

## **PRESIDENT'S NOTEBOOK NO. 5 Spring 2008**

### **Another Record Start of a New Calendar Year**

I know that we begin to strain credibility when, term after term, you read or hear of more records being set by Lindenwood. We are an inarguably blessed academic community when the president feels the need to begin his newsletter with an apologetic tone in preparing to announce still more successes. That preface having been conveyed, here are some enrollment facts:

We started the spring semester with 3315 full-time residential students, which is (you guessed it) the highest number ever recorded for the term. In the spring semester of 2007 we had 3220 residential students, which exceeded the spring 2006 headcount of residential students by more than 200. The daytime commuter student count for this spring is nearly 600. We all owe the Day Admissions team, including our International Students Office, a hearty thank-you for making the best of all opportunities to recruit well qualified students again this academic year.

Other enrollment data may also be of interest:

- Lindenwood started the winter/spring terms with a total unduplicated student count – across all day and evening programs – of 9,153; this year is the first time the overall student count has exceeded 9,000 for the winter/spring terms.
- A significant portion of these healthy figures stemmed from the excellent work of John Feely, whose efforts in recruiting graduate students in Education netted Lindenwood a 12% increase in that population relative to spring semester 2007.

- The winter/spring tally is about 5% smaller than the fall count, which was 9,633; this change is slightly better than our normal fall-to-spring shrinkage of about 6-7%.
- Winter quarter enrollments this year exceeded those of one year ago by nearly 14 %
- We expect the unduplicated student head count for Fiscal 2008 to exceed 14,500. By comparison, the total count finished at 14,002 in Fiscal 2007 (which ended last June 30).

More good news is on the way. Preliminary figures strongly suggest that the spring quarter 2008 registrations could outnumber those of spring quarter 2007 by as much as 20%. Our quarter enrollments have shown exceptional growth this year, as a result of five factors:

1. Exceptional leadership by Brett Barger, Dean of Evening and Graduate Admissions
2. Exceptional effort and effectiveness by our Site Directors and Admissions Counselors
3. Excellent teaching and advising by our Evening College faculty members
4. The enhanced retention strategies implemented by our LCIE professors
5. Significantly improved customer service campus-wide

In short, we continue to be in very good shape in terms of enrollments and finances. What is more, the customer-service enhancement program upon which we have embarked as a university community will enable us to do even better in the future. I wish to express my deep personal appreciation to everyone reading this newsletter, for your contribution to the remarkable success of this institution.

## **Strategic Planning Process**

This year, Dr. Weitzel, Dr. Boyle, and I have met with 24 planning units (i.e., academic divisions and administrative offices) to respond to the drafts of their strategic plans for Fiscal Year 2009, which will commence on July 1. Both the plan contents and the *esprit de corps* have been great, and we appreciate the tremendous thought and work that all of you are investing in the shaping and reshaping of Lindenwood's future. This nascent plan will be – more than ever before – genuinely a whole-University project.

The purpose of developing a strategic plan each year is twofold: (1) to assemble a printed guide that facilitates our ongoing efforts to improve what we do as an institution of higher learning; (2) to ensure participative management of the University, that is, to get all of you involved in determining Lindenwood's direction.

The annual strategic planning process starts with the Strategic Planning Committee of the Lindenwood Board of Directors. Each winter, that committee reviews the assumptions, premises, and success of the current plan, updates and reaffirms the overall policy and outlook for the University's future, and directs the President to formally initiate the planning process for the next fiscal year. The President then commissions the Vice-President for Academic Affairs to direct all offices to launch the planning steps within their areas of operation, using a standard set of guidelines. The divisions and offices meet to compose their initial plans in the context of Lindenwood's mission, and they send their initial plan drafts to the V-P for Academic Affairs. In turn, she asks for certain revisions and then schedules the work units to meet with her, the V-P for Human Resources, and the President. Those meetings produce some small changes and/or refinements, after which V-P for Academic Affairs crafts the first draft of

the Strategic Planning Process Document. In April the Board's Strategic Planning Committee receives an update on the planning process and may make suggestions to the President and the V-P for Academic Affairs regarding needed changes to the document or the possible addition of other initiatives.

