. With the express goal of furthering the mission of the College, the NAWM may fly under the radar for some students. However, the work done by the association is indispensable, laboring tirelessly to stay engaged with current students and the changing needs of the College.

At the helm of both the NAWM and its board of directors is Tony Unfried '03. Halfway through his two-year term as President of the NAWM, Unfried seeks to give the College help wherever help is needed, truly embodying the Wabash man as one that leads effectively. Unfried brings a background in business leadership, having started over 10 businesses, as well as prior leadership in the Wabash community, serving on the board of Center for Innovation, Business, and Entrepreneurship (CIBE) at its founding, president of the Lambda Chi Alpha alumni association and President of the Wabash Club of Indianapolis. Through all of his experience in his career and beyond, Unfried feels well equipped to lead an organization like the NAWM.

"Sometimes you learn more from your failures than you do your successes," said Unfried. "Everybody figures out their own leadership style, and everybody wants to be led differently. Once you figure that out, that translates into a board leadership position."

Unfried identified three pillars of the NAWM's work, emphasizing that the association does much more behind the scenes than many realize. The goals are to strengthen current fraternities, strengthen regional alumni groups and to increase the visibility of the NAWM as a whole. Unfried dedicates himself to all three goals, but emphasized that the latter may be the key to increasing engagement across the board.

"How can we increase that visibility and be more than just the board that has an event every other year for the Hall of Fame and that board that has an event at Homecoming that gives some awards?" said Unfried. "That's a very important part of what we do, but it's probably only about half of what we do."

One of the most important contacts Unfried and the NAWM have at Wabash is Director of Alumni & Affinity Group Engagement Ron Dostal '92, who also serves as one of the representatives of the College administration on the NAWM's board of directors. Dostal spoke to some of the goals that he shares with the NAWM at large, namely recruiting more alumni to assist with regional engagement.

"We're trying to identify more alumni volunteers who can help with some of our regional engagement efforts so they don't have to come back to campus to have a Wabash experience," said Dostal. "If there's a critical mass of Wabash guys in Denver, [there's] a chance

for them to get together and maybe watch the Monon Bell game, or maybe get together a couple of other times during the year as well."

Overall, while the NAWM holds events for alumni to stay connected to their alma mater, the focus is still very much on the shared community in Crawfordsville, which current students are the most directly tied to. As a result, everyone in the NAWM wants to connect with students and is concerned with improving the student experience. As the student representative on the NAWM board, Ayden Salpietra '27 is one of the key liaisons between the board and the student body, using his voice in their three yearly meetings to advocate for student interests.

"I'm the only student in those meetings, and it's been really cool just to talk to those guys and tell them what's going on on campus," said Salpietra. "In the most recent meeting, I talked a lot about inclusivity and brotherhood on campus and how we can build that to be stronger."

With the youngest perspective behind the scenes of the NAWM, Salpietra has fresh eyes to see how the collaboration within the association and its board embody the fraternal spirit of Wabash.

"Even though they see each other three times a year, they're still a very cohesive group," said Salpietra. "It just speaks to the Wabash brotherhood as a whole. You could have graduated in 1983 and another guy could graduate in 2012, and you guys are still on the same page."

What unites these alumni that volunteer their time and energy to the NAWM is a desire to give the gift of service to the current students, not expecting anything in return.

"We don't owe anything back to the alumni or the current students, but we give back because that's our connection," said Unfried. "That's what we want to do and offer."

The NAWM is much greater than just the few directors that spearhead engagement campaigns: the NAWM is the whole body of living alumni that have passed through these halls. What Unfried urges current students to do is take advantage of this larger brotherhood before graduation, when the network is perhaps the most accessible.

"Understand that as soon as you graduate, you become part of the Wabash mafia," said Unfried. "When you come in as a freshman, there's someone on this campus that's already done what you're trying to do and been through what you are going through. Now you've gone from 'how do I pass that chemistry test?' to 'how do I figure out what I want to do with the rest of my life?' And that's where you find those folks that have done it before or have the experience to figure it out."

The work done by Dostal, Unfried, Salpietra and the entire NAWM is all oriented towards improving the College, both for its continued success and for the sake of current students. By necessity, the alumni body will always be larger than the current student body. By recognizing and engaging with the good work of the NAWM, one can tap into the broader brotherhood that lasts long after commencement — because it's not four years, it's for life.

Senior spotlight: Quinn Sholar



PHOTO BY ELIJAH GREENE '25

Quinn Sholar '26 prepares for the 130th Monon Bell Classic at DePauw University. His leadership as a captain has been a staple of the Wabash football team.

BRADY REEVES '29

STAFF WRITER

Few Wabash men are able to bridge the gap between a standout athletic career and a pursuit of artistic expression. Even fewer can do both while fostering an inclusive campus community. Despite these odds, one senior has perfectly balanced all three.

Quinn Sholar '26 is a member of the Sphinx Club, captain of the track and football teams, chairman of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXIBS), member of the Dean's President's council and former member of Center for Innovation, Business, and Entrepreneurship (CIBE). Sholar is an art major and economics minor from Indianapolis, Indiana.

"I was always a part of some type of community, whether it was community service or helping others," said Sholar.

Sholar is a big advocate for the phrase: "it takes a village to raise a

man." He loves this saying because he was raised as a community oriented person and lives by it. Prioritizing community has led him to many leadership positions across campus, a place he didn't initially expect he would be in when he came to Wabash.

"I didn't think that freshman me would see myself in this position of leadership I am in now" said Sholar. "I know my dad always told me I was going to be a leader growing up, but I did not think that I would see myself leading in multiple facets around campus."

Sholar has grown much from his first days on campus. However, a strong conviction led to a strong beginning to his Wabash career.

"I thank freshman year me for knowing what he wanted to do with his life and for having the kind of morals and ethics to put me in such a successful position," said Sholar.

Becoming chairman of the MXIBS was an important step for him be-

coming the Wabash man he is today. The MXIBS helped him get involved and change campus and the views of students and faculty on campus.

"When I became Chairman, I got to better the Black experience at Wabash," said Sholar. "It is a very important facet that needs to be talked about and discussed more on campus."

His humility is also a key factor that he consistently hones in order to improve his character; Sholar looks at the bigger picture before himself.

"It's possible to be a leader and put it on the big scale without showing off," said Sholar. "But for people that look like me, to know what that is like, I want you to know that whatever you want to do at this school is possible."

Sholar's leadership across his athletic career has been exceptional. Through his high work ethic, commendable mindset and overall discipline, he has proven to be a superb role model among his Wabash peers.

"I think players immediately look towards the most talented players as leaders until they get to know everyone," said Head Football Coach Jake Gilbert '98. "That has allowed him to set a great example for all of those who are watching."

