

# Community Center progress slow but ongoing



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

The Community Center project has been stagnant since the government shutdown in november of last year. Wabash College awaits for construction crews to come back to begin constructing the new Community Center.

**ELIJAH WETZEL '27**  
 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In the center of campus, an empty construction site accumulates snow. Long approval processes and a record-long government shutdown halted construction of Wabash's new Community Center. But, as students, faculty and staff and the community at large wait patiently for the new building to appear, other infrastructure projects are alive and well.

Almost a year ago today, the College held a groundbreaking ceremony in the Great Hall of the Sparks Center. Announced months prior, demolition of Sparks was originally slated for the summer of 2024, but delays in the approval process for a federal loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) pushed demolition back to summer 2025.

But since students came back to campus this past autumn, progress on the site has been limited. What will be a community center has been, for the past few months, a community's crater. There are a few reasons for the delay in construction. One is that there has been turnover among some of the USDA administrators the

College is working with to secure the loan. Another factor is the record-long shutdown of the federal government in late 2025.

"The shutdown impacted us," said Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer Kendra Cooks. "We could not move forward when, even at the state level, they were not monitoring emails. When they were shut down, they were shut down. So, there was no one to work with to do the approvals."

The College can take solace in the fact that there is federal money set aside for the Community Center project. Thanks to the work of USDA administrators, there has effectively been money with Wabash's name on it since last fall. However, some of the difficulty as of late has been navigating a loan-approval process that is not built for speed and typically involves the government on the front-end of construction. So, even though the College came to the USDA with finished designs for the building, it still had to work on their timeline.

"The process is not designed to be nimble," said Cooks. "They're about safeguarding the federal gov-

ernment and the people of the United States. Even if it inconveniences us, it is their program with their rules and their money. Usually in our projects, we're able to be much more nimble, so we have been very blessed that we have the right donors between the folks that love Wabash College and the Lilly Endowment."

The College has already received funding for the construction work done thus far and is hoping to make significant progress towards approval of the rest of the loan. Still, the process has taken longer than expected.

"When we were having preliminary conversations with some of the senior leadership in the state, we had an understanding that it was a more nimble process," said Cooks. "We still feel like a long-term fixed loan provides the college opportunities and resources we would not have had. It's definitely worth it to go through the process, or we would have moved away from it. This project has needed to be done for 30 years and we are making it happen."

While construction on the Community Center is stalled, other campus construction is well underway. Construction

of a new parking lot on the south side of Jennison Street, directly across from the Theta Delta Chi house and College Hall, and a new cooling plant south of Martindale Hall has begun. Recently, crews completed a new sidewalk that connects Crawford Street with academic buildings on the Mall. Announced just prior to students departing for Winter Break, the sidewalk will make it easier for students living on the northwest corner of campus to access buildings on the Mall.

"The speedy construction of the path made the disruption very minimal," said Evan Bone '26. "Although it is hard to enjoy the scenery in the cold weather, I can see myself reading a book on the new benches and enjoying the fresh greenery once spring arrives."

The parking lots, cooling plant and walkway are aspects of the College's 2019 Campus Master Plan. The main feature of the 2019 plan was a campus center, which became, of course, the Community Center project. The Community Center remains the College's priority project, but meaningful changes to campus are still happening in the meantime.

# U.S. invades Venezuela; Nicolas Maduro taken into US custody



COURTESY OF ANADOLU AJANSI

As tensions in Venezuela rose, the Venezuelan army was mobilized and began doing drills including rolling armored tank battalions through streets.

**PHILLIP HARVEY '29**  
 STAFF WRITER

United States special forces captured Venezuelan head of state Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, in a mission on January 3. The operation, codenamed Absolute Resolve, saw a deployment of over 150 aircraft in addition to ground units. A mere five hours after President Trump gave the order, Maduro was transported to the United States to face charges of narco-terrorism, handcuffed and blindfolded.

The operation began around 2 a.m. in Venezuela, when people in northern Caracas reported hearing explosions as U.S. strikes targeted air defense systems and communication hubs. Those strikes, in addition to cyber-attacks, took down the power grid of the city's southern half while suppressing their air defense systems. At that point an extraction force composed of units from Delta Force and the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team descended into Maduro's compound in Chinook helicopters.

The operation went off with "surgical precision," said Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. "America can project its will anywhere, anytime, with coordination,

strength, lethality and precision." He confirmed that there were no American casualties, whereas Venezuelan officials claim as many as or more than 100 people were killed. The exact number has not been revealed.

Before dawn, President Trump posted on social media a photo of the detained Maduro on the USS Iwo Jima. From Mar-a-Lago he held a triumphant press conference. "We watched, we waited, we prepared," Trump told reporters. "This was a massive joint military and law enforcement raid flawlessly executed by the greatest Americans our country has to offer. No nation in the world could achieve what America achieved last night."

Although the administration frames this event as an act of law enforcement by its military assets, international reactions are divided. Heads of state in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba and Nicaragua have all condemned the intervention. Delcy Rodríguez, the acting president of Venezuela in the aftermath of Maduro's capture, called the event a kidnapping and complete violation of international law.

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# Four Wabash professors earn tenure at the end of 2025



Associate Professor of Economics Eric Dunaway.



Associate Professor of English Julian Whitney.



Associate Professor of Classics Matthew Gorey.



Associate Professor of Chemistry Joe Scanlon '03.

**OWEN VERMEULEN '28**  
 NEWS EDITOR

For many people, winter break is an opportunity to find a small bit of rest after a long fall semester and before a grueling spring semester. However, for select faculty, this time of year only marks the beginning. Four members of Wabash's esteemed faculty earned their tenure over break. For most professors, earning tenure from college or university is the main goal after they get out of graduate school, academia is one of the most competitive professional fields to be in. Only about a quarter of professors are tenured nationwide, but cream rises to the top and so do the most dedicated and talented professors.

Associate Professor of Economics Eric Dunaway graduated from Eastern Washington University with his Bachelor's degree in Economics and then went on to receive his PhD from Washington State University. Dunaway was hired as an assistant professor in 2018.

Receiving tenure is a sign of confidence from the College in the professor. It takes years of work and research for a professor to be considered for tenure.

"It feels really nice in the sense that tenure is a signal from the college that they have faith in what you do for the long run," said Dunaway. "To receive that endorsement from the college

is great. It takes a long time to get here, but it's also important to understand that tenure is just the beginning."

One only needs to talk to Dunaway's students to learn why he was one of the professors to earn tenure.

"Dunaway is a key reason as to why the economics department is so strong," said Harrison Wainman '26. "He has been a great advisor and a life coach as well. His passion for economics and how he keeps the material engaging is what has driven me to be an economics student."

Associate Professor of Classics Matthew Gorey graduated from Georgetown University with his Bachelors degree in English and Classics, but decided to focus his graduate-level work on Classics. After receiving his PhD and Masters from the University of Washington, Gorey arrived at Wabash in 2019, first as a visiting professor and then made a permanent Bryon K. Trippet Assistant Professor of Classics in 2022.

One of the most important things tenure has afforded Gorey is a sense of stability. Wabash has allowed him to establish a home and build a community of his own. Based on what his students have to say, it is only right that Gorey receives this sense of security from Wabash.

"[Associate] Professor Gorey is very knowledgeable about the ancient Mediterranean world

and its cultures," said Lucas Ranard '26. "He brings great insight and good humor to his lectures and makes them engaging and enjoyable."

Associate Professor of Chemistry Joe Scanlon '03, notably the only Wabash alumnus in the new batch of tenured professors, eventually returning to the College after earning his PhD from the University of Minnesota. Scanlon is a great example of Wabash development coming full circle and giving back what you know to the next generation of Wabash men.

"Personally, Wabash College was a place that really helped my transition from a teenager to an adult," said Scanlon. "It feels like I'm able to give back a little bit which I'm really proud of."

What Scanlon is giving back is the engaging and personalized learning environment that he received as a student.

"Professor Scanlon prepared us well for the expectations of upper level chemistry courses," said Brayden Spurlock '27. "He made laboratory activities especially enjoyable, doing things like bringing in Burger King crowns for everyone. He has a natural ability to make students passionate about chemistry."

Lastly, Associate Professor of English Julian Whitney came to Wabash in 2020 with a Bachelor's from Haverford College and a PhD from Emory University. Associate Professor

Whitney has no intentions of letting his foot off the gas after receiving tenure. He sees this as an opportunity to refine his teaching strategies even further.

"I think that one of the advantages of getting tenure is that it sort of encourages you to think about new pedagogical strategies," said Whitney. "You can try new things because you're constantly refining the craft of teaching even after you reach this milestone"

Associate Professor Whitney's students are especially grateful for the dedication and enthusiasm that he brings to teaching.

"[Associate] Professor Whitney is one of those professors that can electrify a classroom," said Evan Bone '26. "He'll connect a reading from a century ago to our lives today with wit and an intense delivery that captivates all students. He's undoubtedly deserving of tenure."

Each of these professors expressed gratitude for the tenure process and all of the feedback that they got from students and staff. One thing is certain, each of the professors from this group offer something special to the Wabash community. It's good to know that they'll be sticking around for the years to come.

HEADSHOTS COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

## U.S. invades Venezuela; Nicolas Maduro taken into US custody

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The legal justification the Trump administration provided for the operation is a 2020 indictment and 2025 filing which accuses Maduro of leading the “Cartel of the Suns,” a drug-trafficking network made up of Venezuelan officials and military members. He is accused of providing law enforcement cover, logistical support and selling passports to aid in trafficking operations.

Under international law, however, this justification may be scanty.

“First, the action in Venezuela violates UN Charter Article 2(4),” said Assistant Professor of Political Science Huei-Jyun Ye. “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” As members of the United Nations, countries agree to the Charter. However, the UN does not have an enforcement mechanism to ensure countries follow the rules. Therefore, charter violations are not rare. In fact, the US has had a history of violating Article 2(4), and so have other countries.”

The administration has signaled it will be heavily involved in Venezuela’s transition of power. Trump has even gone so far as to say the United States will “run” the government, but other members of the administration have pared that back from literally controlling the country. Whether his extradition remedies political instability in the country or hastens it remains to be seen.

“On the consequences of the U.S. ‘running’ Venezuela, research shows that foreign interventions to remake a country’s domestic politics often fail,” said Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science Ryan Liou. “Even people who dislike the current regime might not like foreign management either, which can fuel long-term instability or even insurgency. Beyond the politics, we have to consider the humanitarian dimension. If the goal is to help the Venezuelan people, we have to ask if a foreign-run administration can actually deliver food, medicine and safety more effectively than a locally legitimate government, or if it would

just create a power vacuum that causes more displacement and suffering.

