

**Great Spirit on Campus**

Despite the fact that we are in the last stage of the semester, the classically bright spirit of the spring season seems to be prevailing on campus. There is a justifiable mood of optimism and industry just about everywhere. I am fully aware that the Lindenwood faculty and staff collectively set the tone and *Geist* of the University at any one time, and I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the many ways in which each of you contributes to the upbeat learning environment here.

**Progress of Projects**

This active campus always has a number of interesting initiatives underway, and this spring semester is not an exception. The recently printed booklet titled *Lindenwood Academics: Good Theories for Life* is now available and comes as highly recommended reading. It effectively portrays and describes the variety and strength of programs and excellent talent we have on this campus. It also conveys the seriousness with which we take our mission to learn and teach. The booklet is being sent to all college and university presidents in Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Iowa, and Arkansas, as well as to the K-12 schools and business leaders in the St. Louis region. Additionally, we have included the officers and boards of the Higher Learning Commission on the distribution list. Praise and admiration are due Dr. Jann Weitzel, Provost and V-P for Academics, for being the chief architect of this project.

The *Lindenwood Employee Guidebook*, a comprehensive reference for faculty and staff, is in its penultimate draft and will be available to you no later than the end of June. The purpose of the *Guidebook* is to clearly communicate and codify policies, procedures, and expectations for all employees. I think you will find it extremely helpful.

The revised *Student Handbook* that is coming out this year will cover the new student services we have added this year and will exhibit improvements in organization and currency. It should be printed early this summer.

Strategic planning for Fiscal 2008, which runs from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, is proceeding well. Drs. Boyle and Weitzel and I have met with all of the academic divisions and administrative offices, and Dr. Weitzel has assembled the first draft of a master *Strategic Planning Process Document*. The Board of Directors' Strategic Planning Committee has reviewed the assumptions underlying the plan for next year and will be modifying those premises to reflect present conditions and developments in higher education. At its July retreat, the Lindenwood Board will receive and acknowledge the presentation draft of this piece, which will serve as a date-anchored guide for most of our endeavors and projects during the 2007-08 academic year. Our strategic objectives emphasize continuing program development, academic excellence, facilities enhancements, and improved communications, as well as student, faculty, and staff development. I want to thank all of you for participating so conscientiously in the formulation of our University's future. What an exciting vision you have painted!

On the facilities side of developments, the upgrade of our Weldon Spring Campus is advancing at a brisk pace, with at least six large classrooms already dressed up with new paint and carpeting. We have ordered new furniture for all of those rooms and will soon have hardware and software shipped to the site, to fulfill the plan for an IT Management education Mecca. A grand opening celebration is being planned for sometime in June or July. The site will offer general management curricula as well as a BA program in Information Technology and an MS degree in IT Management. Please refer prospective students to Brett Barger (636.949.4366).

The “Campus Town” project (a.k.a. the Lindenwood Retail Center) is close to becoming a reality, pending a decision by the Lindenwood Board of Directors this spring. The Executive Committee of the Board considered the proposal on May 8 and will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors at its May 18 meeting. The development would include a major regional supermarket, a nationally known retail department store, several specialty stores and eateries, and, possibly, a Lindenwood University Consolidated Student Services Center (Academic Services, our Business Office, and our Financial Aid Office). If the Lindenwood Board of Directors gives the project a nod, groundbreaking could begin as early as mid to late 2008.

### **Faculty and Staff Development**

Professional Development of our faculty and staff is a high priority, and each year we support dozens of requests from our personnel to participate in professional conferences and professional education and training experiences. This academic year we have sent 54 members of our workforce to association meetings or workshops. We believe in the importance of our faculty and staff growing in wisdom and stature along with the University. The more engaged and proficient we are in our calling, the more effectively we fulfill Lindenwood’s mission.

Another professional-growth initiative that has proceeded very well is the series of orientation sessions that we conduct for our first-year professors. Eighteen faculty members who joined us this academic year met monthly with Carla Mueller and Rick Boyle to ask questions and share experiences regarding their work as scholars and mentors. They also received information and tips on how to deal with myriad practical matters, from recruiting students to purchasing office supplies. I want to thank Carla and Rick for organizing and implementing these essential exchanges – and our Faculty Planning and Development Committee for coming up with the idea.