"I try to make sure that our brotherhood is grounded and genuine and that we care for each other with selflessness," said Sholar. "Whenever there's a brother in need, just drop whatever you are doing and go and help that person out; nobody's problems just disappear."

Sholar will be working as The Mind Trust's manager of community engagement through the Orr Fellowship where he will be building the foundation for the next generation of young talented leaders. While he is working back in Indianapolis he will visit many art shows to continue supporting his passion of art while supporting the youth of his hometown.

Sholar is a man with a lot of experience on campus, and his advice to all of the underclassmen is to participate in the brotherhood.

"You have to go out and find your community on campus," said Sholar. "You cannot sit in your room and think the community will come to you. Find the people that resonate with you, the people that make you feel like you belong."



PHOTO BY ELIJAH GREENE '25

Quinn Sholar attends the 2025 MXI MLK day speaking event. His work at the institute has had substantial impacts across campus.

'With Heaven On Top' is a questionable release

ange" and "Revival." Bryan repeatedly swims against the currents of the country music industry. While

country as a genre has, as opposed to Bryan's first hit, headed north towards a pop-like category of music, Zach Bryan has stayed consistent to country's roots. He has frequently featured traditional country instruments, with little over-production and the nostalgic and earthy feel that makes country magical. Listeners can hear his songs without friction; Bryan has a natural ability to communicate emotions and universal experiences within his art.

However, in this latest album, "With Heaven On Top," a clear problem emerges: his music is far too repetitive. Fundamentally, Bryan sticks with songs in G, C and D major scales, which limits the musical variety within his albums, including his latest. Another critique is the sheer number of songs on this album. "With Heaven On Top" features 25 tracks total for a listening time of around one hour and twenty minutes. If Bryan fluctuated the songs through instruments, keys, chord progressions, tempos and overall feel this album might be

tolerable. However, instead of selecting the top tracks — the more unique songs — it seems Bryan was told to produce as much music as possible. From a business perspective this makes sense. More releases means more Zach Bryan songs in social media users' algorithms. In an industry where the majority of revenue is stream-based, being intertwined with a soaring number of algorithms would naturally make the artist more money. The strategy seems to be to release many middle-of-the-way hits rather than focus on creating chart-toppers. Summed up, Bryan has chosen quantity over quality in this latest album.

No matter the overall lack of originality, there are still a few standout tracks in "With Heaven On Top." "Plastic Cigarette" begins with a crisp guitar quickly accompanied by a gorgeous groove. Zach Bryan's vocals continue to impress with a raw and unseasoned tone. Additionally, the lyrics are well-written and indicate Bryan's poetic ability to tell stories through music. This song is quintessential Zach Bryan; his performance, as in other tracks, is perfectly and deliberately imper-

fect. The overall vibe of this tune is sweet wistfulness of younger times. Another song that stands out is "Appetite." The song begins with a brief guitar chord resemblant of the main guitar notes in "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana. "Appetite" also has an instrumental section in the chorus that makes one want to kick along to the beat of the song. Bryan sings with slight differentiation than in his usual music, however. In many of Bryan's tunes, he relaxes his vocals. In this song, he has more passion that screams that he is trying to implement some sort of personal life changes. The lyrics are also high-quality. This song is like some of Bryan's top hits in that it has a flawless balance of raw musical talent and pertinent lyrical meaning.

In a stark contrast to Zach Bryan's usual focus on personal life struggles, "Bad News" features muscular political commentary. The song discusses many politically charged topics with clarity on Bryan's personal beliefs. Bryan sings, "And ICE is gonna come bust down your door/ Try to build a house no one builds no more/ But I got a telephone/ Kids are

all scared and all alone." Later on, he sings "Got some bad news/ The fading of the red, white, and blue." He also stated, "I heard the cops came, cocky mother*****s, ain't they?" Whether he is attempting to criticize the Trump Administration's use of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), or aiming to grieve a lack of unity within the nation, is up to the listener. Agree or disagree, one can admit that Zach Bryan has serious guts for making such bold and controversial political statements within "Bad News."

All in all, "With Heaven On Top" is an intriguing album. It is too long and features mostly similar tracks, however, there are some notable songs and political messages spread within the album. "With Heaven On Top" may be worth it for listeners who have previously admired Bryan's work, yet it still falls short of some of his substantial work.

FINAL VERDICT:

3/5 WALLY'S



COURTESY OF PITCHFORK

TOBIN SEIPLE '29

FEATURES EDITOR

Most Wabash men, in fact the bulk of people in the Midwest, should be aware and even appreciative by now of Zach Bryan's artistry. Bryan embodies a desirable and approachable story of a rugged country man with a coarse background and an all-American attitude. His career is just as inspiring. Zach Bryan was a Navy sailor serving his country until one day, he released a TikTok of a tune he wrote, a song that would later establish itself as a top country song of 2020: "Heading South." Since his swift rise to fame, Bryan has released multiple billboard-charting songs including "I Remember Everything," "Something in the

Shakespearian symphony 'Hamnet' is somewhat one-note

NOAH MINTIE '29
FEATURES EDITOR

Due to the never-ending cycle of inspiration, one can observe that every great story was likely inspired by yet another story of another kind. While this phenomena is novel, movies about the making of other stories often aren't. I feared that would be the fate of Chloé Zhao's "Hamnet," one of this year's awards-season darlings which even earned a nomination for best picture. Thankfully the film does a lot right, but it still fails to truly invest the audience.

Based on the novel "Hamnet," the movie explores the real-life events that might have inspired Shakespeare's famous "Hamlet." The film particularly focuses on Agnes (portrayed by Jessie Buckley), a mother of three who strays from fifteenth-century society's puritanical and Christian norms. Her husband (played by Paul Mescal), who works in London, is both loving and largely absent. After tragedy strikes the family, Agnes and her husband process their grief differently, and it leads to a great amount of friction.

What on Earth does any of this have to do with "Hamlet?" You may ask yourself this question a lot during the first act, but rest assured that with time the pieces fall into place. Going into this movie knowing nothing about it (hence my rather vague description) might be the most enjoyable way to watch it. The film is good at dropping little hints and clues all along the way, until a magnificent climax that, if anything, hits you with the themes a bit too explicitly.

