

# Letter Draft

Title: Proposal for All-Win Business School

Dear Dean James,

We, students, alumni, and faculty of Wharton undergraduate and graduate programs, want to express our concern for the trajectory of the institution and invite a bold path forward. At the most critical juncture in the history of business school education, there are clear opportunities for us to demonstrate the leadership required to meet the existential demands of our time.

## **Concerns**

The pioneering vision of Joseph Wharton was to prepare graduates with the breadth and depth of knowledge to become “pillars of the State, whether in private or in public life.” Amidst an increasingly destabilizing society, we fear graduates are not only starved of knowledge and inadequately prepared to become strong pillars, but that the more Wharton graduates excel by our current success metrics, the faster our civilization loses.

Beyond alarming evidence by economists and scientists, business leaders from Larry Fink to Marc Benioff to Ray Dalio are coming out to yell that the current system is not working.

As one of the world’s most influential institutions, producing leaders who in turn have an outsized influence on the lives of their stakeholders, Wharton has a responsibility to persistently challenge itself to do better.

## **Invitation**

We call on Wharton to overhaul the core curriculum to train the next generation of leaders in a deeper and more diverse skill and awareness set that we anticipate will be required to navigate the ever-complex challenges ahead. This includes but is not limited to skills such as systems thinking and omni-considerate decision making, emotional intelligence and non-violent communication, and awarenesses such as indigenous wisdom, decolonization, and developmental psychology.

Examples of high impact actions include:

- Create a council of Wharton community members (students, faculty, alumni) with vision around the evolution of the institution
- Establish dual degree program with Penn’s Positive Psychology Center

- Create boundaries for corporate influence in On Campus Recruiting
- Overhaul freshman year curriculum to include purpose work, screening for childhood trauma, graceful offramps for those who want to transfer out
- Reimagine conventional success metrics (SAT/GMAT scores, starting salaries)
- Limit screen use in class except for critical educational needs
- Create mentorship program between alumni who have forged a different path
- Adjust admissions criteria to select for qualities such as self-sovereignty and empathy
- Establish equivalent of "readers advocate" / ombudsman to voice criticism of institution
- Increase capacity of Career Services to advise on alternative career paths
- Overhaul core curriculum and recruit staff to teach courses such as:
  - Ethics and Technology
  - Alternative Ownership, Funding, & Governance Structures
  - Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in the Workplace
  - An Honest History of the Business World
  - Teal Organizations and Holacracy
  - Workplace Culture / People Management / Psychological Safety
  - Non-Violent Communication in the Workplace
  - Collective Intelligence and Sensemaking
  - Living Systems Protocols
  - Omni-considerate Decision Making
  - Emotional Intelligence
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Healthcare Systems of the Future
  - Adult Development Theory
  - Work Life Integration
  - Connecting With Your Life's Calling
  - Deconstruction of the Business World
    - "Unlearn Business School" to illustrate all of the ideology taught in those environments that is causing harm to the planet.

We want to lift up the groundswell of efforts in this direction

- [Wharton Wellness](#) (Wharton)
- [The Penn Program for Mindfulness](#)
- [P3: Purpose, Passion and Principles](#) (Wharton)
- [Guiding Undergraduates in their Development and Education](#) (Wharton)
- [Executive Coaching and Feedback Program](#) (Wharton)
- [PennDoes](#) (Penn)

and initiatives at peer institutions that are a start

- [Stanford WellnessEd](#)
- [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#)

- [Harvard Center for Wellness and Health Promotion](#)
- [Dartmouth Tucker Center Mindfulness Programs](#)
- [MIT Stress Reduction, Mindfulness & Relaxation](#)
- [UMASS Center for Mindfulness](#)
- [Duke Center for Koru Mindfulness](#)

Change is scary. Let's face this fear together. Millennials and generation Z are calling bullshit on the world they are inheriting. At the very least, from a risk management perspective, we believe it would be prudent to consider how to mitigate the brand risk, which impacts all of us.

Imagine when we take kids with the demonstrated capacity to be leaders and help them connect with what they were born to do, instead of force them down a lane, severely limiting their potential

We believe there are abundant, untapped opportunities to support both current students and alumni on their personal and professional journeys. We see clear examples of actions Penn can take to position itself as the most forward thinking university. We can change the culture. People create businesses create society. We envision a future where schools compete on societal impact and love and justice instead of test scores and starting salaries.

