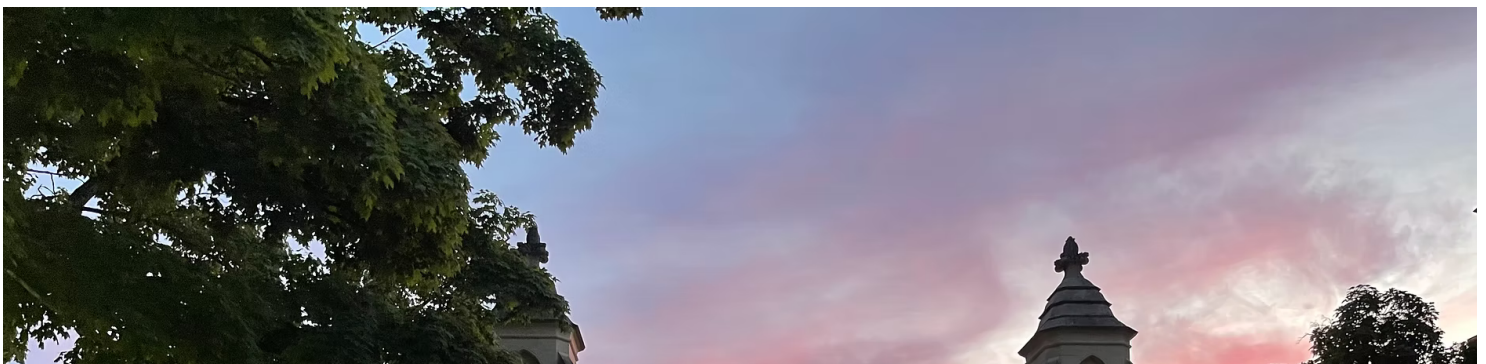




David Wolfe Bender · Aug 16, 2022 · 4 min read

The First Notebook: Fifteenth Grade



A gorgeous sunset is seen over Sample Gates, the iconic entrance to the west side of Indiana University.

When school let out for my 9th-grade year, I was not doing well academically. To try and create any sense of motivation ahead of my 10th-grade year, I wrote down a series of goals and

thoughts for the school year ahead. I wrote about my plans for the year, and I scrawled about what I wanted to do. It took 25 minutes to complete, according to the metadata on my computer. Type. Right click. Save as. And I never planned to look at it again.

The file still sat on my computer, though. It was titled: "The First Notebook-Grade 10.docx." I found it accidentally – and read it – earlier this summer as I was looking through some old files.

So now, as I proceed to enter Grade 15 – my third year at Indiana University – I thought it would be good to write another edition of The First Notebook. Here are some of my plans for the 2022-2023 academic year, and I hope it'll be the best one yet.

I'm extending my internship with the Niskanen Center. I started working for the Niskanen Center – a centrist, DC-based think tank – over the summer as a communications intern (here is the original [announcement](#) from February 2022). I've gained so much from this internship, and I've loved every minute of working for one of our nation's leading think tanks. Over the course of the summer, I've created a database of media mentions, written social media copy, copy edited blog posts, designed graphics, and *a lot more*. I've read thousands of pages of research and commentary during this internship; it's wonderful to be working for an organization making an influence in our nation's capital.

I am so thankful that Niskanen's communications team asked me to stay through the fall. I'll continue with my major projects, and I'll continue working to promote Niskanen's extraordinary mission.

I will also be continuing my role with Chrysalis Global. I never made an official announcement, but I have been doing work for Chrysalis since early June. Chrysalis is an Indianapolis-based consulting firm, mostly focused in the aviation sector. I am working with their business operations team, working as a marketing and business development intern; it is very rewarding work, and it's great to continue in this capacity through the fall.

On campus, I'll be working with Indiana University's Student Government as its Director of City Relations. I never expected to work for IUSG. What changed my mind? My years of watching Bloomington's city government leads me to believe that our city doesn't listen to students (even though we represent half of the city's population). We need to have someone at every city council meeting ready to speak our voice on major issues. Starting this fall, we will be doing just that: IUSG will be speaking in front of our city council about issues important to students.

I want to thank IUSG President Kyle Seibert, Vice President Bell Pastore, and Chief of Staff Maddie Zirkle for extending this opportunity to me. I'm thrilled to advocate for our student body in front of our city's legislative body.

Also on campus, I'll be joining the Alexander Hamilton Society – a foreign policy group – as its Director of Programming. I'll be running educational events such as book clubs and events with nationally renowned speakers. This will run alongside my role as the Chairperson for the American Enterprise Institute's Executive Council at IU. Both of these groups bring in policy experts from across the political and ideological spectrum to speak to students, and I'm thrilled to be a part of it.

Additionally, in 2019 and 2021, I worked with some major stakeholders in Indiana to host the Speedway Signature Event, a major competitive robotics event for grades 6-12 hosted at or near the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. It is one of most prestigious robotics competitions in the country. **This November, I will return to serve as Tournament Director of the Speedway Signature Event.** When I was in middle and upper school, I loved being involved in robotics; this role is at the crossroads of so many major interests of mine: public relations, media relations, event management, marketing, long-term planning, and more. Interested in attending? You can attend the event November 18-19 at the Dallara IndyCar Factory in Speedway, Indiana. *Are you interested in volunteering or sponsoring our event? [Reach out to me.](#)*

Along those same lines, I will join the Robotics Education and Competition Foundation as an Event Support Specialist. I will spend many of my weekends traveling across the region to robotics events in order to support schools in uplifting their robotics curricula and event management. I started this job late in the summer, and I can't wait for the robotics competition season to get started. STEM education for the win!

In the academics sphere, I'm registered for another 18 credit hours for the Fall semester. My courses revolve around topics relating to economics law, business law, government spending, quantitative political statistics/analysis, religious history, and public relations. I am delighted to dive into these very interesting topics starting next week.

Oh, and I'll have some other major news to share soon. *Stay tuned.* When it comes time, I'll share more news to this website, but [follow me on Twitter](#) to be the first to know.