Aside from that, the film is also nicely shot with attention to color usage. The cinematography is pleasant but not overstated, a choice that works rather well for the small scope of the story. The sound design is also amazing. The use and subsequent removal of background noises creates a textured and realistic world. When said noise fades out, the dialogue or

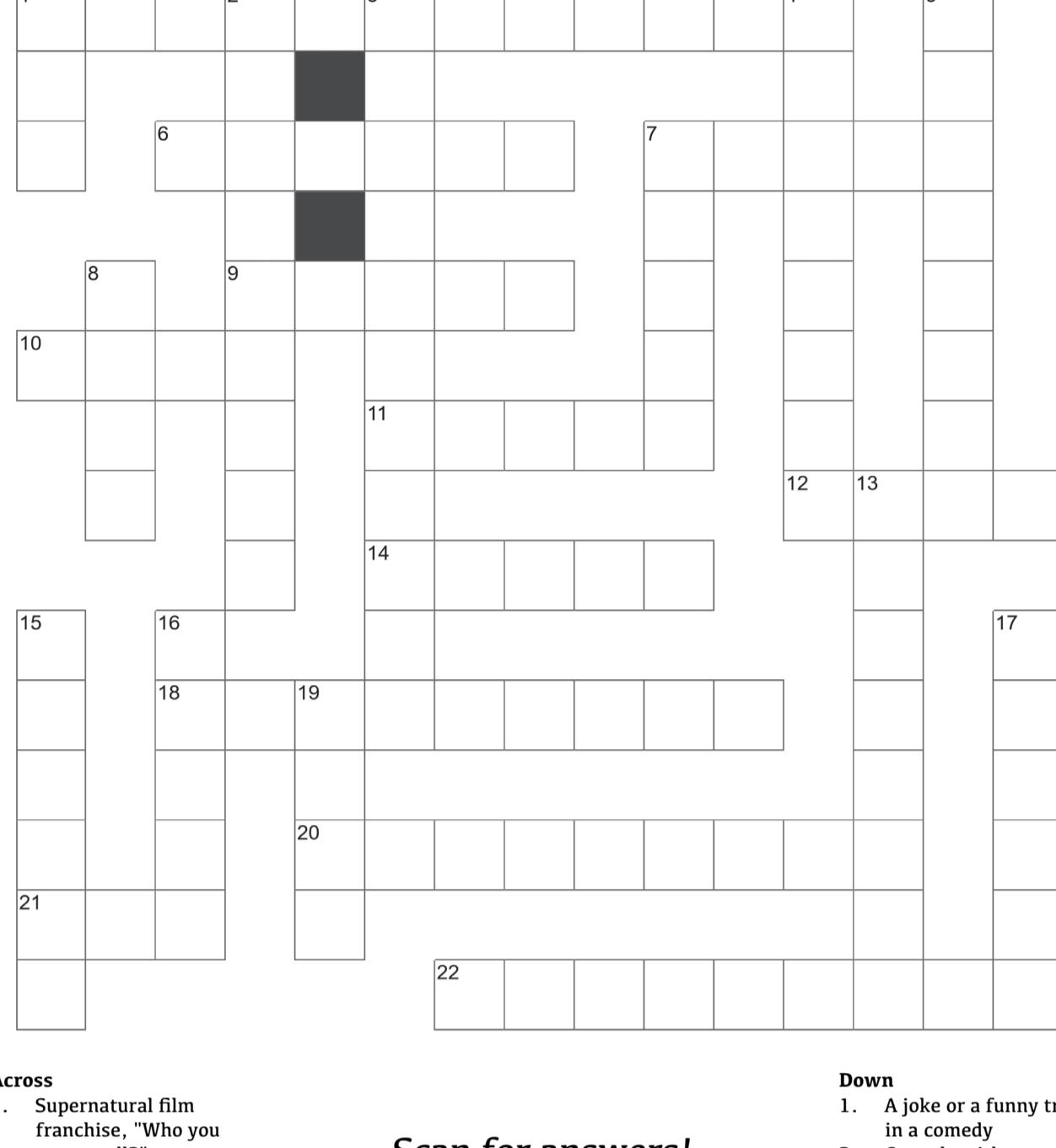
FINAL VERDICT:

3/5 WALLYS



'Comedy'

Crossword by Tanner Quackenbush '26



Across

- Supernatural film franchise, "Who you gonna call?"
- Comedy criticizing societal issues with wit
- The quality of being amusing
- A single segment with in in a show or film
- A playful or witty remark in comedy
- ____ Python's Flying Circus comedy troupe
- ____ Brothers, a Will Ferrell and John C Reily comedy
- An outcome contrary to what's expected
- Frat house comedy with Will Ferrell
- Tina Fey's high school comedy
- A performance in a comedy show
- Classic holiday family comedy

Scan for answers!



Down

- A joke or a funny trick in a comedy
- Comedy with exaggerated physical humor
- Popular female-led comedy film
- Long-running animated family cartoon
- Classic spoof comedy film
- ____ Gilmore, and Adam Sandler golf comedy
- Blooper compilation of funny video clips
- Feel-good comedy series about a football coach
- ____ House, a classic college film
- Sacha Baron Cohen's mockumentary character
- The ____, originally British hit comedy series
- ____ And Dumber, a Farrelly Brothers comedy

26th Annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship and Creative Work

Wabash College hosted the event on Friday, January 23, to promote the research of Wabash students. Over the course of three hours, students were able to share their final results on projects ranging from Economics to Black Studies with their fellow Wabash men and impressed both faculty and alumni alike.





BACHELOR

301 W. Wabash Ave.,
Crawfordsville, IN,
47933

X: @bachelorwabash
IG: @bachelorwabash

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Elijah Wetzel • ejwetzel27@wabash.edu

MANAGING EDITOR

Nathan Ellenberger • nvellenb26@wabash.edu

NEWS EDITOR

Owen Vermeulen • ohvermeu28@wabash.edu

FEATURES EDITORS

Noah Mintie • njmintie29@wabash.edu

Tobin Seiple • tlseiple29@wabash.edu

OPINION EDITOR

Evan Bone • ecbone26@wabash.edu

INTERIM SPORTS EDITOR

Ty Murphy • tmmurphy27@wabash.edu

PHOTO EDITOR

Will Duncan • wjduncan27@wabash.edu

ONLINE EDITOR

Paul Hawksworth • pdhawksw28@wabash.edu

The purpose of *The Bachelor* is to serve the school audience, including but not limited to administrators, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, community members and most importantly, the students. Because this is a school paper, the content and character within will cater to the student body's interests, ideas, and issues. Further, this publication will serve as a medium and forum for student opinions and ideas.

Although an individual newspaper, the Board of Publications publishes *The Bachelor*. *The Bachelor* and BOP receive funding from the Wabash College Student Senate, which derives its funds from the Wabash College student body.

Letters (e-mails) to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. They will only be published if they include name, phone, or e-mail, and are not longer than 800 words.

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The Bachelor is a member of the Hoosier State and Indiana Collegiate Press Associations (HSPA and ICPA).