Trump has, however, been clear on the goal of fixing up Venezuela in a manner favorable to the United States. He intends to do this by encouraging American private industry to invest in Venezuela’s oil market. In concert with that goal, he has put an “oil quarantine” on the country so that shipments are blocked to U.S. adversaries.

Blocking oil exports may have massive consequences within the Caribbean. Cuba, an ally socialist state, relies almost singularly on Venezuelan crude oil. It may yet enter its worst economic crisis in decades.

Socialism in Venezuela began in 1999 with the rise of Hugo Chávez, who on the back of his charisma and prestige as a soldier launched the “Bolivarian Revolution.” Chávez used the historic revenue of oil funding to fuel social programs. While the redistributionist policies initially cut poverty and lionized him into the working people of Venezuela, he also systematically dismantled democratic institutions, nationalized formerly private industries and fostered nationalist loathing for the United States’ intervention in South America.

Maduro was Chávez’s hand-picked successor following his death in 2013. Maduro’s reign largely has been marked by economic collapse due to oil price falloff and a mass exodus of an estimated 7.7 million Venezuelans. Those conditions are what the U.S. says made the state turn toward sponsored criminality. The state department estimates that the country heretofore moved 250 metric tons of cocaine annually based on satellite data.



President Maduro and his wife taken into U.S. custody January 3 during operation Absolute Resolve.

Moving forward, the power in Venezuela remains in the hands of Chavez’s ideological similars. Maduro may be gone, but the United Socialist Party of Venezuela maintains its hold of military command and the judiciary. Delcy Rodríguez, Maduro’s vice president, is now the head of state, theoretically as an interim leader. She has a herculean task laid out before her.

“For Rodríguez, her biggest challenge isn’t just the U.S. or the Venezuelan public, it’s the internal elite, particularly the military,” said Liou. “To avoid Maduro’s fate, she has to solve the ‘principal-agent’ problem. She’s the ‘agent’ for the Chavista movement, but if she moves too far toward reform to please the international community, she risks a backlash from those who keep her in power. If she stays too rigid, the economic collapse continues. The question is whether she can provide enough “order” to satisfy the military without committing the human rights abuses that make her an international pariah. History suggests that when leaders prioritize political survival over institutional reform, the country’s long-term stability usually suffers.”

The U.S. has turned its back somewhat on the democratic opposition movements inside of Venezuela. Recent Nobel Prize Laureate and democratic activist Maria Corina Machado has praised the president, even going as far as to present him her Nobel Prize medal. Absent military backing though, it’s hard to see a future where her contemporaries take power in Venezuela without significant U.S. backing, something that has not materialized yet.

## Presentation of student research preview



PHOTO BY ELIJAH GREENE '25

Jacob Ramirez '25 presenting to students at the Celebration of Student Research on January 24, 2025.

DAGIM HUNTINGTON '28  
STAFF WRITER

Wabash College’s 26th Annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship and Creative Work highlights the depth and variety of student work across campus that brings together projects that have scientific innovation and creative problem solving. This project gives students the opportunity to present original research and ideas developed both inside and outside the classroom. The presentations on January 23 will showcase how Wabash students are engaging with real world questions through academic curiosity.

Precious Ainabor '26 will present research focused on adapting a custom-designed protein system known as LOCKR (Latching Orthogonal Cage/KeypRotein) for use in bacterial cells. The protein allows scientists to precisely control protein levels inside the cells. Ainabor’s work centers on using this symptom to trigger protein degradation in bacteria, which opened the door to new possibilities in medicine and synthetic biology.

Ainabor was inspired by the idea that scientists can design artificial systems and introduce them into living cells to control cellular behavior.

Ainabor was inspired because the design artificial systems and introduce them into living cells to control a wide range of cellular processes created a vision in his head of the possibilities of using a protein to precisely control protein levels within bacterial cells in a tunable way

He joined the lab in 2023 and eventually took over the project, conducting experiments to prove the system works within bacteria. In addition to his presentation at the Celebration, he also presented his findings at the 2025 ASBMB Annual conference.

Success comes from challenges, when asked what the most challenging part of his research was, he stated that failing more often than he expected was a key memory. He admits, however, this is the reality of scientific research.

“I spent my first summer in the lab and left feeling as though I had

made no real impact, since my efforts did not amount to anything substantial, at least in my opinion,” said Ainabor. “That experience pushed me to reflect on how I could contribute more meaningfully to any projects within the lab, and that shift in mindset is what changed things for me. I wanted to continue working in the research lab until I knew I had made an impact.”

While he experienced failure, he also had help from a partner, Jonathan Parackattu '28, and guidance from Professor of Chemistry Walter Novak '04 and Associate Professor of Biology Erika Sorensen-Kmakian to help the research get back on track. Looking ahead, Ainabor plans to pursue a career in medicine and hopes to remain involved in research as a physician.

Also presenting is Connor Phillips '28, whose project focused on the outcomes of the seventh International Youth Think Tank Conference. Phillips centered his presentation on bringing attention to key problems within modern democracy and discussing potential solutions developed.

Phillips was collaborating with 24 individuals from diverse backgrounds, all working together to improve democratic systems. He admits his biggest challenge was coming up with realistic ideas and considering how they could actually be implemented in the real world.

Through the experience, Phillips gained valuable skills in teamwork and communication under a tight time frame. He hopes his presentation inspires others to take an active role in shaping the future. One of the key takeaways Phillips believes he received from this project was how to work efficiently with a large group of people with limited time and get a lot done.

“We are the future and deserve a voice in shaping it” said Phillips.

Both Ainabor and Phillips demonstrated how involved and engaged Wabash students are both in and out of the classroom.

## ICE faces pushback, Governor Mike Braun, delivers State of the State, Indiana judge shot

This week in regional news



COURTESY OF THE INDY STAR

The Marion County jail will no longer hold people detained by ICE agents for more than 48 hours.

CONNOR PHILLIPS '28  
STAFF WRITER

In Indiana, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has faced trouble and pushback this week. The Marion County jail will no longer hold people detained by ICE beyond 48 hours after it reached capacity Sunday. Around 175 people convicted of state crimes and held at the Adult Detention Center in Indianapolis have not yet been transferred to Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) facilities. This has caused the jail to exceed its financial limit and resulted in a budgetary shortfall

of about \$2.7 million per year because IDOC only reimburses the office with \$42 per person per day. In Carmel, several hundred students walked out of class on Tuesday afternoon. The students’ protest was part of the “Free America” walkout, planned across the country on January 20 to mark one year since President Donald Trump was inaugurated for his second term. It also comes as students across the country protest the killing of Renee Nicole Good by a federal immigration officer in Minneapolis on January 7. The Trump administra-

tion has called the shooting self-defense, though state and local officials strongly contest that account.

Gov. Mike Braun '76 delivered a State of the State speech on January 14 that was heavy on achievements. Most of the address focused on affordability for Hoosiers, from electric bills and rent to property taxes and child care. Braun didn’t mention the bitter December redistricting battle that has strained some relationships in the Statehouse. Democrats attacked Republicans by hopping on the affordability bandwagon, citing bills the Democratic caucuses have offered in recent years that Republicans rejected. Their claim is that if state Republicans wanted to lower costs, they would have done so by now. Braun issued a full-throated declaration of support for data centers. Moving to homeownership, Braun said he supports a bill from Rep. Doug Miller, R-Elkhart, to remove government hurdles and make it easier for Hoosiers to purchase a home. Braun also announced support for bills to limit cellphone use in schools, ensure that parents have veto power over their kids creating social media accounts and curb homelessness in public spaces. He also supports a constitutional change to make holding accused criminals in jail pre-trial easier.

Indiana state court judge Steven P. Meyer and his wife, Kimberly Meyer, were shot at their home on

January 18, prompting concerns for the safety of the state’s judiciary after recent increases in threats and violence against public officials nationally. The shooting is the latest in a line of violence directly towards public servants. Last year alone, the Pennsylvania governor’s residence was set on fire while Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, and

his family were asleep inside, the Republican Party’s headquarters in New Mexico were firebombed and a Democratic state representative in Minnesota, Melissa Hortman, and her husband were assassinated in their home.

The Lafayette Police Department released few details about the shootings of the Meyers. The police

said that they were called to the couple’s home at about 2 p.m. on January 18. They found that Judge Meyer had been shot in the arm, and that Mrs. Meyer had sustained an injury to her hip, the police said. Both are in stable condition.



COURTESY OF INDIANA CAPITAL CHRONICLE

Governor Braun delivers Indiana State of the State speech on January 14, in the Indiana House of Representatives.

# Wabash Always Cites!

Cheers to the 26th Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, & Creative Work

instagram.com/wabashclubofindianapolis

## The ten best movies of 2025

10

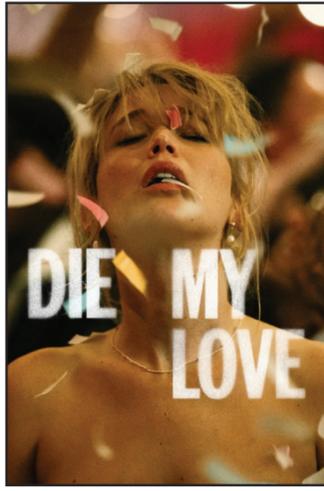


COURTESY OF TMDB

NOAH MINTIE '29  
FEATURES EDITOR

"Highest 2 Lowest" is Spike Lee's adaptation of Akira Kurosawa's legendary "High and Low." The story follows a music mogul whose son is kidnapped by an aggressive startup rapper and the ensuing police investigation. The discourse surrounding "Highest 2 Lowest" does not seem to have transferred over to the awards season. Perhaps that is a side-effect of the film's limited release, or perhaps it is because of "Highest 2 Lowest's" flaws. Indeed, the first act feels more like a reread of the original film, and the film's use of music, while integral to the main conflict, sometimes missed more than it hit. If these elements drag the movie down for some, I understand. Still, I would dare to say that the highlights of "Highest 2 Lowest" rival even the film it was based off of. Denzel Washington's performance is incredible in a rather subtle way, and A\$AP Rocky brings a fiery performance and the movie's themes about creativity and supporting one's roots are perfectly developed.