Not only does effective staff development facilitate more proficient realization of Lindenwood’s mission, it also lends to what Jim Collins (author of *Good to Great*) calls a “culture of discipline.” This kind of work environment is populated with self-starting, self-monitoring, productive employees: They know their professions and their job assignments very well, enjoy and take pride in their daily work, and perform productively without having to be regulated by external surveillance and fear of adverse evaluation.

That climate is what we have and what we intend to preserve and strengthen on this campus. I think the culture-of-discipline ethic has caught on! Let's all keep it going.

### **Government Watch**

We and most other Missouri universities, both independent and tax-funded, have been intently watching the progress of the recent versions of the Missouri Higher Education Funding Bill – Senate Bill 389, a.k.a. House Bill 16. The bill, which been reworked multiple times across the past several months, finally was passed by both the Senate and House and now goes to Governor Blunt, who will likely sign it into law.

Of greatest interest to Lindenwood is the provision that combines the former Gallagher Grant and Missouri Guarantee Grant into a single scholarship system called The Access Missouri plan. This will increase state grant monies from \$27.5 million to more than \$72.5 million by 2010. Total Access Missouri scholarship amounts per student will range from \$300 to \$1,000 for tax-funded two-year colleges, \$1,000 to \$2,150 for tax-funded four-year institutions, and \$2,000 to \$4,600 for independent institutions. Presently Gallagher-funded students receive no more than \$1500 per year at independent institutions.

However, under this new state scholarship plan, both eligibility for the award and the amount of the award will be more need-based and not at all dependent on the amount of tuition charged by the university at which the student matriculates. By contrast, the Gallagher grant amount was affected by the tuition rate of the school chosen by the student: The more expensive the school, the more Gallagher dollars the student could be granted. Although the specific impact of these changes on Lindenwood will not be known for several months, state legislators I've spoken to feel that, with the huge increase in amount of State scholarship aid brought about by this bill, *both* the independent universities and the state schools will receive more tuition dollars from the Missouri Department of Higher Education than previously.

### **Congratulations**

There are so many notable and laudable events and efforts transpiring at or in connection with Lindenwood at any particular time that it is difficult to find enough space or words to recognize the all of these achievements. Nevertheless, I want to mention a few recent highlights of the Lindenwood Community.

Our new student newspaper, the *Legacy*, has made quite a splash with its professional-looking layout and competently written features and notes. It has been nearly 20 years since Lindenwood has had a student newspaper, but the wait for rebirth of the medium has been worth it. The *Legacy* is the finest student-crafted periodical that I have seen in my 33 years at this school. Gratitude, praise, and further encouragement go to the Lindenwood Journalism program, its enthusiastic students, and its devoted and effective professors.

Lindenwood's sports teams continue to kick up an impressive dust storm in the world of intercollegiate athletics. This spring alone, our student athletes have brought home the following national championships: Wrestling, Roller Hockey (two titles), Trap and

Skeet. Meanwhile, the Women's Tennis team, Men's Track team, and the Women's Lacrosse teams earned regional titles. Intercollegiate sports are a significant component of the Lindenwood experience, with more than 40% of our residential day students being involved in organized athletics. Of additional interest is the fact that our student-athletes normally have about the same average GPA and retention rates as students who are not athletes. Overall, our student-athletes are good protégés who go the extra mile to represent the University. Please join me saying thank you to all of them.

Lindenwood's response to the VPI incident was nothing short of wonderful. Jeri Schultz organized a tribute-and-condolences project, in which hundreds of students, professors, and staff members signed a large banner to express sympathy and support for the students, faculty, staff, and families of VPI. At about the same time, Steve House led a more formally spiritual candlelight vigil service on campus to pray for goodness, peace, and forgiveness in the wake of the heartrending event in Virginia. More than 100 Lindenwood students participated. During that same week, our Residential Services and Communications (PR) offices initiated several projects and procedures to bolster security at Lindenwood. All of these gestures and actions are indicative of the psychological and spiritual maturity of our campus community.

In addition to the many special undertakings we so often observe at Lindenwood, each week of every year we sponsor many instances of what I would call "regular excellence." One very recent example is the project through which several of our students conducted tours in French of the visual arts exhibit at the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts in St. Louis. That contribution to cultural enrichment of the region was shepherded by Dr. Nancy Durbin, Chairperson of Lindenwood's French Program. It seems that everywhere one goes in the region, Lindenwood is there making a difference in the lives of individuals and their communities.