Chayce Howell '27

Reply to this opinion at
cjhowell27@wabash.edu

The Bachelor, in partnership with Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse, launched this column designed to reflect how the campus is thinking about life, current events and the broader world. Each week, a small group of randomly selected Wabash students comes together for a facilitated conversation. Participants are not quoted by name to allow them space to be authentic when sharing their thoughts. Rather than offering conclusions or arguments, the column aims to surface how students are making sense of complex issues in real time.

The first of these conversations brought together five students with the expectation that they would discuss the recent national events related to immigration enforcement. That conversation never fully materialized. Not because the topic felt unimportant, but rather because it was too important. No one in the room felt informed or comfortable enough to speak with confidence.

Instead of forcing opinions, the group moved on. That decision became the conversation.

Several participants felt overwhelmed by the volume of political information and misinformation circulating online. Social media, they argued, rewards speed and certainty rather than careful thinking. Without the time or energy to verify facts, it becomes easier to disengage or avoid high emotion topics altogether. One student said he did not want to give an opinion on immigration enforcement without knowing enough to do so responsibly. Another described choosing silence as a form of self-awareness rather than apathy.

The participants agreed that Wabash plays a role in this retreat. Classes, jobs, athletics and social commitments in a myriad of clubs and organizations often crowd out the mental capacity to pay attention to national events. One participant described Wabash as simplifying life, "a place where the world feels quieter and more manageable than it does at home." That simplification can be comforting, but it can also create distance from broader social issues.

"Wabash is its own world," one student said.

That insulation cuts both ways. Participants noted that Wabash offers spaces designed for discussion, but that

students do not always take advantage of them. It can feel easier to avoid difficult topics than to risk saying the wrong thing. Several students described code switching, adjusting what they say or whether they speak at all based on who is in the room.

The group returned repeatedly to the college's mission statement, which commits Wabash College to educating men who think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively and live humanely. Most agreed Wabash succeeds in teaching critical thinking. Where they were less certain was whether students consistently live up to the rest of that charge.

As a community, participants said, Wabash provides platforms for leadership and engagement, but those platforms require individual initiative. Some students choose to meet the minimum expectations without fully committing to the ideals the college promotes. When that happens, participants, said, it can weaken a sense of belonging and strain the brotherhood Wabash prides itself on.

Misinformation emerged as another barrier to open conversation. Students expressed concern about how easily misleading claims spread through social media catalyzed by artificial intelligence. Without shared faces, disagreement becomes more emotionally charged and less productive. When people only encounter views similar to their own, opinions can harden and disagreement can start to feel personal.

Concerns about speaking freely extend to the classroom. Two students shared experiences in which they felt hesitant to express dissenting views because they believed their instructors held strong positions counter to their own. Even if grades were not explicitly threatened, the prescription that disagreement could affect evaluation was strong enough to silence them. That raised an uncomfortable question. If students write to agree rather than think, what happens to critical thinking?

As the conversation came to a close, the group returned to responsibility. Wabash, they concluded, offers opportunities for engagement, but it cannot force participation. Brotherhood and belonging require attention. Being informed takes effort and even hearing someone out carries costs in time and energy.

The participants did not arrive at a shared position. They did not try to solve a national crisis. They did pause long enough to notice the forces shaping how and whether they should speak at all.

HI-FIVES

FIVE THINGS WORTHY
OF A HI-FIVE THIS WEEK

SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE

Hi-Five to the Seattle Seahawks for making it to Super Bowl LX. Maybe they'll actually run the ball this time...

NEW ENGLAND, OLD ENEMY

Lo-Five to the New England Patriots for making Super Bowl LX. Tom Brady or not, these old wounds haven't had enough time to heal.

BASKETBALL SCHOOL NO MORE

Lo-Five to Purdue basketball for losing to unranked Indiana. This has been a bad week for black and gold college basketball teams (see page 8 for more).

MAKE BIOPICS GREAT AGAIN

Lo-Five to Amazon for spending 35 million dollars to promote Melania Trump's documentary despite its expected flop. We can't wait to see what features editor Noah Mintie '29 has to say in his review!

90210 B.C.

Hi-Five to Travis Scott for making a cameo in the upcoming *Odyssey* movie. If he made an appearance in the original poem, you'd probably have more freshmen actually read it during EQ.

Shad's Supper: Carnitas and Chicken at the Blue Cactus



Shad Wilson '27

Reply to this opinion at
sawilson27@wabash.edu

Welcome back to round two of Shad's Supper, bozos. Today I decided to hit up some Mexican food to give my life some new flavor. Blue Cactus is near The Breakfast Co. and Kroger off of South Washington St., and they had a selection of options for me to choose from. I took some recommendations and ended up getting tacos de carnitas with Mexican rice, arroz con pollo, a pink lemonade and flan as a dessert. My goal was to get an array of tastes to see what's best and give a fair rating. Let's get into the review!

First up was the tacos de carnitas. The meal came with one side which I chose as Mexican rice. On the tacos it was slow cooked carnitas, onion, cilantro and tomatillo sauce in flour tortillas. The meat was extremely tender and flavorful, and the sauce gave it a small kick that put my tastebuds on alert. I'm normally not a fan of pork in general but these tacos were scrumptious. They cost me \$14, so for three tacos and a side of rice it's not at a bad price point.

Next was my personal favorite, the arroz con pollo. The chicken was well seasoned and the queso with Mexican rice went together very well. I truly believe I could eat this weekly if I had the time and money. This one is a great option for anyone out there who likes to keep their meals simple and isn't a huge fan of spice. It also came with a pink lemonade which was a great refresher to finish it off. This dish cost me \$10.25

which was the price for the kids option since I couldn't eat all of this amazing food.

Lastly we get into the dessert. The flan had a spongy texture with a sweet taste where the caramel really popped out. It wasn't something that impressed me. I could see why someone else might enjoy it, but it wasn't for me. It cost \$7 — a bit much for an underwhelming dessert. Also, I forgot to mention, since I got it delivered it came with a free side of chips and salsa. The chips were all cooked to the right level of crunchiness, and the salsa — which was more on the mild side — had a good taste to match the rest of the meal. My overall cost came out to \$31.25, which gave me enough food for two meals — this is much better than last week's hard bargain. In my very unprofessional opinion, Blue Cactus gets a 9.3/10 burbers (knowers will know). I will definitely be back there next week to get some more arroz con pollo.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAPQUEST

Blue Cactus adds to the array of Hispanic cuisine in Crawfordsville with its own tequila bar.

You get what you give

Senior Associate
Director of
Admissions

Tyler Wade '12

Reply to this opinion at
wadet@wabash.edu

this place is worth showing up for, even when it's easier not to.