9



COURTESY OF TMDB

Throw Jennifer Lawrence and Robert Pattinson in a shabby house, add a newborn baby and an obnoxious dog in the mix, spice it up with a dash of abstractly-represented post-partum depression and and top it off with a social commentary about the restrictive social outlook on women's mental health and the roles of a mother. Then, let the pressure build up for the majority of the runtime until it finally boils over. That is how you make Lynne Ramsay's "Die My Love." The main attraction here is definitely Lawrence's lead act. Whether she's arguing, reflecting, connecting, or crawling on all fours and pretending to be a dog, her performance is impressively layered. "Die My Love," in both the script and the performances, makes depression feel inescapable and multifaceted. Beyond that thematic interpretation, it is gorgeously shot. Every technical element from the sets to the sound greatly amplifies the tone. It is among the most emotional films of the year, not only because of the movie's tone but because of the overwhelming feelings it leaves you with.

8



COURTESY OF TMDB

My pick for the best documentary of the year, Jeremy Workman's "Secret Mall Apartment" tells the true story of eight artists who protested the construction of a needlessly overbuilt shopping mall by creating their own little apartment inside of it. What begins and ends as an exploration of this whimsical trespassing also manages to explore the nature of impermanent art as well as the social and political climate of urban areas in the early 2000's along the way. The documentary's use of dramatic reenactment and situational humor is unique, particularly because implementing those elements can sometimes cheapen a documentary. However, in this movie's case, the risk pays off, and the incredible story is brought to life in a charming and insightful way. Often documentaries feel like they're just coasting on the "cool factor" of the stories they are based on, and ignore any potential further significance. "Secret Mall Apartment" does have a cool story on its own, but what the film then does with the story is wildly impressive.

7



COURTESY OF TMDB

No doubt the most controversial movie of the year, Ari Aster's contemporary western "Eddington" has gotten a mixed reaction from the few people who actually went to see it this summer. Set during a pivotal mayoral election in March of 2020, the film is likely to dig up memories that some think should be left to rest for a while longer. Despite depicting many issues which are controversial to this day, I do not see "Eddington" as a political movie. It plays like historical fiction, feeling almost as if it was made in 2045. The film may dramatize several aspects of the lockdown era, but it still feels appropriately introspective as a whole. Beyond the subject matter, the filmmaking on display is undeniable. Aster's directing and Joaquin Phoenix's performance go hand-in-hand to craft a disgustingly intriguing descent into modern America's most volatile year. Instead of retreading old western tropes with the gimmick of a pandemic setting, "Eddington" asks and answers questions about the psychology behind our politics. A lesser film would fixate on details, but this film prioritizes characters.

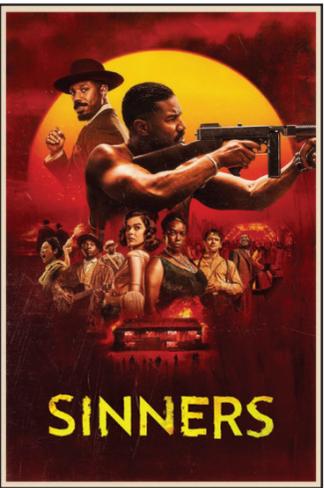
6



COURTESY OF TMDB

Opening to blasting rock & roll instrumentals and refusing to calm down from there, Joel Potrykus' "Vulcanizadora" is one of the most obscure yet inventive movies on this list. It follows two friends who journey into the woods of Michigan to carry out a disturbing pact. After my first viewing, I did not quite know how to feel. The film throws a lot at you, but after it settles over time, you can not help appreciating it. "Vulcanizadora" bears some of the greatest character writing of the year, with masterful performances to boot. It brilliantly explores the lives of the kind of people that everyone tries to minimize contact with. Once the average person has interacted with either lead, they mentally scrape them off of their minds like uneaten food on a dinner plate. To follow the lives of the discarded is deeply compelling, and is part of why "Vulcanizadora" is so great. If that is not enough, the film also captures the forests and lakes of the midwest with a beautiful color palette and soft cinematography.

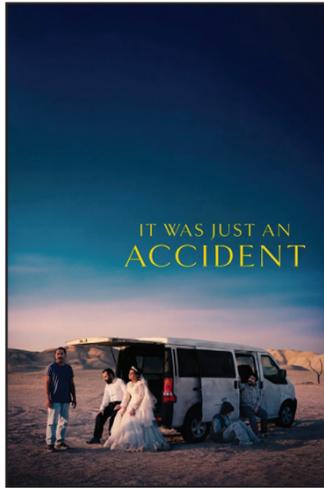
5



COURTESY OF TMDB

There is not much to say about Ryan Coogler's musical horror film "Sinners." Not because the movie in any way lacks depth, but because for eight months this movie has been going strong in popular discourse. This is for good reason, as "Sinners" has everything one could ask for from a blockbuster: thrills, depth, great acting and an engaging visual language. Coogler's use of a dynamic aspect ratio is bound to become greatly influential. Regardless of its performance in the awards season, I have no doubt that "Sinners" will come to be seen as a modern classic, and numerous road trips through the deep south will be accompanied by its all-time great soundtrack. While it is not without flaws and blemishes, one would have to work hard to discount the value of such an unforgettable time in the theater.

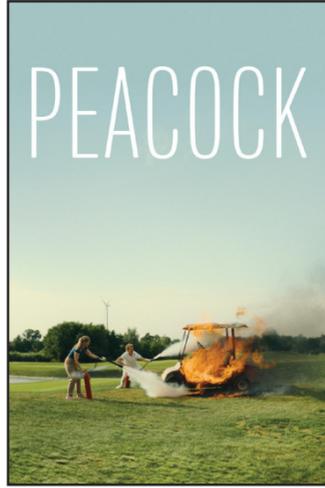
4



COURTESY OF TMDB

Despite the Iranian Government's numerous attempts to censor him, the renowned director Jafar Panahi is still producing phenomenal movies, no matter how restrictive the conditions are. His latest film, "It Was Just an Accident," follows a group of former prisoners who toss aside their reformed lives when they find someone who may be one of their old torturers. The film is haunting, raw and deeply engaging. Much like the rest of Panahi's filmography, it blends elements of documentary filmmaking with dashes of Italian neorealism. The movie also functions as an invaluable window into aspects of modern Iranian culture, attributable to Panahi's unwavering dedication to show the world as it is, and not how the powers that be may want it to seem. You would be hard pressed to find a more raw movie released in 2025.

3



COURTESY OF TMDB

The final film festival discovery featured on this list, Bernhard Wenger's "Peacock" is doubtlessly the funniest film of the year. Being a satire of the performative upper-class in modern Europe, "Peacock" follows a man who makes a living pretending to be whoever a customer needs. Basically, an actor to help follow-through whatever fanciful lies one may tell at a schmoozy dinner party. He spends the majority of the film in an identity crisis, trying to prove to himself that he is, in fact, a real person behind his many masks. Every joke in the film is layered, creating a satisfying feedback loop where the viewer takes a few seconds to process what has happened, only to burst out laughing when it clicks. The humor is delicately crafted, but still accessible to any audience.

2



COURTESY OF TMDB

Josh Safdie's "Marty Supreme" might be the most deceptive movie of the year. The first act starts as a by-the-books sports film, but the entire plot radically shifts by the second act, and then the third act connects the two together while also moving into another new direction. This lopsided structure perfectly compliments the protagonist himself. Marty Mauser, played by Timothee Chalamet in the performance of the year, is hard to root for. He subverts the tropes of almost any conceivable story about an ambitious athlete. Not a single risk he takes pays off without also biting him in the backside. "Marty Supreme" is beautifully unfortunate while also being oddly touching. Though Marty lies to people just about as much as he breathes, his connections with them still feel as though they come from a genuine source.

1



COURTESY OF TMDB

It could not have been any other way. Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another" is arguably the greatest Hollywood release of the decade. It has been a while since stratospheric movie stars have taken part in such an exhilarating adventure story. The film follows an ex-revolutionary who must spring out of his substance-abusing coma to rescue his daughter from a familiar enemy. Everything about the movie works, densely packed with political commentary, larger-than-life setpieces and the greatest car chase of the century. It marries contemporary themes with unrealistic naming conventions to create the perfect mix of escapism and modern relevance. "One Battle After Another" goes a step farther than just being a masterpiece, it legitimizes itself as a succinct argument for why we should go to the movies at all.

## 'Don't Be Dumb' is stupidly smart

Drake's "Family Matters," which is hard to do considering Rocky has been a movie star, fashion model and Rihanna's boyfriend. But it happened, and after all the hold up, this album needed to be good for the Harlem rapper. So, what did he do?

He brings in Winona Ryder fresh off of defeating Vecna for one of the coolest music videos of this decade. "PUNK ROCKY" became the first song to be released on the album as a single, and it proves what Rocky wants to do. He wants to make a new sound. The lighthearted punk rock inspired flow brings in a fresh new sound that does just that. But this album is not just his experimenting. It also gives the fans what they want. That is bodacious Rocky. "STOLE YA FLOW" comes out

heavy with petty disses to fellow rappers in the industry. It is fun, loud and boasts that "my baby mama Rihanna so we unbothered." But his ability doesn't limit him to one big album full of similar songs but to mix it up a bit. "STAY HERE 4 LIFE" employs fellow artist Brent Faiyaz's fantastic vocals to make what is in my opinion one of the best songs on the album. "STOP SNITCHING" is another highlight of the album that brings back Rocky's hard flow, but it is songs like "NO TRESPASSING" with such good production and vocals that make the album.

Nonetheless, there are some misses on the album, especially towards the end. "STFU" is weird and sounds simply too unusual. "ROBBERY" is forgettable and just does not fit into

the album. "AIR FORCE" is just okay and "THE END" struggles to match the album's broader ethos and vibe. With that being said I do not think it is enough to hate this album.

There is something to say about the production and creative direction of this album. In a time when many artists purely prioritize releasing a volume of songs, "Don't Be Dumb" is anything but pure fodder. I already mentioned the music video for "PUNK ROCKY," but "HELICOPTER" is equally as good, with a retro style to fit great lyrical flow. The cover, designed by the legendary Tim Burton, matches nicely with the style of the songs and videos to level up his visuals. Rocky brings a creative and unique approach that is not always evident in today's music.

Overall, "Don't Be Dumb" is a great album that has cemented A\$AP Rocky's legacy. He has rebounded coming off a disappointing album in "Testing", and "Don't Be Dumb" has become the standard of what fans should expect from their favorite artists. But this album is not perfect. It loses replayability towards the end and also the wait it took for the album to be released has to be mentioned here. It took eight years for this album to be released after constant pushbacks. Nevertheless, this album will be getting plenty of plays out of me.