We are social entrepreneurs, activists, investors, leadership coaches, facilitators,

We envision a world where prospective students apply not b/c they can make the most \$ fastest but because they can develop their leadership skills in public and private life. Where Wharton is sending out hundreds of true changemakers each year and inspires a "race to the top" for leadership.

## Next steps

- Put time on calendar for next check in. Goal to release in early January.
- Expand working group
  - Start building list of people from Wharton who could really support this initiative
  - MJ and Ankit are a Yes
- Narrow down to five core asks. Put courses in appendix. Lots of words require defining.

## High Level Questions

- Tone
  - From heart vs with directness
- Distribution
  - Daily Pennsylvanian?
    - Opinion Column
    - Letter to the Editor
  - Change.org?
  - Send to dean first, and then wait for response?
  - Submit to WSJ or Financial Times?
  - What event can this coordinate with? Juniors x OCR? Let's set first goal to get it out first week of Jan 1st. Can mention we've created Wharton Wisdom or umbrella think tank. Ready to meet with dean of Wharton. We invite peers from other institutions to weigh in and join.
- Signed by
  - Get 100 signatures?
    - First name last initial?
  - Consortium of other schools?
- Title
  - A more beautiful Wharton experience
  - Calling for Wharton's evolution
- Review
  - Other WW collaborators
  - Zack Stein
  - Drew Hensen

# 11.13 Meeting Notes

(Marc + Andrew)

[Insert two lines Links to recent trends like business council, Blackrock, IPCC report, % saying system is broken e.g.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/world-has-gone-mad-system-broken-ray-dalio>]

- Wharton is a very influential institution with a lot of connections to powerful people - it is attracting some of the brightest young people in the world and then putting them through the literal ringer
  - That literally rings out the light, the joy
  - Because of the exponential potential, the seductiveness of the monetary reward and prestige
  - So many forces that perpetuate that - resume building, caliber of professors, status, family wealth of a lot of students,
- Wharton has been doing what it thinks its right for 100 years and now we're in a new reality where those who can see clearly (Ray Dalio, Marc Benioff, Larry Fink) the system is fucked AND YET, the Wharton curriculum doesn't reflect that at all
  - We should review the curriculum (the Wharton curriculum doesn't reflect this at all
- There's an opportunity for Wharton to transform and really take leadership to usher a business world that is ALL WIN
  - We as these sense making antennas on the periphery - that care about the institution and community - have gone out and have some wisdom to bring back to invite - here are some actionable things that can be done that if nothing else can be a risk management as certain companies, ideas fall out of favor
  - Opportunity to be solidified in history as the ones who transformed the business world - the economy, the thing we all relate with
- What really gets me excited, I went through that ringer - it was traumatizing in some ways
  - Was very confused, didn't have support, didn't have role models, wasn't nourished
  - Lied to in many ways - didn't get the full picture - very skewed, very boring, not tailored to my gifts and interests (packages)
  - What inspires me to do this at all
- An accelerator for narcissists - case in point our president (clinical definition of narcissism)
- Fear, greed - headwinds (tribalism, wealth inequality) vs. tailwinds (ie: greta thurnberg, neobanks, environmentalism)

- Cancer analogies - is enflaming cancer cells into the system when it could be creating healing
- Who are the future business leaders of America and what qualities do we want them to possess AND is this institution 100% aligned with those qualities OR are we creating individuals with the opposite BY just serving corporate interests
  - Creating more cogs for the machine - which is leading to self-termination
- 1 intro mgmt 100 class touching on all aspects of leadership is insufficient
- have to expand to 20 pg working doc, then boil down, so that if we're invited, we have a plan of action. And we're open and want to discuss with continuity.

Many students get to Wharton from Tiger moms, neurotic jewish parents, and extremely successful parents who place Ridiculously high expectations on their kids, so when they arrive they're already broken. Let's heal them, not give them more of the same

Statistics to see if there's a trend of declining applicants - DATA driven approach. "Emotions are not noise, they're data"

This is the one part of the letter that I don't think is getting enough attention: an answer to the questions, "What makes you think that Wharton isn't giving its students these things? What proof do you have here? Why are you bringing this up in the first place?"

does MBA program have a core curriculum?

