

## **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS – Investiture, 9NOV2007**

### ***It's All About the Student***

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I accept the charge and responsibility that you and the Lindenwood Board of Directors have given me and pledge to fulfill both with vigor and effectiveness.

Good morning to you all! What a thrill it is to be associated with Lindenwood University at this time in history! I want to thank all of you for being here to celebrate Lindenwood's future. Your interest and presence mean a lot to this University and to me. I want to thank the Lindenwood Board of Directors for deciding to have this event, and for their support, confidence, and guidance over the past year, which led to this day. I express particular gratitude to Board Chairman Jim Shoemake and longtime Board Member Nancy Calvert for their tireless leadership in the planning of today's festivities. As well, my devoted faculty, administration, and staff have worked for months to put everything into place for the magnificent ceremony that you are experiencing this morning. I want to recognize Scott Queen, who is our Director of Communications and Public Relations. He was the pivotal staff member in the preparation of this event, and he personally committed more than a hundred hours of his time to make this day both successful and memorable. Thank you, Scott.

Many thanks, too, to all the today's speakers, for their kind and inspiring words of support and encouragement.

I also wish to thank my wife, Lois, my parents, Charlotte and Roy, my sister, Patricia, my nephew, Nathaniel, and Lois's brothers, Jerry and Steve and their families – including my niece, Hannah, for being here today and for the support they have shown throughout the years.

I want to express special appreciation to all of you students, because I know you are busy. Yet you have taken the time to be here and be a part of this ceremony. From my perspective, today is really about you and your future. I think you will understand what I mean in just a few minutes.

### **State of the University**

A strong university has much in common with a strong marriage: Love is necessary and wonderful but, by itself, not sufficient for a happy, productive institution. The financial challenges of the 1970s and 80s taught us that very valuable lesson. As a consequence of those challenges, we have learned how to connect the best business practices with the best educational practices, so that there will always be enough money and material support to sustain our passion for teaching and learning. The outcome of the unique Lindenwood Model for higher education is a firm financial base, an enviable (and ever-improving) physical plant, a superbly productive workforce – including, I am convinced, the most devoted university teaching faculty in the world – and the best academic and developmental programs that higher education has to offer. Here are the specifics regarding the state of the University:

- For more than a decade, we have been the fastest growing university in Missouri.
- We now have nine external campuses in addition to this main campus.
- The number of students studying at Lindenwood grew from fewer than 7,000 in 1997 to about 14,000 this past year; we expect that number to exceed 14,500 this year.
- We plan to award about 38 million dollars in Lindenwood scholarships and grants directly to our students this year, to ensure that they have access to a first-class private college education.
- Ninety-three percent of our students obtain either professional positions or admission to competitive graduate programs within six months of completing their Lindenwood degrees.
- Lindenwood graduates more than 2000 students per year.
- We produce more K-12 teachers each year than all but one other university in the state and more K-12 administrators than any other Missouri school – period!
- One-hundred percent of our Teacher Education students who complete their Lindenwood degrees pass the Praxis II teaching competency exam, which qualifies them to teach in the State of Missouri.
- The number of full-time teaching faculty at this University has grown from 93 in 1997 to 201 presently.
- In that same decade the number of support staff (which includes every employee who is not a full-time

classroom teacher) has doubled from fewer than 100 to slightly more than 200. These increases were necessary to keep pace with our student and program numbers.

- We have completed about \$120 million in facilities improvements and new-building construction within the last 10 years without going into debt – and we remain debt free.
- Our Board of Directors has authorized another \$110 million for additional campus expansion and facilities initiatives over the next eight years, to better serve a growing population of both day and evening students.
- Over the past five years, we have invested more than \$4 million in library and technology improvements.
- We presently offer 78 undergraduate degree programs and 37 graduate degree programs, and we have the wherewithal to add more programs that are consistent with our mission and will serve new and growing markets.
- Until the early 1990s, Lindenwood had no more than 10 intercollegiate sports teams in any one academic year. Today we are up to 40 teams, about half of them being women's teams. Each year several of our athletic teams win conference, regional, and national titles. In the words of celebrity sportscaster, Randy Karraker, "Lindenwood University has become an intercollegiate sports powerhouse."
- We have athletics facilities that are top-of-the-line – including this performance arena, a newly renovated football stadium, an eight-lane Olympic quality track,

an ice rink, and the Lou Brock Sports Complex for baseball and softball.

