

JOHN DEE BRIGHT COLLEGE

History and Character

The John Dee Bright College honors the legacy of Drake alumnus Johnny Bright, who graduated in 1952 with a bachelor's degree in education. After a successful career with the Canadian Football League, Bright became a beloved principal, teacher, and coach in Edmonton, Canada, where an elementary school now bears his name as testament to his impact as an educator there.

An all-around athlete who set 20 Drake records in football, basketball, and track, Bright is perhaps most famous for his prowess as a football halfback and quarterback. He was a clear favorite to win the 1952 Heisman Trophy when, in October, 1951, in what would become known as the "Johnny Bright Incident," he suffered a broken jaw from a vicious, racially motivated attack after a play at Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University). Bright, undaunted continued to practice and play—his jaws wired shut for weeks after the incident—and completed his degree, even though the injury ultimately would result in his finishing fifth in Heisman balloting in 1951.

Johnny's legacy of grit, resilience, and determination as an athlete lives on at Drake: In 2006, Drake named the Stadium's football gridiron "Johnny Bright Field." With the establishment of Bright College, which welcomed its first cohort in Fall 2021, the University honors Bright's complete legacy by celebrating his dedication to teaching and learning.

Planning for Bright College began in April, 2019, with the development of the innovative, high-impact, integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum that would become the cornerstone of the Bright College learning environment. Swift approval by Drake's Board of Trustees and the Higher Learning Commission, Drake's accrediting organization, in Spring, 2020, launched a year of implementation planning and student and faculty recruitment. Bright College was publicly announced on September 1, 2020, in a ceremony that featured Dwana Bradley, another Drake school of education alumna and then-president of the Des Moines school board, and Wayne Ford, who graduated Drake in 1975 and went on to a successful career in politics and public service in Iowa. During the next eleven months, despite a global pandemic, the University marshaled the financial and human resources necessary to develop its programs and support services.

In these early years, Bright College has been led by its founding dean and a group of ten faculty members broadly representing the colleges, schools, and academic divisions of the University. Drake Faculty are invited to teach seminars and courses in Bright College based on their excellence as educators and their commitment to effective, innovative, student-centered and collaborative learning. The intensely collaborative, innovative, and forward-thinking dispositions Bright himself embodied on and off the field live on in the commitment to access, inclusion, and excellence demonstrated daily by the faculty, staff, and students of The John Dee Bright College and the many Drake alumni, donors, and community partners who have helped to bring it to life.

Mission

The John Dee Bright College at Drake University provides affordable access to innovative excellence, offering an alternative pathway to a Drake University degree to ambitious, motivated students from all backgrounds who want to do college differently. Our students take an active, collaborative approach to learning as part of a community distinguished by interdisciplinarity, high-impact practices, and engagement in the world beyond college. They develop

both foundational disciplinary knowledge and universally transferable skills that will help them achieve their personal and professional aspirations.

The Bright College Compact

Bright College seeks to prepare its learners for professional accomplishment, community engagement, and engaged citizenship. We can pursue these goals only in an environment where all members of the learning community engage respectfully and authentically with one another. To that end, the College fosters, sustains, and protects a culture of inclusion and belonging among all students, faculty, and staff.

While personal expression is often framed in terms of rights, at Bright College, we understand our relationship to one another as governed by a **social contract**. We seek to create a community in which shared purpose transcends difference and where respect for human dignity transcends conflict. As the college encourages civil debate and discussion of divergent perspectives and opinions in a manner that affirms our community, we intentionally exclude intolerance of difference from permitted speech or expression.

We also actively seek to correct errors of fundamental attribution, which is to say: While we hold individuals accountable for their words and actions, we also understand that humans are complex and that they are capable of personal and intellectual growth and change. What a person says or does at one moment does not necessarily represent the whole of who they are or who they might become. Indeed, Bright College exists to foster those very transformations.

Nevertheless, personal attacks; the negative characterization of others' identities or perspectives; engaging in bad-faith discourse; slurs and hostile epithets; and the expression of views that can reasonably be expected to cause harm will be met with rapid intervention. A student who refuses to refrain from such will be subject to university disciplinary sanctions.

Bright College expects of its students a high degree of honesty and personal integrity, both in formal academic work and in interpersonal engagements among students, faculty, and staff.

Integrity Pledge

At the beginning of each academic year, students in the John Dee Bright College commit (or recommit) themselves to honesty and integrity throughout their academic pursuits by reciting and living up to the Bright College Integrity Pledge.

As a member of the John Dee Bright College, I commit myself to honesty and integrity in my words and actions. I will always model honesty, reliability, and trustworthiness, and I will hold myself accountable to the college's expectations for personal and academic integrity.

I will take part in dialogue and debate in good faith to advance my own and others' learning, and I will uphold a shared commitment to a mutually supportive environment.

I commit to being present in the classroom and showing up for myself, my peers, and my instructors. I will treat others with patience, kindness, courtesy, and respect, just as I will expect the same from them

- Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Associate in Arts (<https://catalog.drake.edu/archive/2024-2025/undergraduate/john-dee-bright/areas-study/arts-sciences-humanities-aa/>)
- Business, Organizational, and Professional Studies Associate in Arts (<https://catalog.drake.edu/archive/2024-2025/undergraduate/john->

dee-bright/areas-study/business-organizational-professional-studies-
aa/)