Kudos is in order for the Admissions, Academic Services, Financial Aid, Business Office, and Student Development staff, as well as our troupe of experienced faculty advisors, for adeptly welcoming, housing, enrolling, and orienting more than 550 new students in our first three open registration days this spring. Teamwork, poise, and stamina are the recipe for success on those delightfully demanding days, and we seem to have had those qualities in the right quantities on each of those dates. The results were the registration of a substantial number of well qualified new students and ample praise from many favorably impressed parents. Our next open registration day is scheduled for May 25. I thank you all for what you do to ensure the future of Lindenwood and her students.

### **Importance of Class in Everything We Do**

"It only costs a nickel more to go first class," said Joe Rich, my high school football coach, just a year before the Mineral Ridge Ramblers gridiron group achieved a ranking of number one (in its category) in the state of Ohio. As uncomplicated as Joe Rich's idea is, it nonetheless applies so validly to all spheres of endeavor: Incrementing a service, product, or situation from very good to first class often requires just slightly more attention and effort than would be sufficient to merely "get it done." I would respectfully

suggest that all of us, including yours truly, can consciously and intentionally raise the University's public and functional status in many small ways each day by simply giving "a nickel more" in the following areas:

*Appearance of our spaces:* How do our offices appear to students and visitors?

*Appearance of campus:* Are most areas of campus picked up and clean looking?

*Appearance of ourselves:* Do we dress and groom like professionals?

*Poise and patience:* Do we take the high road in resolving problems and frustrations?

*Going through channels:* Do we honor our own policies and procedures?

*Communicating clearly and often:* Do we regularly make a point of asking and informing rather than assuming?

*Maintaining objectivity and mission consciousness:* Do we routinely ask ourselves why we make particular decisions and take particular actions on the job?

*Always placing the student first:* Do we normally ask if our choices are principally aimed at serving the student's educational and developmental needs?

*Taking responsibility:* Does each of us personally try to help resolve an issue or problem that emerges rather than passing it off as someone else's responsibility?

*Being timely:* Do we consistently make a conscious effort to respond to messages, requests, questions, and situations as soon as possible – every day?

*Being generative:* Do we share our job skills, wisdom, and experience with co-workers and colleagues, so that the University could run smoothly in our absence?

*Committing to the Greater Good:* Are we able to give priority to a cause that is larger than any individual?

The moral and intellectual stature of a university resides in the collective spirit and attitude of its campus community, and it is manifested in the moment-to-moment behaviors of its people.

### **Contrition for Incorrect Grammar**

I occasionally start sentences with prepositions, which I am told is not grammatically correct. On behalf of Stephen King, Sigmund Freud, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, and Thomas Jefferson, I apologize. Perhaps we were all misled by a famous author who began His bestselling book with, "In the beginning . . . ."

### **Looking Forward to Joyous Celebrations of Achievement**

We used to say that graduation is "what it's all about," in reference to the purpose of our being involved in the business of higher education. Some would say that higher learning – rather than the formal conferral of degrees – is actually what higher education is all about. Regardless of your view or mine in such a discussion, I think we would concur that mid-May is one of the most exciting times of the year at Lindenwood. It is exciting because commencement formally symbolizes and publicly recognizes the fruits of higher learning, and because the day and the ceremony are so personally defining and gratifying for our protégés . . . our students. Commencement is exhilarating for us because it seems to validate in the most moving way our calling as human beings and our *raison d'être* as higher education professionals.

This year we are holding baccalaureate and commencement at the Family Arena so that we will be able to accommodate the largest ever graduating class at Lindenwood University. The commencement program booklets list a total of 3,106 students who theoretically are eligible to participate in the ceremony. The previous high was around 2,900. We are expecting about 650 graduate students to walk in the Friday ceremony and about 800 students to participate in the Saturday morning festivities.

The many Lindenwood employees who have worked diligently for months to make all preparations for these magnificent events tell me that all details are now in place for the best May ceremonies in the history of the University. It is pleasant to anticipate experiencing the majesty of those ceremonies with all of you. Thank you for the essential part you played in of our 180<sup>th</sup> year of academic excellence.

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