**FINAL VERDICT:  
4/5 WALLYS**



TY MURPHY '27  
STAFF WRITER

A\$AP Rocky has finally done it. After countless delays of his much-anticipated album "Don't Be Dumb," he has finally delivered, albeit two years after his originally scheduled 2024 release date. He definitely came heavy; however, that should be expected of an artist with his track record.

His reputation took a hit after

# Wabash welcomes the works of AKIRASH

TOBIN SEIPLE '29  
FEATURES EDITOR

If the work Wabash requires for students is a game, then perhaps the prize is a precious perspective attained through the liberal arts experience. In light of that mission, Artist-in-Residence Olaniyi Akindiya fits right in at Wabash. A renowned artist with award-winning work and experience with over twenty residencies served across the world, Akindiya, known professionally as AKIRASH, will participate in a residency at Wabash this spring. AKIRASH is no stranger to the value of perspective as demonstrated in the art gallery opening on Friday, January 23, at the Fine Arts Center. He has taken the gallery by storm with his thought-provoking pieces and will also co-teach Materials and Message with Associate Professor and Chair of the Art Department, Annie Strader.

"I met Akirash during our interview for the position last year, so my first impression of Akirash via Zoom was how he translated such positive energy through a screen," said Strader. "I was impressed by how thoughtful and grounded he is for being such a successful artist and having so many demands for his time."

AKIRASH's career as an artist is purely stunning, and it started in a peculiar way. After becoming a pharmacist with a Biochemistry degree in hopes of helping his community in Lagos, Nigeria, he found the work largely unfulfilling.

"I think one of my colleagues was sick, and I told him I could see him over the weekend. One of the things in Lagos is that Saturday is a celebration and many streets are closed," said AKIRASH. "I came through his area, but he was feeling better, but by then the area was blocked off. He said, 'Let me show you a different way,' and that is

ba word for "isolation," is a project about the memory and stories of people who survived the time of Covid-19. The project consists of aerial photos the artist took of cities around the world during the height of the pandemic. The project also has figures of abstract people that add color to the collage.

"It is kind of a landscape... it was done when we were isolated," said AKIRASH. "The idea was that I listened to the news and put everything together. That was when it was difficult in the world because people were just dying. I look at memories — stories of people surviving and telling the story of people who died at that time."

"Asiko Di İranti" is another project that will be on display at the gallery. Translating to "moments become memories," it is an astonishing and is sure to seize the curiosity of students and faculty.

"Underneath what you see together is all about the moment," said AKIRASH. "Moments become memories. Some moments happen in our lives that we plan, many we don't plan. We cannot predict what will happen in the next second. Nothing we ever achieved comes easy. You cannot have what you are looking for while sitting down and crossing your legs and expect it is going to happen. You have to go out there and fight for it."

"ASIKO DI İRANTI" presents an array of parts, the most striking of which is the hanging interwoven structure made from hundreds of cardboard squares. Each one was hand-placed and painted by AKIRASH.

"They are cut in strips 14 inches long, one inch wide, folded into 4-by-4 inch squares and glued together," said AKIRASH. "They are tightened with twine individually and represent individuals. This is who we are as a



COURTESY OF TRUE NORTH

AKIRASH poses next to one of his art projects while serving a residency at The McColl Center, one of the most prestigious residencies for artists.

how I found the answer: the art institute. There were mirrors, sculptures and I was asking myself, what is happening here... I was there from eleven to seven in the evening, so I just enrolled and went back to school."

Though his path to art was atypical, AKIRASH's success is deep. After pursuing a full-time career as an artist, he taught at NYU at the art institute. However, he realized that he could not simultaneously develop his art while teaching his students. Thus, he decided to pursue residencies. Ever since, he has been awarded some of the most prestigious and sought-out art residencies, including the highly-competitive residency at The McColl Center.

"The idea of residency is to focus on your work," said AKIRASH. "When I am thinking I want to change perspective, I am looking for something dynamic in my creation of how I weigh things, trying to see if I want to dictate a new idea."

AKIRASH's respect for viewpoints certainly shows in the art gallery here at Wabash. The gallery will call attention to studying underlying systems and themes of humankind. "İpinya," a Yoruba

life, as a tree. We come together to form cities and live together with different languages, cultures, and colors."

Beyond his exhibit, AKIRASH looks forward to co-teaching Materials and Message with Professor Strader. The course is designed to give students a broader perspective on how artists choose materials to shape meaning.

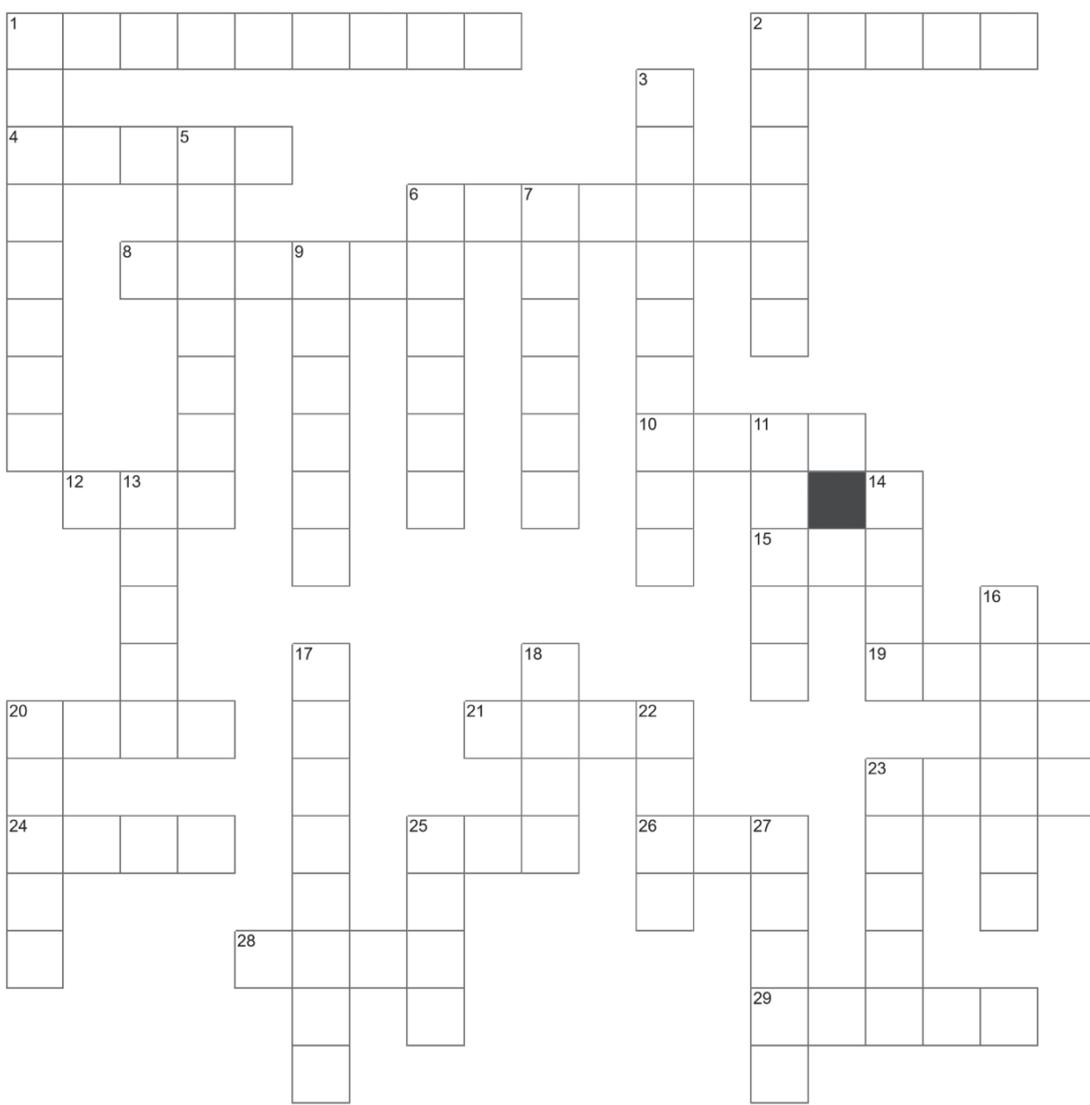
"I think materials tell stories," said AKIRASH. "You have to be specific in choosing them for the theme you are trying to address."

"Students will get the chance to experiment, ask questions and see how AKIRASH approaches making decisions in his own practice," said Strader.

With his brilliant career and emphasis on outlook, AKIRASH is an outstanding addition to a campus that encourages many points of view. His latest exhibition will provoke thought among Wabash students, and his help in Materials and Message with Professor Strader is sure to influence students positively and widen their perspectives.

# 'Cards'

Crossword by Tanner Quackenbush '26



**Across**

- 1. One-player card game
- 2. Deceptive tactic in poker
- 4. Increase the current bet
- 6. Remove a card from your hand
- 8. Indiana's favorite 4-player card game
- 10. Initial bet before cards are dealt
- 12. Highest or lowest card in a suit
- 15. Commercial card game, Spanish for "one"

- 19. Take a card from the deck
- 20. Decline to bid or bet
- 21. Cards held by a player
- 23. One of four card categories
- 24. High-ranking face card
- 25. Simple game of card comparison
- 26. Divide the deck before dealing
- 28. Match a previous bet in poker
- 29. Decline to raise but stay in the game

**Down**

- 1. Five cards in sequence
- 2. Strategic partnership card game
- 3. Casino game, also known as 21
- 5. Action to randomize a deck of cards
- 6. Player who distributes cards
- 7. Black suit with a pointed symbol
- 9. Red suit, "everyone's got one"
- 11. Suit that outranks others in a card game
- 13. Black suit in a deck

- 14. Withdraw from a card game round
- 16. Where the house always wins
- 17. Game with a peg board
- 18. Two cards of the same rank
- 20. Popular card game with betting rounds
- 22. Full pack of playing cards
- 23. Points accumulated in a game
- 25. Card that can represent any other in Uno
- 27. Cards won in a round of play

## Historic night for Indiana football cherished among Wabash men

ELIJAH WETZEL '27  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The past year has been one of hope and heartbreak for Indiana sports fans. Injuries to star players, losses in the NBA finals and Notre Dame's defeat in the College Football Playoff National Championship game combined with the Indianapolis Colts' late season collapse surely left some fans questioning if the Hoosier state had inadvertently offended some higher power of athletics. But for some, all those losses paled in comparison with Indiana University's triumph over the University of Miami in Monday night's College Football Playoff National Championship. The Bachelor talked to students around campus before and after the game to capture what it meant to them.