And showing up doesn't always mean filling seats at big events. Sometimes it's grabbing lunch with someone outside your usual circle. Sometimes it's stopping by a friend's recital or game. Sometimes it's just being present — actually present — when you're with people, instead of halfway somewhere else.

That swagger didn't come from perfect programming or flawless traditions. It came from participation first. Ownership first. The confidence followed.

This isn't a lecture, and it's not a nostalgia piece. It's an invitation. If something feels missing, all of us have a role in addressing it. Culture isn't something we inherit or wait for someone else to fix. It's something we build together, in ordinary ways, over time.

I don't have all the answers here. If you're seeing something different, or if you think I'm missing the point entirely, I'd genuinely like to hear it. Write a response. Find me on campus. We can grab coffee and talk through what's actually going on.

Wabash doesn't need to be reinvented. It needs to be inhabited — fully and collectively. Swagger follows from that.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWARD HEWITT

Tyler Wade '12 as Sphinx Club president kicks Chapel

Sing off on September 29, 2011.

The Trans experience at Wabash



Oscar Jacome
Huesca '25

Christian Tackett '25



Warning: Piece contains offensive language

Imagine feeling out of place in what is supposed to be your community. You arrive at Wabash expecting to be a brother, but any comfort in your masculinity — if it was ever there — evaporates. Though surrounded by people, none of them seem to understand your experience. It's a strange and petrifying feeling that, maybe, you are not a man. These are experiences of transgender students at Wabash College, experiences that have perhaps been buried or revealed to only a trusted few. Despite the clear dissonance between gender-nonconforming students and an all-male institution, trans students at Wabash College deserve a place to be heard and celebrated, just as much as anyone else. The writers, along with the unnamed trans alums who graciously provided their experiences for this piece, aim to bring the rarely told experiences of trans students to light.

Transgender identity is a contentious topic at an institution that prides itself on representing one sex (male) and one principle, the Gentleman's Rule. As a student at Wabash College, you are enrolled under the presumption that you will fit within a standard of masculinity set by the trustees and a majority of students. Merely challenging this standard will have you deemed an outsider. This is without mentioning the prevalence of discriminatory rhetoric across campus. Homophobia and transphobia abound on YikYak, which is used by a large portion of the student body, and defacing buildings with variations of the word "faggot" has seemingly become a yearly tradition. The environment at Wabash is one that is inherently hostile to gender nonconformity, which has been made obvious throughout its history. Even within the small pocket of openly queer students, there is no guarantee that your situation will be met with genuine understanding. After all, even gay and bisexual men can display ignorance or prejudice towards genderqueer people.

At a college where everyone is constantly expected to present as masculine, being transgender is mentally exhausting and often terrifying. The thought of presenting authentically at Wabash, as a student or alum, comes with fears of rejection. Despite this, transgender students have not only survived but even thrived at Wabash and beyond. Some of them have gone on to become highly successful, such as Silky Nutmeg Ganache and Andrea James. Many continue to support Wabash with their time and money even as alumni, despite their negative experiences. We

are not the first trans alums of Wabash, and we certainly will not be the last.

The personal experiences of trans alumni speak the loudest. One recalls being met with apathy from 'shOUT leadership when attempting to establish a permanently accessible space to store affirming clothes and makeup supplies. One found an interest in following trans issues, including authoring an op-ed for this paper, preceding their transition. Another recalls feeling a sense of elation upon being "mistaken for a girl" by another student. Yet another few incorporated their identities into their works as a subtle form of visibility. However, all of us began experimenting with alternative gender expressions during our time as students. Some of us wore nail polish, some wore feminine clothing, and some began medically transitioning. Some of us were open and unabashed with our identities, even beyond our immediate, trusted circles. Although the degrees of gender expression varied, our identities were known to at least some Wabash community members during our time as students. Regardless, our identities laid in a limbo between invisibility and public knowledge, leaving our experiences largely unacknowledged.

With transphobia actively promoted and normalized in recent American politics, we believe it necessary more than ever for Wabash College to solidify its position on trans issues. The College, to our knowledge, has never had any official policy on trans students. Trans issues at Wabash have been continually ignored year after year as trans people have gained public visibility and the number of trans students increases. We believe the College should explicitly support transgender students and work to improve their quality of life. Transgender students should be able to easily change their name and gender markers without excessive burden to themselves. The administration should also release a nondiscrimination statement regarding transgender students. To our knowledge, at least five trans students have graduated in the past few years. Five students who were closeted to most, open to very few, who nevertheless established themselves as worthy members of the Wabash community. There are surely many more, perhaps some attending as students right now. We do not want to be the glaring issue that the administration and trustees would prefer to ignore, but instead wish to be treated with dignity and recognized just as any other students or alumni.

Request for opinions

Have an opinion on campus culture or a hot take to share? Write an opinion piece!

If interested, contact ecbone26@wabash.edu

'@Squirrels_of_Wabash_outtakes'

by Drake Green '28



Tips and tricks for those looking abroad



Rodolfo Elizondo-Alcala '27

Reply to this opinion at ryelizond27@wabash.edu

know where to start, how much it would cost, how to plan, where to go, if I was on the right track or what to expect once I got there. Fortunately, I was sweet-talked to start the process and everything else fell into place.

Once abroad, the experience becomes unforgettable—down to the mundane everyday moments like going to class or a local coffee shop or taking the tube to a museum, comedy show, theatre or landmark. I have the best memories of walking through the cities, exploring and making friends with people all over the world. I realized how close yet just how different everything truly is. Over time, the world starts to feel both bigger and more accessible than I ever thought.

As a now upperclassman at Wabash, I feel the necessity to pass my experiences to younger students and hopefully learn from them.

So here are a few things I wish I had known:

1. Choosing a program: Choose a country that you love and loves you back. Think about language, culture, food, city size and how easy it is to travel from there. London was all I was looking for: a big city, great location, multiple cultures and a rich history and literature.

2. Choosing classes: The whole point of studying abroad is to enrich your college experience, not prevent it. Communicate with program advisors and professors to ensure your classes transfer correctly.

3. Plan trips early: Traveling through Europe is not as cheap as they make it look. Prices rise fast. My worst mistake was taking a trip that I could have saved hundreds on if I planned with time. Take three or more weeks to check prices, hostels and reservations.

4. Managing costs: Ryanair and train passes are your best friend. Take trains to shorter locations, stay in hostels. Say no if you can't afford going out one day. Many students tend to spend most of their money in the first weeks.

5. Collecting memories: Not every memory should be digital. Collect tickets, journals, and memories. They often mean more once you get back to the US.