Not sure, but let's review this: <https://mba-inside.wharton.upenn.edu/core-curriculum/>

## Idea / Reference Dump

<https://www.contentment.org/program#section-1>

Wharton: Reach out to Jordan Williams

Nichol Bradford collab

Design thinking

Charles eisenstein book review

[https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/climate-change-labour-london-stock-exchange-business-manifesto-mcdonnell-a9208801.html?fbclid=IwAR3Hk\\_rEtrnvh2ef1E8zhDzufPI\\_YL7RAi\\_z85KZ88ACdVam3IDYzGe8tZ0](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/climate-change-labour-london-stock-exchange-business-manifesto-mcdonnell-a9208801.html?fbclid=IwAR3Hk_rEtrnvh2ef1E8zhDzufPI_YL7RAi_z85KZ88ACdVam3IDYzGe8tZ0)

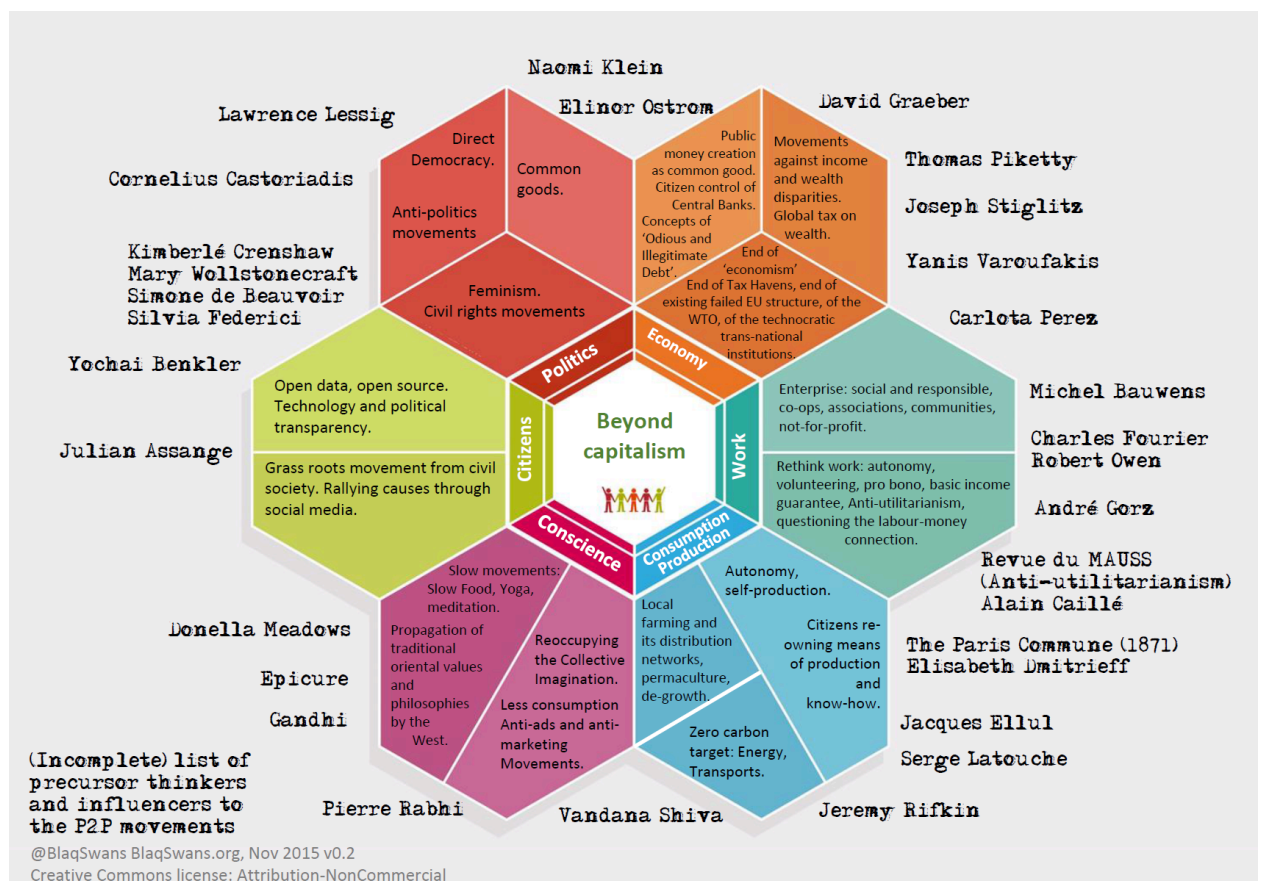
<https://spark.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/what>