We provide the penultimate draft of the Strategic Planning Process Document (i.e., "The Book") to our Board of Directors in May, with the final draft being ready for submission to the Board by mid-June.

For the first time, the formal planning meetings included the standing faculty committees: Faculty Planning and Development, General Education, Educational Policies, Teacher Education, Institutional Review Board, and Assessment. Their inputs and program initiatives are both seminal to the campus culture and germane to our vital planning activities. I cannot praise those faculty members highly enough for their contributions to the academic governance and continuous improvement of the University.

### **Lindenwood Academics: A Republic of Shared Ideas**

One of the core purposes of a university is to enlighten people through the open exchange of information, ideas, and divergent perspectives. This essential characteristic of the university can be manifested in various ways, one being the interaction of the faculty and students with guest speakers who visit us to share, discuss, and debate their distinctive views on particular issues and topics.

Lindenwood's newly invigorated speaker series provides the latter form of enrichment and growth. The series is managed by Lindenwood's Speakers Bureau (a.k.a. the Lectures and Concerts Committee), individual departments and academic divisions, and (on occasion) individual faculty members. This year we have enjoyed the intellects and unique perspectives of a variety of scholars, ranging from mountain-climber-turned-author to an expert on Eastern

European poetry. Each scholar enlarges our island of knowledge, helping us realize just how much we have yet to learn.

Our republic of ideas is blossoming in other ways. Soon Lindenwood will publish the first edition of its new *Literary Journal*, edited by Alex Balogh and Michael Feters. Each edition will contain original poetry and prose created by Lindenwood professors and students as well as outside scholars. I had the pleasure of scanning a pre-publication draft of the first issue, and I must say that the content is generally artful and imaginative. This wonderful journal is worth reading for both enrichment and pleasure. You might be surprised to discover how much talent lurks just next door.

In a similar vein of intellectual fecundity, Jeff Smith will be the Editor-in-Chief of Lindenwood's *History Journal*, which will debut in the coming academic year. Meanwhile, our student newspaper, the *Legacy*, which recently cloned itself on our Web site, continues to mature into a forum for student-initiated observation, commentary, and discussion. (You have noticed the advent of an *Opinion* section, right?)

What a stimulating environment has grown up around us! Now it is up to us to make sure we never devalue or forsake this fertile culture of learning in deference to less appropriate purposes.

### **Challenge of Building a Sense of Community**

I have mentioned on more than one occasion that, despite the enviable educational and physical status of this University, we have room for improvement in at least one crucial area of performance: Establishing a strong sense of community on campus. Such an ethos is characterized by a sense of belonging and commitment on the part of all sectors: faculty, staff,

administration, and, above all, the students. What additional steps might we take to improve along this dimension?

#### *Maintaining Basic Reverence for One Another*

A cohesive spirit of community begins with an attitude about the humanity of humans. Abraham Maslow deplored the tendency of modern society to “desacralize” the individual, meaning perceiving him/her as having no significance above that of an object or an instrument – in short, to relate to people as though they are not worthy of empathy and respect. Especially in academia, where open expression, civilized thinking, and other-centered values are held most highly, it is important to both perceive the worth of each student or colleague and honestly express that perception through our treatment of him/her.

#### *Ditching Irrational Assumptions*

The most basic phase in achieving and maintaining positive relationships with members of one’s community is to expunge negative assumptions about people. If a student or a colleague disappoints you, does that mean that the person is inherently bad, selfish, scheming, and pernicious? Or is it more likely to reflect a communication problem, a duty/time conflict, or simply a lapse in attention or judgment. In today’s world, who walks on water? As Maslow noted in the majority of his later works, all people have the same basic needs. Excepting aberrations, such as hardened sociopaths and suicide bombers, humans are not intrinsically evil or nefarious. By nature, they respond better to honey than to vinegar. They fundamentally want what you want from life – nothing more and nothing less.