If you are going to spend your four years challenging yourself, take a chance and do it somewhere new. Go abroad and take the opportunity this college has to offer.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RODOLFO ELIZONDO-ALCALA '27
Neal Laymon '25 and Rodolfo Elizondo-Alcala '27 meet up at the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain.

Poetry from Wallies

'Prior to' by Jeremiah Clayton '26

And how I'm leading Bible study,
I was just questioning my whole faith
sleeping with my old mates, living in my old ways,
pouring up with no chase growing up with strong stone, cold killers with war stories
about leaving no trace
If I left that mask on I'd up the rate of your heart
But the beauty of it all light came forth out of dark
A melanated presence with the present of a spark
Like before, the great flood, there was Noah & his ark
Nathaniel Mary Quinn, and his brush
Snoop Doggy Dogg and his Kush
Before he got around to splitting the red sea, there was Moses and a burning bush

Acquiescing to the truth, led to John Wilkes Booth
mercy on you when you spitting only when you snaggletooth
Governmental incoherence now its disappearing youth
All conspiracies until you see I.C.E. • Code: P.R.O.O.F.
It's not public relations
It's proposition then roots
Use Occam's razor for all overreaching routes
Finally, you'll find your facts your foundations of the truth
Exercise it with your life it all hangs in a noose
Nat Turner hung too
Yeah, the spirit sprung loose
They assassinated Malcolm now Twitter done too
Revolutions of the moon shine in the Sun too, just sacred kundalini for what was
done to the Sioux.



Jeremiah Clayton
'26

Reply to this poem at jclayto26@wabash.edu

Request for Poems

Have a poem you want to share with campus?

If interested, contact ecbone26@wabash.edu

SPORTS

Track and Field dominates early season meet

CARTER MCCALL '29

STAFF WRITER

Skill, depth and timely individual victories propelled the Wabash College track and field team to a decisive win at the MoJoe Invitation, hosted by Mount St. Joseph University.

Powered by six individual wins and 19 top-five finishes, the Little Giants captured 168 points to beat out Division I opponent Northern Kentucky (153). Wilmington finished third with 104 points followed by Pikeville (61) and Mount St. Joseph (60).

Wabash dominated every group, collecting points in sprints, distance, relays, jumps and throws. The Little Giants frequently placed multiple athletes among the top five.

The distance group set the tone early when Haiden Diemer-McKinney '26 captured the mile title in 4:20.31. Angel Perez '27 added points with a third-place finish at 4:37.70, providing Wabash with a strong start.

"The plan [for the race] was to let someone else lead, go off of them, then chase on the back end when the real racing starts," said Diemer-McKinney. "Getting into an environment that requires patience and tactics was helpful for our confidence and a good visualization for championship-style races later in the season."

The sprinters provided the Little Giants with a significant share of the scoring. Brock DeBello '29 continued a dominant start to his rookie season by winning the 200 meters in a season-best 23.12 seconds. Owen Smith '27 followed with a fourth place finish at 23.94 seconds. In the 60 meters, Sly Williams '26 finished second at 7.10 seconds, while Conner Grimes '27 finished fifth in 7.19 seconds.

Wabash also captured an essential relay victory, finishing first in the 4x200 meters. The group of Carter Leininger

'28, DeBello, Tanner Brooks '27 and Grimes won with a time of 1:33.38, further extending the Little Giant's margin of victory.

"The biggest takeaway for me was that they're slowly starting to get closer as a team, which is a process," said Head Track and Field Coach Clyde Morgan H'11.

William Shearer '29 started his collegiate career strong with a runner up finish in the 400 meters at a time of 51.35 seconds. Sawyer Lewis '28 added another top-three finish by placing third with a season-best time of 52.70 seconds.

The Little Giants dominated the throwing events through the leadership of their experienced upperclassmen. Quinn Sholar '26 swept the shot put and weight throw events with throws of 15.72 meters and 17.35 meters respectively. Evan Furuness '26 added a fourth place finish in the shot put at 15.21 meters, while Jakob Van Pelt '28 rounded out the scoring with a fifth-place finish of 13.86 meters.

In the jumps, Williams added another 1st place finish to his day by claiming the long jump win with a leap of 6.60 meters. Morgyn Clark '28 contributed with a third-place finish in the high jump, clearing 1.85 meters. The pole vault was another strong event for Wabash, producing three top-four finishes. Hugh Ford '28 led the group with a second-place finish of 4.25 meters. Colson Mendenhall '29 recorded a career-best vault of 3.65 meters to place third. Nate Joven '26 finished fourth at 3.80 meters.

With that team performance, Wabash demonstrated why they are always a contender. The Little Giants will look to build on that momentum next Saturday when they compete at the Steemer Showcase, hosted by Wittenberg University.



PHOTO BY ELIJAH GREENE '25

William Boas '26 competes in the shot put at the Friday Night Spikes Invite hosted by Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology on January 24, 2025 at the William Welch Track and Field Complex.

Volleyball heats up as the new season approaches

NATE JOVEN '26

STAFF WRITER

Amidst a frosty spring semester, the volleyball team looks to make a hot return to the court. The Little Giants ended the 2025 season with a final record of 16 wins and 10 losses, marking the team's best season to date. The team has been hard at work since their last match in April 2025, using the offseason to recover and gear up for the season ahead.

The core of last season's roster will return, allowing the team to build upon last season's success. However, veteran leadership has since graduated. But with this vacant space comes the opportunity for younger players to take initiative.

"Trezdin Hair '27 and Christopher Board '27 have stepped up to lead our team after being voted captains by their teammates," said Head Volleyball Coach Ashaun Baker. "Both are great young men with a good head on their shoulders. Their personalities and drive to serve their team through acts of selflessness and support will be the reason why our program will always remember their tenure."

Board, who was named to the Midwest Collegiate Volleyball League's (MCVL) All-Academic Team for the 2024-2025 season, is unafraid to step into roles beside his primary position as libero. If the team needs someone to fill in as setter, Board is more than capable of meeting that need.

"My goal for the season is to help the team be successful," said Board. "Whatever role I have to fill to make sure everyone can get better is what I will do."

Hair, a defensive specialist for the Little Giants, seeks to guide the team to its first playoff berth.

"My goals for this season is to mentor the freshman and be an asset to the team



Zev Wolverton '27 returns a ball in a double header against Indiana University East and Goshen on January 25, 2025 at Chadwick Court.

in whatever way that I can," said Hair. "The road to the conference tournament looks extremely feasible. To be the first team in program history to make it there is our ultimate goal for this season."

The freshmen on the team include skilled hitters with high level experience, but also fun and energetic personalities. Their enthusiasm and skill blend well with the existing roster and will surely aid the team's success this season.