For Ethan Koeneman '26, a life-long IU fan, the last two years have felt like a whole new world.

"I've been going to the games since we've been horrible," said Koeneman. "I watched us win a four-over-time win against Akron before [Head Football Coach Curt] Cignetti was hired. Now the stands are actually full, and it's just unreal to see the difference in everything; the whole school has changed."

Now somewhat famously, IU is the losingest NCAA Division I FBS football program in history. They have 715 losses to their name, but just two of those have come in the last two seasons. Even after an impressive first season under Cignetti that ended in a loss to Notre Dame in the playoffs, IU fans had learned not to hope.

"I was nervous going into the season because I didn't know if we were going to be

able to keep it up," said Adam Gaskill '29. "I didn't know if the Cignetti era was going to be a fluke or not. But being able to keep this momentum going? It almost doesn't feel real."

Before the title game, IU had already won the Rose Bowl and the Peach Bowl, which was held in Atlanta. Will Duncan '27 attended the Peach Bowl with his family. "My parents are alumni, so they were set on going to the game to watch history in the making," said Duncan. "In Atlanta, the atmosphere was genuinely insane. It truly felt like a home game."

Anticipating a similar result, some students made their way down to Bloomington in order to share in the festivities. Parker Cox '29 watched the game in a packed Assembly Hall.

"I've been in Assembly Hall many times," said Cox. "This was one of the most electric environments I've seen it in. It was cool to see because it wasn't just kids there. It was adults, young kids and IU fans of all ages together."

At least a couple of Wabash students made it down to Hard Rock Stadium in Miami to witness the game in-person and create lifelong memories. The game itself was a tight affair. IU grabbed a lead in the first quarter and never trailed, but the Hurricanes never rolled over. The swings in momentum had fans on edge.

"I will never forget waiting at the gate to get in and then the stampede of people," said Koeneman. "During the game, when IU blocked the punt and scored the touchdown, I thought, 'Oh my gosh, I think we just won the national championship.' But

when they [Miami] came back I got a little scared. But then the Fernando Mendoza touchdown run on the quarterback draw was just one of the best moments ever."

Coen Bauschek '26 was also in Hard Rock Stadium on Monday night. A last-minute interception sealed the deal for the Hoosiers, and they kneeled out the clock to complete an undefeated season.

"It was a completely surreal experience and feeling, having watched them for 15-plus years," said Bauschek. "Being there with my dad and brother, watching that last knee get taken, hugging my family and

There was an energy in the air that I've never felt before."

For so many fans young and old, this college football season was one they'll never forget.

"Being able to attend a playoff game in person to see arguably the greatest college season in history means everything," said Duncan. "That will be an experience that I will share with friends and family for the rest of my life."

The Hoosiers proved they were not a fluke, and Coach Cignetti has successfully introduced a new expectation: winning. The goal for next year? Back-to-back.

Scan for answers!



PHOTO BY COEN BAUSCHEK '26

The Indiana University band makes an IU symbol during the championship on Monday, January 19.

all the fans around, it's something I won't ever forget."

After the final whistle, fans in Bloomington poured into the streets.

"It was like nothing I've ever seen before," said Cox. "I've been down there many times, and I've never seen it that energetic. Everyone was just so passionate, so happy, so joyous. It's hard to explain.

"I know they play Ohio State on October 17 in Bloomington, so I think if they win that game then they have a good chance of repeating," said Koeneman. "But it's hard to do that."

No one knows what next season holds, but IU fans won't be surprised by anything.

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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 printed every Thursday at the Purdue Exponent in West Lafayette. It is delivered freely to all students, faculty, and staff at Wabash College. All advertising published in the *Bachelor* is subject to an established rate card. *The Bachelor* reserves the right to deny requests for publication of advertisements. Student organizations of Wabash College may purchase advertisements at half the listed rate.

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

## Our homophobia



Associate  
Professor of  
Theatre

James Cherry

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cherryj@wabash.edu

The following is adapted from a talk delivered at Wabash faculty's "Pride is a Protest" event on December 12, 2025.

Homophobia comes in all shapes and sizes — violence, systemic oppression, insults, online harassment. It can be virulent, malicious, secret, internalized, even playful. It can be spoken, typed or spraypainted. It can be in a joke, or a joke can conceal its existence. For all this diversity, I would like to engage with our — Wabash's — near-unique varietal. As an undergraduate academic institution with an all-male student body, Wabash has a distinctive ecosystem in which homophobia can thrive. What's so idiosyncratic about Wabash's bespoke homophobia? It is a homophobia rooted not necessarily in the fear or hatred of queer people, but the fear or hatred of being seen by others as queer.

In 2025, for men to join a same-sex college community by choice is to come immediately under the suspicion of queerness. What percentage of Wabash students have been teased by their friends just for coming here? How many times have Wabash students censored themselves about Wabash's all-male status for fear of what others might think or say? How many times have Wabash students heard that their school is "gay"?

Now, I suspect not very many of these benighted peers are women. Because women usually don't police the masculinity of men; that tends to be "man's work." It's also because women are less suspicious and far more understanding of single-sex situations — just ask your mom about her book/wine-drinking/crafting/walking/scrapbooking club.

There's lots of reasons to choose Wabash — a rigorous education, small classes, professors who actually care about you, a vaunted alumni network, the chance to play sports you love, excellent financial aid — but it is a big choice. Wabash students made a choice to go to a college where they are not surrounded by women of their same age, who come from similar backgrounds and who might be potential romantic partners. For all of the appropriate pride that students have in this place, the all-male aspect of Wabash can make its students a bit defensive and insecure. Which brings us to a little something called "compensatory masculine posturing." I first heard this term from Professor Crystal Benedicks when it came up in her Gender Studies 101 class. It's basically men's tendency to overemphasize stereotypical masculine traits like aggression, dominance or

risk-taking in response to the feeling that their manhood is threatened. It's basically why truck nuts were invented. But it's also why acts of misogyny and homophobia — which are unacceptable in normal society — become quasi-legitimate ways to cope with a threatened masculinity. Every bellow of "DePauw Swallows" not only offers the pleasure of saying naughty things in public, but it also contains the subtext of "seriously, I'm not gay! Stop saying I'm gay, you guys!" It is also why proudly-out queer Wabash students make some Wabash men distressed.

Is Wabash a more tolerant place today than it used to be for queer folks? Absolutely. Ask anyone who went to school here in the 1980s and '90s. But is it comfortable? Is it safe? Is it as easy to be a queer student at Wabash as a straight student? Can queer couples on campus be as open with their affections as their heterosexual friends? When pride flags get trashed or thrown in the dumpster with regularity, and slurs get written on fraternity walls without widespread, universal condemnation on the part of the entire community, it's clear Wabash has a problem. And the fact that Wabash is more tolerant than it used to be might be satisfying for those who have been here for a while, but it's cold comfort for students who are here for a short time, especially when that time is marked by repeated incidents of bigotry. All of which is done under the cover of darkness by their fellow Wabash men, their "brothers."

It is well past time for all of us — faculty, coaches, administrators, staff, students, alumni, straight and queer people alike — to openly engage with the pernicious insecurity that gnaws at Wabash men. This insecurity is grounded in a contemporary American masculinity that presumes places like Wabash are suspect and tainted, which excuses Wabash men to feel like they can ignore the final and most difficult part of our creed: to live humanely.

If the whole point of Wabash is to make better men for a world that desperately needs them, the entire campus — not just sh'OUT — needs to reckon with our bespoke brand of homophobia. The answer is education, dialogue, training, courage, persistence and visibility. It's you taking the time to read this op-ed. To mock and degrade fellow Wabash men for a simple, unavoidable fact of their very existence is to take the side of the people who mock and degrade students for coming here. In fact, it's even worse because it's not done out of ignorance, but out of fear of being seen as queer. Our homophobia is not an inevitable fact of Wabash life. In the 21st century, it should be the expectation that gentlemen do not tolerate acts of bigotry, and do not accept acts of cruelty. Standing up for what's right and decent — even when it's hard, and especially when it's hard — is at the core of living humanely. It is just what good men do.

## HI-FIVES

### FIVE THINGS WORTHY OF A HI-FIVE THIS WEEK

#### LIGHT AT THE END OF TUNNEL

*Hi-Five to all of the seniors for getting through comps. On behalf of your professors, remember you still need to pass your spring semester classes to graduate!*

#### HOO-HOO-HOO HOOSIERS

*Hi-Five to the Indiana Hoosiers for winning their first-ever football National Championship title. We, like ABBA, felt something in the air that night, and the stars were bright... FERNANDO!*

#### THE STANDARD IS THE STANDARD

*Hi-Five to Mike Tomlin for a historic 19-year stint as Head Coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers, stepping down without ever having a losing season. Considering that Tomlin is a lock for the Hall of Fame, this is the equivalent of getting straight B's at Wabash for 5 years and getting distinction.*

#### BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

*Lo-Five to Brooklyn Beckham, son of legendary footballer David, for airing out his family drama on Instagram. Do what the rest of us do and keep it to subliminal messages hidden in the songs on your story.*

#### THE STARS AT NIGHT

*Lo-Five to Editor Emeritus James Wallace '26 for graduating early. I hope you're happy with three extra months of rest, relaxation and travel instead of grinding out Hi-Fives at 1:00 a.m..*

## Listening to ourselves: A new conversation column



WDPD Director  
Chris Anderson

Reply to this opinion at  
andersoc@wabash.edu

What are Wabash men really thinking right now?

Not just what shows up in class discussions or circulates online, but how the people on this campus right now are making sense of campus life, life in Crawfordsville and the larger national moment as it reaches into our everyday experience. This spring, *The Bachelor*, with the help of Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse (WDPD), will introduce a new recurring column designed to help surface those perspectives and reflect them back to campus.

Almost each week throughout the semester, WDPD will host a small lunchtime conversation on current events with a group of Wabash students drawn from across campus. Participants will be selected with attention to representation across class years, so that there is a wide range of experiences rather than a single organization or social group. You should be on the lookout for an invite from us, as other than class year quotas, we will be randomly selecting students. The topics will focus on issues of the day that are shaping student life, local concerns tied to Crawfordsville or national events that students find themselves responding to.

Students who take part in these conversations will not be named in the column. That choice is intentional. Anonymity allows participants to speak openly, express uncertainty and engage honestly with one another without worrying about how their words might be received later. Creating this kind of space is central to deliberative and dialogic work and reflects the values that guide WDPD's "every person welcome" approach.