In cases of apparent strife with others, common sense is often the better part of wisdom. Why not assume a person to be able and benevolent until he/she clearly proves to be otherwise?

*Adopting and Expressing Positive Habits: Hello, World*

Shucking irrational assumptions is necessary but not sufficient to promote and strengthen community spirit. You can build cohesiveness on campus by affirming the worth of others and offering them your support and help. I have observed that something as simple as saying hello when encountering students goes a long way toward boosting camaraderie at Lindenwood. They notice and remember the regard we give them, even when afforded in small ways. If space permitted, I could attach a plethora of e-mails from students verifying this phenomenon. Call it the “sacralizing” of humans.

*Becoming More Involved with the Campus*

There are many, many events and opportunities taking place on this dynamic campus – ranging from eminent guest lecturers and student performances to nail-biting athletic contests. Students and their sponsors veritably light up when we show enough interest in their interests to attend some of these occasions. If each of us would commit just four partial evenings or partial Saturdays per semester to recognize and show support for our students, the University’s spirit would soar. (And I am aware that many of you already exceed this level of commitment to the co-curricular life of the University.)

There are also many formal ways in which we can generate and fortify campus cohesiveness. I will address just one in this issue of the *Notebook*.

*The Mouse that Cared: A True Story from the Belleville Campus*

I believe you are familiar with Aesop's fable about the mouse and lion. First an amused lion elected to help a mouse who was in trouble, never supposing that the mouse would or could return the favor. Of course, the mouse remembered the lion's benevolence and reciprocated in an improbable but important fashion on a later occasion, possibly saving the lion's life.

The essential message of this fable represents a timeless principle: What we do with one another today may very well have unexpected consequences at some critical point in the future. Thus, it is important to be consistently considerate of and helpful toward our students under nearly all circumstances.

A present-day example was provided recently at our Belleville Campus: Irresponsible behavior by a former Lindenwood employee had damaged the relationship between our LCIE program and one of our Belleville students, who happened to be a police officer. Upon hearing about the offended student's difficulties and his intention to withdraw from our program and study elsewhere, our Belleville faculty and staff offered to help the student with any and all problems that he had encountered. At first he was skeptical, but ultimately he accepted the help and re-enrolled in the LCIE program. When he had a chance to return the good deed, he did. He brought eight additional officers in to sign up for the new term! Yes, one result of taking responsibility for the decent treatment of the student was a windfall of additional tuition revenues. However, the associated strengthening of Lindenwood's professional fiber and the well-earned enhancement of the University's image were every bit as important as the financial consequence.

Like many Universities of our genre, we are reciprocally interconnected members of an efficiently staffed business environment. Everything that one



employee does or fails to do will affect other members of the community in some way. How can we optimize our mutual facilitation to better serve our students?

### **Frequently Asked Student Questions**

I often receive e-mail from students. I thought that some of the questions they pose, as well as my answers, might be of interest because they convey both current issues and associated policy rationales.

**Student:** How come you do not treat us like adults? Adults can drink what they want when they want and have opposite-sex friends spend the night if they wish.

**President:** Thank you for your question. At Lindenwood we try to educate not just the intellect but the whole person. To realize this developmental objective, we intentionally encourage adoption of social decency, health-promoting behaviors, and a professional lifestyle. Hence, we promulgate and uphold the campus regulations to which you refer. We consider all of our students to be adults, and we hold all adults – including faculty, staff, and visitors – to the same set of regulations *on this campus*. In fact, if we really considered our students to be children, it is likely that we would relax our social standards slightly in consideration of incomplete maturation.

**Student:** What is this new dress code? No other college does this to its students.

**President:** Thank you for your concern. Lindenwood does not actually have a formal dress code that specifies a particular color or style of attire for our students. Rather, we have published standards of decency in dress and appearance. The purpose is to encourage students to develop additional social sophistication and acumen that will enhance their success in the world of college-educated professionals. There are other many other universities with similar standards, and we are proud to count Lindenwood among them. I am

personally proud of the frequent feedback I receive from the outside community regarding the exceptional appearance and etiquette displayed by Lindenwood students.