Psychospiritual

Lay of the Land

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PEmdk1c-UxNipeb9fTIKDX6XcNpvNlv1YcOzDcsQbDY/e/dit#>

- “a fair shift to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable and just for all its members.”
- New economy movement
- Otto Scharmer’s U.Lab on [Transforming Capitalism](#)
- Platform Cooperativism <https://platform.coop/about>
- Decentralizing technology
- Data commons
- P2P movements



Resource Generation perspective

Check out LIFT Economy's New Economy alternative MBA program

Something about correcting for the Trumps

○

Reference professors who chirp about these things?

More self directed learning

Calling work

If somebody is applying to Wharton, chances are they have been through the ringer in terms of pressure of expectation and conditioning

We need to help them on their inner journey so they don't project their insecurities onto the world.

Peer institutions are experimenting

We call on Wharton to take immediate action on considering how to overhaul the curriculum to meet the demands of our time.

There is reputation risk and reputation opportunity. To stay relevant,

Point to Zebras Unite, Sister.is, Minerva, Waldorf, Zack Stein's book

“The planet does not need more successful

people. The planet desperately needs more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers and lovers of all kinds.

-Dalai Lama”

[https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/joanna-macy-on-how-to-prepare-internally-for-whatever-comes-next/?fbclid=IwAR17tOgv629AJWj2fmRziqT1gqArtxE2XuoGPCQnFgqdH1wdaeKOmk0ffU#.Xav9zrJ\\_Max.facebook](https://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/joanna-macy-on-how-to-prepare-internally-for-whatever-comes-next/?fbclid=IwAR17tOgv629AJWj2fmRziqT1gqArtxE2XuoGPCQnFgqdH1wdaeKOmk0ffU#.Xav9zrJ_Max.facebook)

[https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/10/davos-2020-wef-world-economic-forum-theme/?fbclid=IwAR1ldzEoU7EhctZbNU-XBB5c-EiM8BuWbD6R3U3463YF22OKLcTLYtxn\\_m0](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/10/davos-2020-wef-world-economic-forum-theme/?fbclid=IwAR1ldzEoU7EhctZbNU-XBB5c-EiM8BuWbD6R3U3463YF22OKLcTLYtxn_m0)

[WW Master Doc](#)

- [Bain & Company found that among 33 leadership traits, the ability to be mindfully present is the most essential of all.](#)



- [The highest-performing teams at Google have one thing in common: psychological safety.](#)
- [The seven top characteristics of success at Google are all soft skills:](#)
  - being a good coach
  - communicating and listening well
  - possessing insights into others (including others different values and points of view)
  - having empathy toward and being supportive of one's colleagues
  - being a good critical thinker and problem solver
  - being able to make connections across complex ideas.
- [Income inequality is growing across the US](#)
- [Penn has produced 18 billionaires](#), more than any university in the world
  - Only two, Elon Musk and Ron Perelman, have signed [The Giving Pledge](#) to dedicate the majority of their wealth to giving back.
- [\\$105,000 found to be the ideal income for life satisfaction in Northern America.](#) Earnings past that point tended to coincide with a lower level of happiness and well-being.
- [73 percent of students experience some sort of mental health crisis during college.](#) In 2016, 1 in 12 college students made a suicide plan and the 2nd leading cause of death in 20-24 year olds is suicide.
- [Only 13% of employees are engaged at work worldwide.](#)
- [Greek life x sexual violence.](#)

As for your question, I think reaching out to the DP makes sense. It sounds like something they might be interested in publishing. I was actually just celebrating the DP's 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary this weekend with some old friends from there. I don't really know anyone on the current staff, except for a couple of our work-study students who work at 34<sup>th</sup> Street. But I'd say reach out to the someone at the top: Julia Schorr, President: [schorr@thedp.com](mailto:schorr@thedp.com); Sarah Fortinsky, Executive Editor: [fortinsky@thedp.com](mailto:fortinsky@thedp.com). (I pulled that from here: [https://www.thedp.com/page/staff\\_directory](https://www.thedp.com/page/staff_directory))

Writing it first might help them decide for certain if they'd like to publish it, though you can certainly just pitch your idea first. For formatting, I'd say maybe model it after one of their [editorials](#) and try not to go too long. Good luck!