In case you aren't aware, WDPD has been part of campus life for the past 11 years. It is a paid, on-campus co-curricular activity where Democracy Fellows are trained to design, facilitate and report on conversations about contentious and difficult issues facing campus and community organizations. Rather than prescribing solutions, WDPD's work focuses on gathering bottom-up, stakeholder-driven insight. After conversations take place, Fellows produce reports that synthesize what participants shared, highlighting areas of concern, points of tension and questions that remain unresolved. Partner organizations then use that information as they move forward, grounded in the voices of those most affected by the issue.

A WDPD event is not a panacea designed to solve the divisions we face, but an event can help individuals better understand one another and help find the common ground for folks to find answers.

For this new column, a team of Democracy Fellows will facilitate each weekly conversation and then work together to translate what they heard into a readable and engaging piece for *The Bachelor*. These articles will not offer verdicts or take sides. Instead, they aim to capture how you all are thinking through complex questions, where common ground appears, and where disagreements persist.

At a time when public discourse often rewards speed and certainty, this column takes a different approach. It slows the conversation down. Instead, it starts with and focuses on listening rather than responding. The hope is that these weekly reflections do more than inform. The column is meant to spark conversations, giving everyone a way to raise difficult topics with roommates, teammates and friends, using the language and concerns surfaced by their peers.

We are grateful to the staff of *The Bachelor* for offering space for this project and for supporting an effort that helps Wabash reflect back on itself. We look forward to sharing these conversations throughout the spring and to continuing the work of listening carefully to one another.

## Shad's Supper: Worthy foods at Wildfire348



Shad Wilson '27

Reply to this opinion at  
sawilson27@wabash.edu

What's up, Bozos? I am Shad Wilson, and I have been asked to carry on a legacy of food reviews by Wabash volleyball legend Jackson Leeper '25. I hope everyone had a great winter break with some great cooking. Personally, I went through a lot of mac 'n cheese as I was on campus for practice. Since we just got back, I feel it was only fair to review a place that I feel gets forgotten about a lot in the pizza talks in Crawfordsville: Wildfire348 just off US Highway 231 by the Runnings.

For my review I felt it was important to get a variety of options to give a fair and honest assessment. I got a small pepperoni honey pie, an order of chicken alfredo and one scoop of chocolate gelato. Let's start with my favorite: the pepperoni honey pie. I consider myself a pizza connoisseur, and Wildfire348 did not disappoint. The honey pie was as described as I could taste the honey before anything else. The sweet flavor of the honey mixed with the small kick of spice from the red pepper gave an experience to my tongue that can only be described as "hittin'." The pizza's only downside was it being a thin crust which I find inferior to other pizza crust. The pizza's cost came out to \$14.30, which is very expensive for a small pizza, and as a broke college student, I can understand why this place isn't as used as some other pizza places.

The next item I bought was the chicken alfredo. Out of my three purchases it was the worst, but they specialize

in pizza so I feel like I can't hate it too much. It lacked any real flavor, the chicken was under used and while the cheese on top looked good, it just lacked any defining factor. At a price point of \$11, it was edible but definitely not worth it.

The last item was a single scoop of chocolate gelato. My sweet tooth got the best of me and the gelato was a great finisher to the meal. The creamy chocolate combo with the sweet and spicy pizzza pleased every taste bud on my tongue. I still prefer custard and regular ice cream over gelato but it was still very good. It cost \$3.30 for one scoop, bringing the total for the meal to \$28.60.

I believe that the Wildfire348 honey pie is an experience that every Wabash man should try at least once, but I can't deny that the price leaves room to be desired. The tasteless chicken alfredo did not help Wildfire's case, but the honey pizza and silky gelato impressed. I'm giving Wildfire348 7.1/10 burbers (knowers will know). I look forward to my next review as it will give me another chance to savor the flavors of Crawfordsville.



PHOTO COURTESY OF YELP

Wildfire348 is located on US-231 and serves a wide variety of food for Crawfordsville residents.

# Dueling Opinions: Comprehensive exams debrief

## The humanities side: A necessary space to reflect



**Evan Bone '26**  
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semesters make it difficult to appreciate our intangible progress. But comps explicitly challenged me to consider my progress. Rereading my freshman year creative writing was a cringe experience at first, but I began to see pieces of my current writing in my first attempts. Noticing similarities in my writing across my Wabash career gave me greater knowledge of how I tick as a writer – the essays and stories I wrote as a freshman are quite similar to what I write now – but the growth in syntax, diction and overall style was a welcome surprise. I am someone who finds it hard to take a step back and to truly take pride in the work they've done, but the process of studying and reviewing for comps gave me the space to do that.

Reviewing the countless readings of my English courses posed the most aggravating challenge of comps. Which books are worth reviewing and which are not? I targeted the larger novels and readings in my courses but it ended up being some of the smaller readings that became integral to my comprehensive exams experience. One short story from a class my freshman year ended up being essential to showing my understanding of literary periods as well as a powerful example of literature that provided me with comfort when I needed it most.

My notes from my notebook reveal strong feelings towards the short story when I first read it. And rereading it for comps brought about fresh interpretations. Learning is a life-long process that evolves as we age and begin to understand the world in new ways. My experience with comps helped me understand this. It may feel impractical or boring but revisiting literature can be more than simply rereading for understanding; this process can bring out new conclusions and aesthetic experiences with literature as we have all changed over our four years. But it's hard to notice how much we've changed if you aren't willing to do the dirty work of reviewing the past four years at Wabash.

I finished my comprehensive exams quite proud of my efforts but uncertain of how I did. Now we all wait for our results, but I challenge current and future Wabash seniors to consider the value of comps beyond the results. As someone who hopes to be an educator, reader and writer for my entire life, comps provided me with an opportunity to see how I have grown from a wide-eyed freshman to a senior with some confidence. As I look to compile creative writing portfolios for graduate school and submissions for writing journals one day, I will reflect on my experience with comprehensive exams as I have learned to take a step back and consider my growth and the connections across my intellectual development.

## The STEM side: A chance to think critically



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“Why the heck am I doing this?!” is the thought that persisted in my mind and surely the minds of the other seniors during our comprehensive exams. I do not claim to have the true answer to this question, only my own answer, which I will reveal shortly. Before I even began to study, I immediately conceded defeat as a physics major. The physics coursework at Wabash is, to put it lightly, comprehensive. To my knowledge, the required and prerequisite courses for a physics major is the most for any major on campus. Needless to say, I thought I was in for an academic whooping.

“I already passed this course!” was the message that I got reviewing my old tests. It felt weird to prepare for a test which I thought was unnecessary because I had already shown that I am capable of doing the work.

In hindsight, just because I passed did not mean I knew or remembered the material. Admittedly, some of the material which I reviewed is critical to physics and an understanding of physics. Learning something does you no good in the long run if you forget it – a lesson I will not soon forget. If you learn something to pass a test and then immediately forget it and move on, you wasted your time and money. If your goal is to check a box, there is a school down south which would be a perfect fit for you. If your goal is to think critically by applying what you have learned in class to scenarios outside of the classroom environment, you are at the right place.

“There is too much material, I am screwed!” I bet was a common feeling across all seniors, especially those of us in the physical sciences. While at first I felt this to be the case, as I got into the groove of reviewing, I realized that what looked like a mountain up close was closer to a foot-hill from a distance. As a discipline, physics courses are very closely related to one another. While the main focus of the courses might be different, there are overarching laws of physics which show up repeatedly. The math is the same as well, just with different symbols. What's more, the more advanced physics courses are just harder versions of the intro-level courses. These connections greatly simplified studying. Rather than having to study six or seven different concepts, I only needed to study one. In making and reviewing the connections, I also feel like I have become a better physicist overall, not only just more prepared for a test. The connections between courses were rather obvious for physics, but I am sure that any major can make connections between the different courses that they have taken at Wabash. It might take a little bit more critical thinking to make the connections, but I am certain that with enough time and perhaps caffeine connections can be found.

My answer to what is the point of comps is that comps are the biggest fulfillment of one part of our mission statement that students will experience while enrolled at Wabash. Wabash offers many chances to lead effectively, demands that students act responsibly through our Gentlemen's Rule and we live humanely within our unique brotherhood. While I hope that students think critically throughout all of our courses, the ultimate test to this skill comes in the form of comps. It takes critical thinking skills to connect courses and experiences at Wabash, to efficiently review, and to quickly answer questions. While other schools may claim to follow their mission statements, know that Wabash lives ours.

Our four years at Wabash are marked by traditions and rites of passage that challenge us to grow and learn in intellect, maturity and work ethic. Comprehensive exams stand menacingly as one of the final bells to be rung along your four years at Wabash. Wabash men pass down grim tales of long nights reading over years of notes over LED lighting in a cramped dorm. Well, after completing my comprehensive exams, that image bestowed to me from tales of Wabash's past isn't too far off. But comps surprised me as I found value in reflecting over the past four years and learned more about how I had grown as a result of my classes. Comprehensive exams are inherently reflective, of course, as you study practically every class you've taken, yet the stories about these exams seem to only focus on the frigid Indiana winter, absurd study tactics and the difficulties that arise. While all of those negatives are certainly still true, it's worth considering the value of looking at your education comprehensively.

It must be said that my reflection on my experience with comprehensive exams doesn't reflect the whole truth of the tradition given the uniqueness of each student's path at Wabash as well as the variance of exams across majors. As an English Creative Writing major, my experience is quite unlike an Economics major's experience. Yet the core experience of considering your academics comprehensively is still there.

Admittedly, the first efforts at studying my four years were probably some of the most miserable study attempts of my academic career. And that's where the first lesson of comps began. Trying to study four years of content with adequate depth in each year challenged me to spend time effectively and to study with purpose. The mystery of comps, with everything in your Wabash career being on the table, inspired study-anxiety. But after my long nights of studying for comps, I've gained another experience of entering a difficult and uncertain challenge just as I am entering the uncertainty of life after Wabash.

Reviewing my creative writing from freshman year to last semester, revealed areas of growth I hadn't previously considered. It's easy for us to see growth in degrees, grades, and awards: quantifiable and tangible achievements. But noticing incremental progress in writing style takes time and keen observation. Oftentimes the quick Wabash

## ‘Scarlet and white meets crimson and cream’

by Drake Green '28



Seniors Finishing Comps and Classes Beginning

IU Winning the Natty

## Stasis in America



**John Schnerre '26**  
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As Americans in 2025, we can learn a great deal from the analysis of the stasis in Corcyra given by Thucydides in his “History of the Peloponnesian War”. After relating the specific details of the Corcyran debacle, the historian begins to make generalizations about stasis in general. This is when modern audiences may start to feel their ears burning.