I could go on with the list of facts illustrating Lindenwood's remarkable state of vitality, but too many numbers – even pleasant ones – can be overwhelming. As I think you can surmise, we have a system that enables effective revenue generation and financial management. It is our goal to stay solvent, debt free, and fiscally prudent in order to keep our students' costs reasonable.

However, we will never forsake quality to achieve thrift. All of our investments are aimed at benefiting Lindenwood students, present and future, by providing the best faculty, staff, programs, and facilities – and by continually improving on the services we render. We do not sit on any net reserve we earn; nor do we spend it only for today's needs. Rather, by policy, we invest most of our discretionary income in the future of the University. The performance of our students shows that this is a good way to use the money, and is why we will persist in that management philosophy.

### **My Values as an Educator**

Now that I have summarized the excellent condition of the University and the favorable results associated with our institutional health, the next logical step is to present a blueprint that will guide this community to even higher levels of effectiveness and accomplishment – and I will do that in a moment. Before I start talking about plans for the

future, however, I think it only fair to say a few words about my worldview and values as an educator, so that you might better understand the plans I will outline for you this morning.

- My position is that higher education should not be considered just a means to an end, but, rather, a valuable end in itself. A student's college education is not just a rite of passage to obtain a union card called a diploma. Rather, it is a preparation for a meaningful, effective life, and, as such, should be taken most seriously for its inherent value.
- My stance is that collegiate General Education, which exposes the students to the timeless principles and theories of the greatest thinkers, is the essence of higher education; broad courses in the arts, sciences, and humanities are what confer a long shelf life upon a college degree and enable college graduates be adaptive problem-solvers.
- I believe that the purpose of a college or university is to teach – to help students learn and develop.
- It is my conviction that in professional settings people judge a person's wisdom and ability on the basis of how well he speaks, writes and problem-solves.
- Of all the values humans treasure, integrity and responsibility are the most important. I consider this belief to be true for groups and institutions as well as individuals.
- It is also clear to me that this grand old university has an essential spirit that transcends particular times, individuals, and groups. That spirit is connoted by

our mission statement and is responsible for the unusually supportive and edifying relationships that have historically characterized the Lindenwood Community.

## **Outlook and Plans**

Now that I have all of that off my chest, here are some of the initiatives that our faculty and staff, our Board of Directors, and I have planned for our students and the University, as well as some comments on progress made so far:

## **Lindenwood Model**

In both the near term and the long term, we will stay with and improve Lindenwood's incredibly successful model of higher education management. The model is based on fiscal independence and self-determination. In this approach, prudent strategic planning, precise financial management, and merit-based compensation will continue to be key factors, as will personal and group responsibility. Foremost, of course, will be the continual assessment and improvement of the quality of our educational and developmental services.

## **Communications**

Over the past year we have striven to improve both internal and external communications in many ways, including the weekly publication of newsletters for the staff and the

students and our new quarterly publication, *The Connection*, which is a service to our alumnae. We desire to regularize and strengthen our connections with our graduates as lifelong stakeholders in the University. Our objective is to make sure that our alums remain a part of Lindenwood, and achieving it will require an ongoing commitment from us to them.

To provide Lindenwood with much deserved, increased exposure in the region we have expanded our placement of announcements and advertorials in the local media. We will monitor the effectiveness of each outreach effort but, in any case, will continue to keep our image and mission in the public eye, because we are accomplishing great things here.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the establishment this year of our marvelous student newspaper, the *Legacy*. It not only facilitates communication throughout the Lindenwood family but serves as a truly superb learning laboratory for our growing number of Journalism majors. This paper is our pride and joy, and, as it matures, I believe it will be an award-winning publication.

## **Academics**

We have a very large number of enhancements planned for the heart of our collective calling – our academic programs:

Lindenwood has many acclaimed academic programs with annual achievements and awards at state, regional, and



national levels in the Arts, the field of Communications, the field of Teacher-Education, the Sciences, Human Services, Humanities, and in Business Administration. Most years, our academic divisions receive more awards than I can track.

An example of the excellence of our programs comes from an article published in the *St. Charles Journal* just this week, concerning one of the newer curriculums, our program in TV Broadcasting. The article was mostly about Lindenwood's newly acquired ability to broadcast live from our higher education television station – LU-TV Channel 26 on Charter Communications' St. Charles County network. One of our Communications students, Mr. Tim Trokey, had just been hired to work part-time at the Fox Sports Midwest broadcasting company. In the article, Tim praised his academic pursuits in Lindenwood's TV broadcasting curriculum for providing him with the skills that help him perform well in his new job.

