

*DCS remarks
Faculty challenge
August 21, 2003*

Good morning. I want to thank all of you for your preparation this week. We've all been working hard toward Monday's opening. I hope it has been an informative week with some good fellowship as well.

We have a lot to be thankful for here at Lindenwood... I probably don't say it enough, but I am thankful for you—our outstanding faculty. Your efforts are extraordinary... and make up the foundation of our students' success. This is a dynamic institution with a bright heritage and a bright future.

I believe that another significant factor in building that foundation is the mission of Lindenwood. It is well-written and purposeful. Character and values are key components of what we do here. Lindenwood is about so much more than mental exercises...

We do educate the whole person. It says it right in our mission statement. We talk the talk pretty well. But do we walk the talk?

That is incumbent upon you. And me. And all the people who represent Lindenwood University.

Those of you who know me know I cannot resist telling a story or two. I told this one at the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

in Belleville...and again yesterday when I talked at the Leadership Experience down in Farmington. I want to share it again, because it really does leave you with an idea of what Lindenwood is about.

It's about a young man walking along the beach early one morning. Off in the distance, he sees someone throwing things into the ocean.

As the young man gets closer, he sees an older gentleman picking up starfish that had washed up with the tide and he is throwing them back into the ocean.

The younger man says "Hey old man, why are you wasting your time doing that? You can't save all those starfish? You can't make a difference."

The old man hardly looked up as he tossed another into the ocean. All he said was "I made a difference for that one."

(pause)

YOU can make a difference for a lot of young people.

When I came to Lindenwood ... Lindenwood College back in those days...the campus was absolutely devoid of a moral compass. There were all sorts of sit-ins, drinking, drugs, sex...there wasn't much going right. Lindenwood had fallen... for anything and everything.

That was really the first thing I asked our board to look at when I was hired. I told them we had to stand for something. So we took a good, hard look at what happened back in 1827 when Lindenwood was founded. We “returned to our roots.” Lindenwood was founded on Christian principles, but they sure weren’t evident back in 1989. So we attacked the drugs. We banned the alcohol. And we got rid of the co-ed dorms. We returned to the Judeo-Christian values that are a part of our mission.

One of the programs we are quite proud of at Lindenwood is our National Center for the Study of American Culture and Values...we developed this a few years ago out at the Boone Home...for the express purpose of studying the core principles of American culture and values.

Many universities today are prescribing a hodge-podge of general education courses...and abandoning traditional courses in American history, literature and culture. Those same institutions have adopted a values-free or values-neutral philosophy.

We are doing just the opposite. We emphasize the importance of American culture and traditional ideals...

- We believe in values like perseverance...as represented by the tribulations of Job
- We focus on faith, as shown by Abraham

- We believe in and demonstrate compassion, as manifested in Christ

The National Center's main courses are values-centered. We will soon offer an American heritage/environmental awareness semester for students to immerse themselves in American heritage, culture values and environmental ethics. We focus on citizenship education... and character education for teachers, and we have a wonderful K-12 outreach program at the Boone Home.

This National Center fits right in with Lindenwood's mission to develop the whole person as an educated, responsible citizen. The mission illustrates Lindenwood's belief that the development of someone's character is an essential part of preparing enlightened, productive members of our society.

Lindenwood succeeds because we are focused on student success—not our own. We have lots of bright stars and we recruit top students. But we don't believe that the top students in high school are the only ones who will succeed. We take chances once in awhile. We try to help people. At Lindenwood, we don't admit people to fail. That's one of the things that sets us apart...and of course, we expect student to achieve and earn their success.

With this in mind, I remind each and every one of you that you are not only teachers, but role models. You really do

have the opportunity to change someone's world. You are the front line in "walking Lindenwood's talk."

I say this every year... We feel components of our mission are so important that they are included in the faculty handbook and contracts

*Do we believe in Lindenwood's ideals, policies and discipline?

*Do we abide by those standards and regulations?

*Do we exemplify those standards for students, colleagues?

*Do we live by those standards off campus?