Thucydides claims that, in times of stasis (perhaps best translated into English as “civil war”), party divisions take precedence over all other affiliations, including institutional, familial and religious. Parties claim that they seek the common good, trying to persuade as many normal citizens as possible to join their side. Thucydides furthers his argument by claiming that this affiliation is judged by what you can do for your party, and parties are not joined together in fellowship and brotherhood, but rather by a bond of “mutual wrongdoing.”

Thucydides further elaborates how, in times of civil strife, words change their meanings: prudence is discouraged as cowardice, recklessness is praised as courage and extremism is seen as loyalty. Oaths are sworn only to be maintained until they are no longer beneficial to the swearers, and oath-breakers are praised all the more for breaking them in a clever and profitable way. Any mutual trust dissolves as factions grow more extreme, and any citizen trying to maintain a moderate position is condemned and killed.

Thucydides claims that the cause of stasis is human nature's fear, greed and ambition. Tyrants use these vices to manipulate the weak and bring them under their leadership. As the stasis continues, extremism becomes the norm, and moderation is seen less and less. The city is torn apart, and, more

often than not, the winning side calls for utter obliteration of their enemies.

The partisan split which takes place in times of stasis bears a shocking resemblance to modern political division in America. Leaders of each party rally as many citizens as possible to their side, promising that they are doing what is in the public's best interest. Individuals are not judged off of the content of their character, but how much they have done recently to damage the opposing party. Physical violence has become more and more openly accepted, from politically-incited fist fights praised on social media to blatant assassination. Having no political affiliation is becoming more and more openly contemptible, and political divisions split family and friends.

Ultimately, Thucydides teaches us that this state of affairs is extremely dangerous, and must be checked. Once society moves past a climate where civil discourse is the main source of dispute, what logically follows is political violence and extremism. Loss of human life is jeered at and even praised, as we saw last year with the assassination of Charlie Kirk.

Modern politicians and citizens would do well to look into the works of Thucydides and note the resemblance to modern America. Political rhetoric needs to become more moderate, and parties need to find common ground to prevent the inevitable results. History may be doomed to repeat itself through stubborn disregard, but knowledge of history can slow or even prevent repetition, especially when the symptoms are so similar between the Peloponnesian War and modern American politics.

Stasis in “The History of the Peloponnesian War” has the ultimate result of loss of life, and is acknowledged by Thucydides as a true tragedy. Let's do our part as Wabash men to promote civil discourse and avoid the depraved loss of human dignity which was seen in ancient stasis.

## Track and Field makes promising start at Larry Cole Opener

CARTER MCCALL '29  
STAFF WRITER

The Wabash College track and field team opened the 2026 indoor season in impressive fashion Friday night, finishing second overall at the Larry Cole Opener hosted by Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. The Little Giants totaled 149 points — just six points shy of Rose-Hulman's winning score of 155 — signaling an early statement for a squad with depth across every event group.

DePauw finished third with 138 points, followed by Franklin (44), Anderson (32), Oak-

land City (18) and Georgetown (1). Wabash's performance was highlighted by multiple event victories, strong relay showings and consistent top-five finishes in the sprints, middle-distance races and field events.

Wabash's throwers played a major role in the team's success. Evan Furuness '26, who earned NCAC Athlete of the Week honors, captured the shotput title with a career-best throw of 16.00 meters, while Quinn Sholar '26 finished second at 15.01 meters. Sholar also claimed first place in the weight throw, posting a win-

ning mark of 16.88 meters. Furuness added another career-best effort in the weight throw, finishing fourth at 15.71 meters, and Lane Brockman '26 contributed with a fifth-place throw of 15.20 meters.

"Consistency is what helped me," said Furuness. "Not changing anything just because it is a meet."

On the track, Conner Grimes '26 led the sprint group by winning the 60-meter dash in 7.08 seconds. Grimes also placed fourth in the 200 meters with a time of 23.15 seconds. Brock DeBello '29 made an immediate impact in his collegiate debut, winning the 400 meters in 49.47 seconds.

The Little Giants were especially dominant in the 800 meters, sweeping the top four finishing positions. David Adesanya '27 took the victory in 1:56.69, narrowly edging Haiden Diemer-McKinney '26, who finished second in 1:56.76. Sawyer Lewis '27 placed third in 2:02.43, followed closely by Kaiden McGuire '29 in fourth at 2:03.96.

In the distance events, Tyler Kerzee '29 delivered a strong performance by finishing second in the 3,000 meters with a time of 8:58.93. Johnathan Loney '28 added valuable points



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

David Adesanya '27 sprints down the track at the Larry Cole Opener on January 16, 2026, in Terre Haute, Indiana.

with a fifth-place finish in 9:11.81.

Wabash also earned a relay victory in the 4x400 meters. The team of DeBello, Adesanya, McGuire and Lewis crossed the line first in 3:29.47, showcasing the squad's balance of speed and endurance.

Field event points continued in the pole vault, where Hugh Ford '28 placed second after clearing 4.10 meters. Tyler Petroski '29 finished fourth at 4.00 meters, while Nate Joven '26 took fifth with a clearance of 3.90 meters. Colson Mendenhall '29 rounded out the

scoring with a fifth-place finish in the long jump, leaping 6.05 meters.

"We were able to check off a lot of boxes of what I wanted the team to accomplish at this meet," said Head Track and Field Coach Clyde Morgan H'11. "Now the challenge is to see if we can stack those things. We are off to a good start, but we have a lot of work to do."

The Little Giants will look to build on their strong opening performance when they return to action at the Mount St. Joseph University MoJoe Invitational on Saturday, January 24.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Evan Furuness '26 competes in the shotput event at the Larry Cole Opener on January 16, 2026, in Terre Haute, Indiana.

## Wrestling competes in National Wrestling Coaches Association National Duals tournament

TY MURPHY '27  
STAFF WRITER

Winter break can be challenging for many winter sports teams as they return to Wabash to train. One group that never has questions, however, is the wrestling team. With a rich history of national champions and qualifiers, it is no shock that when the group got back on campus, they competed strongly in January.

The team fought hard at the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) National Duals. With top competitors in all weight classes, it was a good opportunity for the team to see what they were made of.

"Winter break is always a great opportunity for us to improve as a team as it provides us the opportunity to solely focus on wrestling," said James Day '26. "Although this break was extremely rigorous, I feel like we really came together as a team and leaned on each other to overcome adversity."

After several hard-fought matches, they closed the duals against Luther College. After a strong performance from Day at 133 lbs. and Michael Taheny '29 at 184 lbs., Wabash finished 14th overall.

"It all goes back to that Wabash brotherhood," said Taheny. "We all build on each other. Energy is contagious, and I think it comes from the top. It comes from leadership."

Even though many wrestlers have already put up some impressive matches, the season is just getting started, and they

are not slowing down. After the NCWA National Duals, the team came back firing at the Tom Jarman Classic on January 17, 2026, at Manchester University.

With an early tournament win at 285 lbs. by Titus Waters '27, others soon followed. Jaylen Young '28 gained a win at 174 lbs. while Zach Huckaby '28 won

at 184lbs. Many others like Day, Spencer Watson '28 and Andrew Ross '26 earned runner-up honors in their respective weight classes. All of this helped push the team ahead as they finished first out of the 17-team field. Much of this success goes back to their practices.

"We just beat each other up

every day, and it only makes us better," said Taheny. "Iron sharpens iron, so we just scrap every day after giving each other the best look we can."

This team is defined by the hard work they put in on the mat and it brings surefire results. With a history of winning, the Wabash wrestling team will continue their march to nationals in the coming months, competing not only for the school but also themselves.

"My goals for this season have not changed: I aim to become a national champion," said Day. "Although I have struggled some this season, I still have confidence in my ability to accomplish this goal, and I believe staying confident and maintaining belief in my ability is essential to actually accomplishing this goal."

The wrestling team will compete again on January 31, 2026, at Knowing Fieldhouse and host the Wabash College Invitational. With tough competition ahead, the wrestlers will capitalize on meets like these as they prepare for their best work yet in March, where they hope to qualify for the NCAA Division III National Championship.



PHOTO BY JEREMIAH RUNGE '29

Andrew Ross '26 eyes his opponent in a dual meet against Trine University on December 5, 2025, at Chadwick Court.

## Swimming and Diving takes on Florida training trip Team returns to Indiana and beats Franklin 123-118

TY MURPHY '27  
STAFF WRITER

Coming off an impressive season last year with all-time conference highs, the Wabash swimming and diving team looks to capitalize on their hard work and early season success. With many impressive freshmen joining the team under a group of poised veteran leaders, a week-long winter break trip to Boca Raton, Florida was much needed for the squad.

"The training trip is just a way of going to a place with the full intent of training, getting better and coming closer as a team without too many distractions outside of the pool, and it's always a great time," said Morgan Govekar '26.

While in the Sunshine State, the team participated in a variety of activities, both swimming and non-swimming. Plenty of work was put in at the pool, but the team also volunteered their

efforts at the Women's Club of Deerfield Beach, where they helped out at the clubhouse by completing a variety of tasks. All of this served to make sure the team was not only fit but also connected.

"We grew a lot closer to one another, and we not only became better athletes, but also better teammates," said Quinn Sweeney '27.

After returning home to the brutally cold Indiana weather, the team set their sights on reaping the benefits of their intense training week in their first dual meet of the calendar year against Franklin College on January 16, 2026.

With 21 top-three finishes, the team started their year with a bang, capturing a 123-118 road win against the Grizzlies. Ryan West '28 had a strong day in the sprints as he claimed first place in the 200 yard individual medley, while Zach Baty '29 won the 1,000 yard freestyle. For the team, however, it is more than just success in the pool; it's also the support on the side of the pool.

"The group we have is tightly

knit, and everyone does a good job at relying on one another," said Sweeney.

**"The training trip is just a way of going to a place with the full intent of training, getting better and coming closer as a team without too many distractions outside of the pool."**

- Morgan Govekar '26

Tough competition will help define the team as they look past January and into February for the North Coast Athletic Conference Championships. As they seek to close the gap against the top conference teams like Denison and Kenyon and also earn an edge over DePauw, the rest of the month of January will help define what this team has become.

"We are getting mentally and physically locked in for the conference championship meet,"

said Sweeney. "We're excited to give everything we have and let all of our training and hard work pay off. This is what we work for: the opportunity to swim fast and compete together as a team for our program and our school."

The swimming and diving team has always been defined by a strong culture, and that was evident through winter break. A daunting challenge awaits for the team in February, but this team is locked in, ready to swim fast and swim for each other.