"The freshmen have lots of raw talent," said Hair. "Now it's about honing their skills and helping them grow into their roles. I think many of them will play a larger role in the success of this season than they think and I look forward to helping them grow."

Swim and Dive celebrates seniors in final home meet



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

A member of the Wabash Swimming and Diving team swims in a butterfly event in a dual meet against Rose-Hulman on October 24, 2025, in the Class of 1950 Natatorium.

TY MURPHY '27

STAFF WRITER

The Wabash swimming and diving team is no stranger to competition. In fact, if this weekend proves anything, they welcome it. On January 24 the Little Giants took on Valparaiso University and Illinois Wesleyan University in the Class of 1950 Natatorium.

Inviting a Division I program to a Division III school is always tough, but Wabash was not even thinking about the size of their opponent as they set their eyes on conference competition. It was less about the team and more about the little things.

"I think most of the guys are ready," said Head Swimming and Diving Coach William Bernhardt. "We're in a different training phase right now, where we're coming down just a little bit and shifting our focus of training to more technique and really focusing on details."

With more of a focus on the little things, the team delivered with strong performances. Lew Sams '29 earned a third-place finish in the 200 individual medley while several others earned top five finishes. William Renie '27 finished fifth in the 200 freestyle and Aidan Gubbins '29 finished fifth in the 1,650 freestyle.

Ryan West '28 was the sole first place finisher for the team, winning the 100-yard breaststroke in a time of 1:54.66. As the team looks past this meet and into the conference season, it is these performances that give them the confidence to compete.

"West was our only athlete that won an event against Valpo," said Bernhardt. "He's ready. He's competing against Division I athletes, and he's beating them, which is a pretty fun thing."

Meets like this one help demonstrate what type of team the Little Giants will bring to the conference championship.

The NCAC is nothing short of a powerhouse, but that does not affect the swimming and diving team one bit.

"I've been to the conference tournament before, so I'm not as nervous, which was just a hard point for me to get to as a freshman," said West. "It was very nerve wracking. But this year, I've been there before, and as long as doing everything right, I know I'll be fine."

The team handily beat Illinois Wesleyan University with a score of 171-37; however, they came up short against Valparaiso in a 70-164 loss to the Deacons.

It was more than just the races that made the home meet such a special one. Before competing, the swimming and diving team got the opportunity to celebrate their five seniors on the team. Before the first event, Josh Allen '26, Morgan Govekar '26, Carson Hiester '26, Dane Market '26 and Aidan Mason '26 were recognized for their four years on the team. Each served as leaders for multiple groups of underclassmen and helped shape the team.

"Anytime you get a group that has been with you and made it through four years, it's an accomplishment," said Bernhardt.

The Little Giants will travel to Indiana University Indianapolis to race in a dual meet with the Jaguars. And the plan is crystal clear. As conference gets ever closer, the team will focus on the little details and perfecting their techniques.

"We are going with the game plan, the race plans that we've had," said Bernhardt. "So that's going to be the expectation going there. Just letting our body take over and not trying to overthink things, or trying to change too much, because at this point in the season, it's not about what we can change. It's what we can perfect."

court. Wabash began the 2024-2025 season strongly, opening with 10 consecutive wins, but injuries led to inconsistency when games mattered most.

"Coming up short the last couple of years due to injury at the wrong time has me hoping for a healthy season," said Coach Baker. "Outside of the scoreboard, my goals are for our athletes to have a great time enjoying the sport we all love and for more student fans to come out and support this hard-working group."

Wabash spent more time in the weight room with Director of Strength and Conditioning David Williams over the offseason to build strength and ensure a healthy, competitive season. Other personnel adjustment includes the addition of Melissa Antrim, the new Assistant Volleyball Coach. Prior to arriving at Wabash, Coach Antrim led Westfield High School's varsity volleyball program. With her coaching expertise, the Little Giants hope to make last season's success the new standard as they propel into the new season.

The team's motto this season is "All Team All Time." Embodying this phrase, captains Board and Hair seek to improve the team's chemistry off the court. They hope to make that connection shine in their matches and stabilize the Little Giants when challenging tough opponents.

The Little Giants open their season on Saturday, January 31 at 11 a.m. on Chadwick Court. With fewer home games than in seasons past, opportunities to support Wabash's volleyball squad are limited. With the support of the Chadwick Crazies, the program boasted a record of nine wins and two losses when playing on Chadwick Court last season. The Little Giants play with speed and intensity, and students are sure to enjoy watching matches in the upcoming season.

Basketball bounces back in Greencastle

CARTER MCCALL '29

STAFF WRITER

Turnovers and a strong second-half run proved too much for the Little Giants as they fell 86-74 to John Carroll University in a crucial North Coast Athletic Conference matchup Saturday afternoon.

The opening half was tightly contested, featuring 11 lead changes and four ties. Wabash took the early lead off of strong points by Rich Brooks '26 and Luke Ellspermann '29. John Carroll answered with a mix of interior scoring and quick transition baskets. Midway through the half, Wabash went on an 8-0 run to regain momentum and take a 19-16 lead. John Carroll responded immediately, hitting two threes to take back the lead. The Blue Streaks closed the half strong behind the leadership of all-American Luke Chicone to extend John Carroll to a 49-42 lead.

Any hopes of a Little Giants comeback were squashed early in the second half when the Blue Streaks opened with an 11-2 run to push the score to 57-44. Wabash trimmed the deficit to 11 on multiple occasions but could never break into the single digits.

"I need to keep finding that balance where I can lead our young guys and still have the focus and confidence to step up and make the next play"

— Rich Brooks '26

Brooks continued his strong senior season by leading the Little Giants with 18 points on 7 of 10 shooting. He has shown himself as a strong leader on a team with many talented younger players.

"I need to keep finding that balance where I can lead our young guys and still have the focus and confidence to step up and make the next play," said Brooks.

Keegan Manowitz '27 added a career-high 15 points, while Ellspermann contributed 14. Gavin Schippert '26 re-



Luke Ellspermann '29 (left), Josh Whack '26 (middle), and Rich Brooks '26 (right) discuss game plan during free throws against DePauw on January 28, 2026 at Raymond Neal Fieldhouse in Greencastle, Indiana.

PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27



Luke Ellspermann '29 drives for a layup against DePauw on January 28, 2026 at Raymond Neal Fieldhouse in Greencastle, Indiana.

PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

corded a career-best 16 rebounds to add on to his eight points.

On Wednesday, January 28, the Little Giants took the trip down south to face off against the DePauw University Tigers.

The opening half unfolded as a tightly contested defensive battle. The Little Giants were able to control the pace and held the lead for nearly the entire half, forcing tough shots and limiting second-chance opportunities by dominating rebounds. Despite maintaining the advantage, Wabash was unable to create meaningful separation on the scoreboard. The Tigers consistently answered the Little Giants baskets, preventing any sustained runs. The teams headed into half-time with Wabash at a 30-29 advantage.