*Do we support those ideals by insisting that students honor policies, regs and academic integrity?

At Lindenwood, we are a community united by values

It sets us apart from the other schools

We have a campus culture that requires our faculty to:

Do more than just teach classes and go home

Our faculty melds into the culture

Our faculty helps build a genuine sense of community

Our faculty helps build an atmosphere where values are visible, experienced

Our faculty doesn't just discuss/pursue methodology, they examine purpose

Our faculty gives stability, gives roots

The things our faculty does, the extra miles traveled, pay off

We help people succeed. We teach. We take risks

This is what really sets us apart. And here's another thing that sets us apart....our Student Handbook.

(Hold book in the air)

This thing isn't just a cookbook or a rulebook! There are a few seminal ideas that flow from our mission statement and give rise to the provisions in the Student Handbook:

- Student-centered university
- Values-based learning
- Holistic higher education: Academic, social, physical, and spiritual
- Character development and citizenship
- Adaptive thinking and problem-solving

1. The Handbook Begins With the President's Message

“We are proud that you are a member of our campus communityNothing is more important than the success of our students. We believe there is a plan for your life, and we want to help you find it.”

These words communicate that **the student is the center of our educational galaxy . . . the reason we exist – and that we treasure the opportunity to educate the student.**

Is this not the reason that independent colleges were started and sustained in this country? (per Alexander Astin's analysis of American higher education).

This is **the most central tenet of Lindenwood's timeless campus culture.**

The letter communicates **our desire to help the student develop in all ways** – academically, yes, but in other important ways as well. It also transmits the idea that we faculty, staff, and administrators are here to support and guide the student – saying to the student, again, that he or she is our reason for being here and that his or her education is the most important item on our agenda!

This is a *most central concept* that none of us should ever lose sight of.

2. The Handbook Summarizes Lindenwood's History and Ties It to Our Future

The student gets a glimpse of the dreams and extraordinary accomplishments of Mary and George Sibley – two names we want them to know about and remember for the rest of their lives. **We urge them to take the pioneering spirit of the Sibleys with them to effectively meet the challenges of the future...and be...as Mary Sibley said....up-to-date and with the times.**

At our kind of university it is especially important to give students a sense of the school's proud and significant history. Why? I believe there are **several reasons:**

At every independent university, **the school's history both generates a distinct campus culture and makes that culture humanly meaningful.** As the student becomes a part of that campus over the months and years, knowing

about the school's past makes the campus culture more personally significant. In addition to enriching the college experience, **engaging students in this way helps motivate student persistence** – and, thereby, helps us with retention.

You've noticed that we keep returning to the themes of our history and culture at various times and events. This repetition tells the student we think this is an important matter for him or her to think about . . . and **boosts the student's consciousness of Lindenwood's values and philosophy of education.**

Talking about our past also **provides a context with which the student can assess and appreciate how far we've come as a university**; it also enables him or her to share in the excitement of present developments on campus and Lindenwood's plans for future growth and enhancements.

3. An Understanding of Commitment

Under this topic the handbook spells out **what we mean by development of the whole person: academic, social, physical, and spiritual.** We spell out at this point in the Handbook the various ways in which the student can demonstrate respect for himself and others.

The students read that their activities affect both themselves and others – **that they have chosen to be a member of the Lindenwood community – that implicit in that choice is a commitment to abide by the rules and norms of that community.**

Our norms include traditional Christian values, some of which have become controversial in this day of “anything goes” and political correctness. For example, we insist that while one is a student at Lindenwood, he or she abide by the norm of heterosexual relationships because it is a value that we hold at Lindenwood. Again, the student has freely chosen to attend Lindenwood, and we have freely chosen to

admit him or her. The student is free to study elsewhere if they cannot abide by Lindenwood's system. But while the student is enrolled here, we expect compliance with our rules and norms.