The team will not slow down for the rest of the season as they will compete this weekend against Valparaiso University and Illinois Wesleyan University on Saturday, January 24, at the Class of 1950 Natatorium. With it being Senior Day, the team is looking forward to hearing all of the support from Wabash fans at home for the last time this season.

"Show out, and give us support! It's one last home meet, so let's make it memorable for the seniors," said Govekar.



PHOTO BY CARSON HIESTER '26

Members of the swimming and diving team swims laps in the pool on January 3, 2026, in Boca Raton, Florida.

# Basketball goes 7-1 over winter break, loses to Wittenberg on the road

CARTER MCCALL '29  
STAFF WRITER

The Wabash College basketball team put together an impressive stretch of games over winter break, displaying offensive firepower, defensive intensity and late-game composure while navigating non-conference tests and a demanding North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) schedule. Across the eight game span, the Little Giants posted key wins, endured a setback and firmly established themselves among the NCAC's top contenders.

Wabash started winter break on the road at Anderson University with a 96-88 victory over the Ravens. Rich Brooks '26 made seven of his eight 3-point attempts and led the way for Wabash scorers with 28 points, a career-high performance. Colton Stowers '29 and Luke Ellspermann '29 contributed with 16 and 11 points respectively. The game was tied at 41 points a piece at halftime, but Wabash pulled away in the last 5 minutes, going on a 10-4 run.

Wabash opened the Lee's Famous Recipe Classic in emphatic fashion with an 82-67 non-conference victory over Berea College. Ellspermann delivered an amazing performance, scoring a career-high 28 points as the Little Giants buried 10 three-pointers in the first half to build a commanding 48-23 halftime lead. Wabash shot 53.8% from the field and never trailed after the opening minutes. Despite a late Berea push, Ellspermann's timely baskets sealed the win, while Deric Cannady '29 added 14 points and seven assists.

"I have really been focused on getting downhill on defenders and being physical around the rim," said Ellspermann. "My teammates have done a great job trusting me and finding me when I am open."

The Little Giants followed that performance by closing the Classic with a 75-62 win over the host school, Centre College. Josh Whack '26 and Gavin Schippert '26 each scored 20 points as Wabash outscored Centre 42-27 in the second half after trailing 35-33 at halftime. Wabash used a decisive 10-3 run midway through the second half to take control. Whack's flawless free-throw shooting down the stretch helped secure Wabash's fourth straight win to close the calendar year.

Wabash opened the 2026 portion of its schedule with a home non-conference matchup against Trine University. The Little Giants played evenly through the first half and held a slim 26-25 lead at the break, but a strong Trine surge early in the second half proved decisive. Despite late baskets and a continued effort, Wabash fell 54-63 as the Thunder capitalized on second-half momentum and bench scoring.

The Little Giants quickly rebounded with a significant NCAC victory, defeating defending



PHOTO BY SEAN BLEDSOE '26  
**Deric Cannady '29 goes up for a layup over a Wooster defender on January 10, 2026, at Timken Gymnasium in Wooster, Ohio.**

conference champion, Denison University, 64-59 at Chadwick Court. Wabash jumped out to an 11-2 start and maintained control for most of the contest. Denison mounted a late rally to pull within two points in the final minute, but Wabash remained poised at the free-throw line. Ellspermann led the way with 14 points while Cannady added 12 off the bench. The win handed Denison its first conference loss of the season and tightened the NCAC standings.

**"We just have a lot of guys that have really bought into how we have built the team and not caring about individual success more than the team's success."**

- Head Basketball Coach  
Kyle Brumett

Wabash carried that momentum on the road with an 89-80 conference victory over the College of Wooster. The Little Giants dominated the first half, shooting 62.5% from the field and building a 48-26 halftime lead. Wooster made a spirited second-half comeback, but Wabash's early cushion proved to be too much to overcome. Ellspermann scored 19 points, Stowers added 17 points and Whack chipped in 15 points as Wabash secured its third win in the last four trips to Wooster.



PHOTO BY SEAN BLEDSOE '26  
**Luke Ellspermann '29 attempts a free throw against Kenyon on January 17, 2026, at the Lowry Center in Gambier, Ohio.**

Back at Chadwick Court, Wabash delivered another strong conference performance with an 82-67 win over Ohio Wesleyan. A blistering first half and balanced scoring effort defined the victory, as the Little Giants built a 42-24 halftime lead and responded to every Ohio Wesleyan run. Five Wabash players scored in double figures, led by Brooks with 16 points. The Little Giants shot 54.5% from the field and controlled the paint, reinforcing their status as one of the league's most complete teams.

"It is really hard for the opposing team to focus on two to three guys on our team when we have six guys averaging in the double digits," said Head Basketball Coach Kyle Brumett. "We just have a lot of guys that have really bought into how we have built the team and not caring about individual success more than the team's success."

Wabash capped the stretch with a gritty 75-70 road win at Kenyon College, leaning once again on Ellspermann's scoring prowess. The freshman poured in 27 points as the Little Giants built a 20-point first-half lead and withstood a late Kenyon charge. Though free-throw struggles allowed the Owls to stay close, the Little Giant's shooting in the final minutes sealed Wabash's fourth straight victory and kept the Little Giants alone atop the NCAC standings.

**WITTENBERG GAME**  
On Wednesday night, Wabash traveled to Springfield, Ohio to take on the Wittenberg Tigers for the last game of the first half of the regular season. Within the first eight minutes of the game, Wabash struggled to find its rhythm as the Little Giants found themselves trailing 6-16. The Tigers held the double digit lead until the final three minutes of the first half where the Little Giants cut the difference to six points by the time the buzzer sounded.

For the first ten minutes of the second half, Wabash kept the deficit in the single digits, but as the eight-minute mark hit, the Little Giants tied it up at 55 points a piece. In the remaining time, however, the Tigers regained the lead and made key shots down the stretch to secure a 73-65 win over Wabash.

Despite Wednesday night's loss, Wabash demonstrated depth, balance, and resilience over break. Ellspermann emerged as a consistent offensive catalyst, while veterans like Whack and Schippert provided leadership in key moments. With strong performances at home and on the road, the Little Giants positioned themselves as a formidable force as conference play continues.

Wabash will host John Carroll on Saturday, January 24, at Chadwick Court. Tip-off is scheduled at 2 p.m. EST.

## The Bledsoe '26 breakdown: NCAC basketball power rankings

SEAN BLEDSOE '26  
SPORTS EDITOR

It has been so long, but the power rankings are back and better than ever! One thing that I must say is that the NCAC is wide open at this point. There have been some shocking results between conference foes so far, and it just goes to show that anything can happen on any given night. So let's dive right in!



**#1 - Wabash Little Giants**  
Overall Record: (12-5)  
NCAC Record: (6-2)

The Little Giants have taken their NCAC preseason coach's poll ranking of fifth personally, dominating their first half of conference play by going 6-2. With one of their losses coming to the Dannies, the Little Giants will seek their revenge next Wednesday when they travel down to the wretched town of Greencastle to play in a putridly yellow gym against the Tigers. The good thing is that it will be like another home game for Wabash. Last year, the Little Giants murdered the Dannies by 26 points with a substantially bigger crowd in attendance.



**#2 - John Carroll Blue Streaks**  
Overall Record: (13-4)  
NCAC Record: (5-3)

The newcomers in the conference are just weird. They don't play defense, and trust me, Chadwick Crazyies, when you see the Blue Streaks play tomorrow, you will wonder if they really need a coaching staff. They have a ball-hog All-American who scores 20-plus points every game. They apply full-court pressure the whole game, but when the ball gets across half court, their defense evaporates. They literally look like a street ball team straight out of Uncle Drew. But they win, so who am I to criticize them?



**#3 - Denison Big Red**  
Overall Record: (11-6)  
NCAC Record: (6-2)

Coming off their NCAC Championship last season, the Big Red have struggled to maintain their impressive level of play. They had multiple key seniors depart after last season, and Trevor Reed, their starting center, has been out with an injury. I really don't have much to say about the Big Red (at least nothing nice), so I'll leave it at that.



**#4 - DePauw Tigers**  
Overall Record: (11-6)  
NCAC Record: (4-4)

I'm convinced the DePauw Tigers are bipolar. Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with playing bipolar basketball, especially if it benefits Wabash. But when they shoot 70% from the field in the second half against us on our home court, it makes me wish they were just consistently bad. The good news is the Dannies lost three out of their last four, and gifted us the first place position in the conference.



**#5 - Wittenberg Tigers**  
Overall Record: (12-5)  
NCAC Record: (5-3)

I probably watched one of the worst shooting performances of my life when Wittenberg played Oberlin last Saturday. Wittenberg lost the game, and they only scored 45 points. Yes, you read that right: 45 points in 40 minutes. Any fourth-grader could tell you that means they barely scored more than a point per minute. I am no genius, but I don't think that style of basketball is going to allow any team to win many games.



**#6 - Kenyon Owls**  
Overall Record: (9-8)  
NCAC Record: (3-5)

The Owls have shown signs of impressive play, but they've shown signs of poor play as well. When they played Wabash, it was a tale of two halves. Kenyon only scored 20 points in the first half but caught fire from beyond the arc to score 55 points after the break. If the Owls could learn how to string together two halves of basketball, they could be a decent team.



**#7 - Oberlin Yeomen**  
Overall Record: (9-8)  
NCAC Record: (2-6)

Don't let the 2-6 conference record fool you, because the Yeomen have shown signs of potential. They took the Little Giants to overtime at Chadwick Court, and they beat DePauw on their home floor. This could be a bracket busting team come NCAC tournament time. Keep an eye out for these squirrels.



**#8 - Ohio Wesleyan Battling Bishops**  
Overall Record: (6-11)  
NCAC Record: (3-5)

If you were a coach, you would think that if teams are consistently beating your 2-3 zone defense, you would change things up. But the Battling Bishops head coach is so stubborn and stuck in his ways that he's practically gifting teams wins by not making any adjustments. OWU also doesn't have Henry Hinkle anymore, so there is practically no talent on that roster.



**#9 - Wooster Fighting Scots**  
Overall Record: (5-12)  
NCAC Record: (2-6)

Yes, my NCAC basketball fans. You are reading this week's power rankings correctly. Wooster is the worst team in the conference. After nearly 30 years of utter dominance from the Fighting Scots, the team now looks like its five players are only playing for themselves. They don't look coherent, and it's honestly embarrassing to call what they do on the hardwood basketball. I'm just going to leave it at that.