DePauw jumped out early on the Little Giants in the second half, and the back and forth continued from there with each team exchanging blows. It was Wabash who started pulling away, but DePauw never let them out of their sights. A couple of late fouls by the Tigers proved detrimental as the visiting Wabash Little Giants were able to seal the deal with a final score of 74-72.

Schippert was a force to be reckoned with tonight, controlling the paint with 10 rebounds and 19 points, including two scores from beyond the arc. Brooks added on another 19 points, also contributing an assist and a rebound. Ellsperman rounded out the double digit scorers for the Little Giants finishing with 18 points, four assists and seven rebounds. Ellsperman continues to show why he is starting as a freshman and how he will be a catalyst for this Wabash team for years to come.

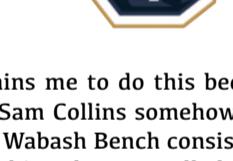
"Luke Ellsperman has played incredibly well," said Head Basketball Coach Kyle Brumett. "We knew that he was going to be an incredibly talented offensive player and he's been able to come in and prove that to be true."

The Bledsoe '26 breakdown — NCAC basketball power rankings

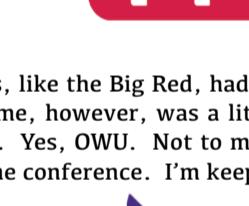
SEAN BLEDSOE '26

SPORTS EDITOR

What did I say last week? The NCAC is wide open. That could not be more true after what happened this past week. Five teams could legitimately win the conference regular season. Let's check in and see what has happened with each team.

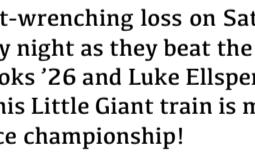


#1 - John Carroll Blue Streaks
Overall Record: (15-4)
NCAC Record: (7-3)

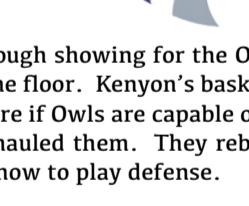


#5 - Wittenberg Tigers
Overall Record: (13-5)
NCAC Record: (6-3)

It really pains me to do this because of how much I disliked JCU on Saturday. Luke Chicone and Sam Collins somehow didn't get technical fouls for swearing at Coach Brumett and the Wabash Bench consistently throughout the first half, but when Rich Brooks '26 says one thing, he gets called for a tech? Bullcrap. I don't like the Blue Streaks, so I should stop typing before I say something I shouldn't. We'll see them in late February.

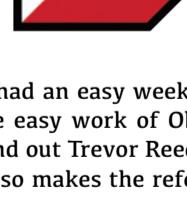


#2 - Wabash Little Giants
Overall Record: (13-6)
NCAC Record: (7-3)

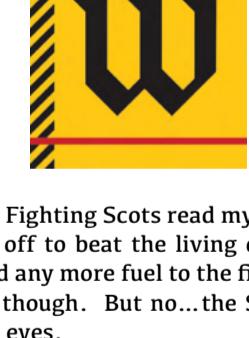


#6 - Kenyon Owls
Overall Record: (10-9)
NCAC Record: (4-6)

It was a gut-wrenching loss on Saturday for the Little Giants, but they responded well on Wednesday night as they beat the everloving crap out of the Dannies. Gavin Schippert '26, Rich Brooks '26 and Luke Ellspermann '29 could not be stopped as they combined for 56 points. This Little Giant train is moving, and these guys have their eyes set on hosting the conference championship!

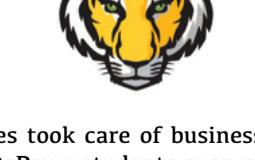


#3 - Denison Big Red
Overall Record: (12-6)
NCAC Record: (7-2)



#7 - Wooster Fighting Scots
Overall Record: (6-13)
NCAC Record: (3-7)

The Big Red had an easy weekend since they didn't have to play a game on Saturday. They also made easy work of Oberlin on Wednesday night, beating the Yeomen by 13 points. I did find out Trevor Reed is out for the season, so that makes every team's life a lot easier. It also makes the referees' jobs easier because they won't have to call nearly as many flop warnings.



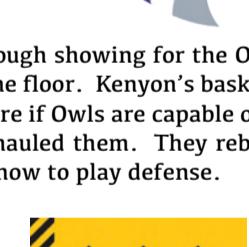
#4 - DePauw Tigers
Overall Record: (12-7)
NCAC Record: (5-5)



#8 - Ohio Wesleyan Battling Bishops
Overall Record: (6-13)
NCAC Record: (3-7)

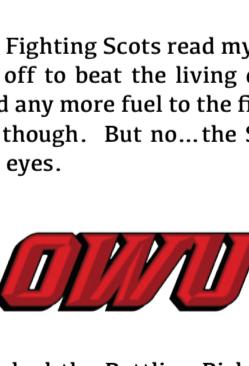
The Dannies took care of business against Kenyon on Saturday, but it sucks to suck doesn't it? DePauw students even packed the stands for the first time in four years and had a bigger crowd than Wabash and still lost. The creatures from down south have lost four out of their last five now, and of course, I hope they keep spiraling downward.

The Tigers, like the Big Red, had a more relaxing week as they only played one game. That one game, however, was a little too close for comfort. They barely beat OWU by three points. Yes, OWU. Not to mention, they only scored 63 points against the worst defense in the conference. I'm keeping my eyes on these Tigers.



It was a rough showing for the Owls on Saturday against DePauw, losing by 19 points on their home floor. Kenyon's basketball team is about as up and down as a roller coaster ride. Not sure if Owls are capable of screaming, but they had to make some sounds when the Tigers mauled them. They rebounded on Wednesday against OWU, but the Bishops don't know how to play defense.

I think the Fighting Scots read my article last week because they took their flannel-patterned belts off to beat the living daylights out of the Yeomen on Saturday. I probably shouldn't add any more fuel to the fire. I really wish they would've beaten John Carroll on Wednesday, though. But no...the Scots are like the disappointing middle child, always failing in my eyes.



I really wished the Battling Bishops would have beaten Wittenberg on Saturday, but again, like I said last week, OWU doesn't have any talent on their roster. Just four more points. It can't be that hard against Wittenberg of all teams. I would say something about OWU's defense, but it's non-existent so there's no point.

The Yeomen have lost their last three games, and one of those losses came to Wooster. If a team can't beat Wooster, then they deserve to be at the bottom of the conference, and that's exactly where Oberlin finds themselves. Enough said.