You are valued employees of this university. You might not personally accept every value and norm that defines Lindenwood's campus culture. **We do not insist that you personally agree with tenets that you cannot accept, but we do expect you to support Lindenwood's values and comply with Lindenwood's regulations in your role as a faculty member.** We expect you to not publicly criticize Lindenwood for personal or political reasons as long as you work here, as any employer might reasonably expect this loyalty from its employees. And, to the best of my knowledge, all of you do support the university in the ways I've described.

Which of Lindenwood's purposes do we serve by addressing the topic of commitment? Values-based

learning and character development and citizenship certainly are the of primary interest here.

4. The Mission of Lindenwood University

The Handbook presents the student with the complete mission statement including Lindenwood’s many purposes a description of our institutional identity. But the essential mission is described simply by the declaration that **Lindenwood “offers values-centered programs leading to the development of the whole person – and educated, responsible, citizen of a global community.”**

We want our students – and our faculty members – to know our mission statement and what it stands for. Also we want them to live by it and carry its significance with them throughout life.

5. Student Involvement

Early in the Handbook, we list and describe our various student clubs and organizations, as well as the various

opportunities we offer students to participate in intercollegiate athletics.

We want our students to try out and eventually commit to several of these endeavors. **Why is that so important?**

Development of:

- Discipline
- Team work skills
- Social consciousness
- Other-centeredness
- Physical development
- Social and ethical development.

And, importantly, we know that this kind of co-curricular involvement engages the student. Such engagement dramatically increases the likelihood that students will finish their college education and that we will retain them through completion of their degrees.

6. Student Services

We include a lengthy section on student services – the business office and academic services, for example – to inform the student about how he or she can get help and guidance for various problems and needs that are part of college life. We show, once again, that we exist for the student and that we are ready to assist him in finding and staying on his or her unique life path.

We do not admit any student to fail! So we expect them to succeed, and, accordingly, we provide every reasonable type of assistance to ensure success. If we expected some failure, we would do what so many other universities do: Let the student sink or swim. To the contrary we are an *in loco parentis* school, and we are proud of that! That is one of Lindenwood’s major distinctions that contrast us with peer institutions.

7. Campus Culture and Conduct

This section begins with “Lindenwood University helps prepare students for their success in personal and

professional services. Training and guidance for your future begins as you enter the Lindenwood gates.”

We address topics such as

- showing proper respect toward the faculty members and other authority figures
- being courteous to all people, regardless of their stations in life
- carrying out personal hygiene and health practices
- dressing appropriately (including not wearing hats and head coverings that are inappropriate or wearing hats in inappropriate settings)
- Avoiding controlled substances and alcohol
- Adhering to academic honesty

Why do we give campus culture, etiquette and student conduct so much emphasis? Are we just being old-fashioned?

These practices are all part of demonstrating respect for oneself and others...and for preparing for success in life.

We have to do some socializing of many of our students because their previous mentors and teachers have neglected to undertake this important task or because this social learning is only partially complete when the student enrolls here.

We strive to instill a professional lifestyle in our students. These good habits will serve them well for a lifetime.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPLES PROMOTED IN THE STUDENT HANDBOOK

As a values-based, student-centered university, we have a fundamental obligation to include character development in our education of students. And it takes a whole campus – working as a team in the student’s behalf – to make this unique kind of environment work the way it should.

Many of you have proven that you are not only committed to Lindenwood's philosophy and culture but also quite adept at helping us actualize both for the student. We have recognized and identified you as Distinguished Mentors. I pleased to say that we are adding several more of you to that honored group of professionals today. Would the following Lindenwood mentors please come forward to be recognized to receive your certificates attesting to your distinction:

Roger Ellis
Mira Ezvan
Peter Griffin
Ana Schnellmann
Glen Waring

[Call for a round of applause]

At this time I am also pleased to recognize this year's teaching award winners (please stand when I call your name):

Chris Scribner	Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence
Curt Billhymer	Emerson Award for Teaching Excellence

[Call for applause.]

I know that we could give many additional awards today based on the outstanding service that many of you exhibit daily.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of you for your dedication to our students and Lindenwood University. I hope you have the best of years in 2003-04. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you at the special reception we are having at the LU Clubhouse later today.
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