“Lindenwood has pretty much given me the opportunity to do what I want,” he said. Later in the same article, the reporter, Mr. Chris Gump, had this to say about this University: “In the past two decades, Lindenwood has thrived with an attitude of more, newer, better. That is evident in everything from rising enrollment to the new buildings that pop up on campus annually. . . .”

All of you now know that we commenced our first doctoral program earlier this year – the Doctor of Education degree – which already has enrolled more than two hundred well qualified candidates. In the next two years we will develop

additional doctoral programs, most certainly in Business Administration but perhaps also in the mental-health professions. Beyond those plans, we are seeking specialized accreditations in Social Work and Business Administration, and we plan to seek additional discipline-specific accreditations in other areas. These seals of approval from national organizations are valuable because they confer a mark of distinction on superior academic programs. That mark will boost our ability to recruit the best and brightest students and will help those students obtain the best professional positions.

My personal hope is that we will be stewards of a University environment that prizes and nurtures a respectful and informed exchange of ideas and perspectives, as well as generating excitement about the search for new knowledge. That educational setting would engage all of the students and faculty members in the quest for higher understanding, clearer thinking, and effective communication and application of what is learned.

### **Student Development Programs**

Throughout its existence, Lindenwood has been known for its goal of developing the whole person. The college years should provide opportunities to learn good habits as well as facts and principles, to mature spiritually and socially as well as intellectually, and to actualize one's potentials in many arenas. Our Student Development Team works with the professors and advisors to ensure that those opportunities are not only available but also accessed. In

the past year we have taken the following steps to promote student development:

- We established and fully staffed a Student Success Center that intervenes to help students who encounter personal, social, financial, or academic-skill problems.
- We launched a complete First-Year Student Program this year. The initiative includes a carefully planned 5-day freshman orientation sequence prior to the beginning of the fall term and an expanded first-semester University Living class, as well as a full-time First Year Programs Director who is available to assist freshmen with any problems or questions. We feel that this improved first-year-student initiative will help us increase the persistence and graduation rates of our students.
- We restaffed and reconceptualized our Student Activities Office, which, so far, appears to be significantly boosting student participation in co-curricular activities.
- We have one of the largest intercollegiate athletics programs in the NAIA, and we intend to persevere in our support of those programs. Not only do 35-40 percent of our students participate in these sports, but those student-athletes are generally good scholars of good character, who are held to higher standards than the rest of the student body. Our blueprint for the future includes the addition of more intercollegiate sports, including synchronized swimming and possibly ping pong and fencing.
- This year we also set up a Student Counseling and Resource Center, which provides basic counseling to

- help students cope with occasional personal problems – at no cost to the students.
- Our Student Development sector has also enhanced campus safety and security by (1) locating a city police substation on our campus, (2) increasing patrols of the campus by both Lindenwood security officers and the city police, (3) instituting an emergency text messaging system for our students and staff, and (4) providing emergency preparedness briefings and/or information to our faculty, staff, residential officers, and students.

We will often assess and improve all of these student development efforts on an ongoing basis, to help our students realize their individual potentials and optimize their achievement within a safe, supportive environment.

## **Personnel**

We plan to install additional personnel in proportion to the growth of our student population, to guarantee a continuation of excellent service. This past year, we developed a system of senior management that is based on five vice-presidents, which has worked very well to increase both productivity and personnel satisfaction campus-wide.

Lindenwood’s senior managers and I are striving to create a “culture of discipline” throughout our work environment. That term is taken from Jim Collins’ book, titled *Good to Great*. It refers to a work environment in which individual

employees assume considerable responsibility and initiative on daily basis without much supervision or goading. It starts with hiring the best candidates, educating them about the value of what your business produces, and essentially causing them to become personally invested in their work, the organization, and the organization's products and services. Such an environment yields greater productivity, satisfaction, and loyalty. We have such a system underway at Lindenwood, and we will continue to develop it as we move forward. The effect of such a work ethic is illustrated in this email passage from one of our young deans, which I will quote to you:

*“Dear President Evans:*

*“I know that I may sound like a zealot at times, but it is critically important that we become the absolute best in the Missouri/Southern Illinois regions in how we treat our students and how flawlessly we process their paperwork. Any of our competitors can spend big bucks on advertising (and many do) but very few will be able to replicate an organization that is highly coordinated and focused on serving the student. I'll stop my sermon with that thought, but we are seriously passionate about being, far and away, the best.”*

## **Facilities**

This vibrant university always seems to be in the midst of further improving our students' physical environment and educational facilities: Presently we are making significant strides in handicap access to our older buildings, taking

steps to beautify the entire campus – inside and out – and establishing wireless connectivity to the Internet in many campus buildings.

We have opened coffee and snack shops in our Library and the Spellmann Campus Center, we have placed new furniture and equipment in the Recreational Center (The Loft) in Butler Hall, we recently outfitted the students' fitness center with \$125,000 worth of new equipment, and we plan to construct more bike and pedestrian paths across campus next summer.

- Our 138,000 square-foot Center for the Fine and Performing Arts will open its doors for a couple of special events next spring and will be fully functional by next August. It will be a regional hub for both excellent higher education in the Arts and live professional entertainment in Music, Theatre, and Dance. Lindenwood's Higher Education TV station will also move to the Center, where it will broadcast over state-of-the-art high-definition equipment.
- By 2009, Harmon Hall, which has housed many of our Arts programs for 40 years will be doubled in size and transformed into the Lindenwood University Center for Business and Entrepreneurism.
- Next spring we will break ground for our the exciting Lindenwood Commons, which will contain more than 100,000 square feet of usable space consisting of an auxiliary dining hall, a dedicated student center, and a large intramural and fitness space. This project is a

direct response to suggestions made by our day students.

- Across the next eight years, we plan to construct eight apartment-style residence facilities as our full-time day student population increases from its present count of about 4300 to more than 4800 by Fiscal 2016.
- I should also mention that just this week we authorized installation of high-tech capabilities in eight more classrooms at our Belleville campus, where we also recently launched a campaign that will enable us to complete Phase II of the spectacular renovation of the Auditorium on that campus.

We have other facilities plans within our master plan, but I will save that news for another time.

## **Sites**

The University will continue to expand and upgrade its extension campuses and sites, as guided by our mission and the higher-education marketplace.

- This fall we opened our beautiful Technology Management facility at Weldon Spring, right off the intersection of Highway 94 and Interstate 64 – along a stretch known as the High-Tech Corridor. Evening students can take accelerated classes there to earn bachelor's or master's degrees in IT.
- I want to mention one other very exciting prospect we are considering at Belleville: The possibility of opening a regular day college to complement our very successful evening programs at that site. The

Lindenwood Board of Directors and I have many questions to answer before we proceed with that project, but I am confident that the initiative will take place in the foreseeable future.

## **Fundraising and Endowment**

We have significantly expanded and invigorated our fundraising and development office this year and are seeking gift and grant support for scholarships and facilities at an unprecedented pace. Now is the best time in history for any individual or organization to become a part of what will be viewed in historical perspective as perhaps the most remarkable story in the evolution of American higher education.

My pledge to our Board of Directors is to raise Lindenwood's now strong and growing endowment to \$100 million by the end of Fiscal 2010, and I have no doubt at all that, if future boards and presidents perpetuate our current operational model, Lindenwood will build its endowment to more than \$200 million before Fiscal 2020.

## **Challenges**

This is the best time in history to be connected with Lindenwood University. It is like being part of a very good dream that will not end. We have the physical and financial foundation upon which to build the best Lindenwood ever and, quite realistically, become the most desirable higher-education environment in the Midwest. That vision will be



fulfilled only if we all step up to the responsibility of being conscientious stewards of what we have and determined producers of what we can be. That is our opportunity, which we can either realize or forsake. It is up to us.

However, we will encounter many challenges as we progress further into this new century. Specifically, we inevitably will be confronted by pressures to stray from our roots and backslide toward the mainstream of higher education. In the face of such pressures, we must abide by our mission and preserve and improve upon our unique operational model. The University's cost of doing business rises annually. Yet, we must keep Lindenwood affordable and accessible not only for today's students but also for their children and grandchildren – and we are constantly working on ways to assure the realization of those goals. .

It is imperative that, as a learning community, we faithfully make decisions in the service of the long-term interests of our students and our mission, and not for reasons of convenience or to serve our own interests in the present. Above all, we must not lose sight of the fact that Lindenwood University is here for the student.

I thank you all for your attention and participation today!