**Student:** Why can't we have MLK day off? Isn't that disrespectful to Dr. King's memory?

**President:** I'm pleased to note that Lindenwood honors Dr. King in the most respectful and meaningful way. A leader of his stature deserves a formal, humanly enriching event to commemorate what he stood for and accomplished. Accordingly, we schedule a beautiful, poignant, edifying ceremony, to which we invite the whole Lindenwood Community, on every MLK day – rather than simply dismissing students from their classes. Participants in that annual event usually more than fill the huge Leadership Room in the Spellmann Center. If given a “day off” from their studies, I wonder how many of our students would spend a portion of it in activities specifically designed to honor Dr. King. We think he was too important to not be officially eulogized and celebrated. If you missed this year's MLK ceremony here, I heartily encourage you to participate next year. You will find the experience as moving as it is enlightening. Thank you very much for your thoughtful note.

**Student:** How come Lindenwood isn't closing today because of snowy weather? It's nice that you live on campus, but what about those of us who have to drive to campus?

**President:** I very much appreciate your frank questions, which are fair ones. Our first commitment is to our students' education, and, thus, we do not call off classes without considerable justification. Since 85% of our daytime students live on campus, a snow must cause fairly treacherous conditions to warrant a cancellation of day classes. We will authorize a campus-wide closure only if we can determine that our commuter students would be at moderate to high risk by

attempting to come to campus. The notice of such a closure is placed on our Web site and communicated to local TV and radio stations as soon as we decide to issue a weather-induced cancellation of classes. Each winter, my staff and I re-evaluate our class cancellation policies and procedures for reasonableness and effectiveness in the context of our students' safety and educational progress.

I do not live on campus, and, in fact, drive 10 miles to campus each day and park in the student lots, amidst the other commuters. Today's snowstorm caused me to some delay: I needed 30 minutes to get to Lindenwood, whereas the trip normally takes 25 minutes. On the way in, I noticed that most businesses were open and serving customers. On the basis of those observations and information from the National Weather Service, we did not think it in the best interests of our students to shutter the University for a whole day. Again, thank you for your queries.

**Student:** Can we have some changes in the food on campus? How about a vegetarian food bar and an international-cuisine section?

**President:** Those are excellent suggestions, and I will forward your ideas to our campus food-service provider for serious evaluation. I see no reason that we cannot implement the proposed enhancements. [NOTE: Pfoodman has made the suggested improvements. JDE]

**Student:** What? No online registration? When will Lindenwood come out of the Dark Ages?

**President:** I apologize for our being a couple of years behind the curve on this one, but we are making great strides toward implementation of an all-University integrated database that includes online-enrollment capabilities and other amenities that will please you and your classmates. Our Board of Directors approved a million-dollar+ commitment to this system, which will elevate

Lindenwood to one of the top spots in state-of-the-art database technology. We have spent more than a year converting existing student data to the new format and should be ready to activate online registration access by this fall. We are in the process of training our faculty and staff on the new software as I write. Thank you very much for your questions.

### **Uplifting and Upcoming**

At this active and dynamic University, there are always too many exciting developments to keep track of, let alone note in a brief newsletter. However, I feel compelled to convey a sample of the great moments we are living at today's LU:

- Kudos is due Dr. Sue Tretter for being designated a Fulbright Scholar, with a commitment to study and teach in Germany next year. Dr. Tretter is but one brilliant example of the scholarly prowess represented by our troop of talented and academically notable professors. The apt term "Scholar-Teachers" is often used to describe many of Lindenwood's faculty members: They are superb university-level teachers who actively help to shape their respective disciplines through relevant scholarly work and productions that, in turn, improve the content delivered to our students.
- Lindenwood just completed yet another positive MoSTEP review. This acronym stands for Missouri Standards for Teacher Education Programs, and the reviews and evaluations of teacher/administrator-education programs at Missouri's universities are conducted by DESE, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Universities that do not receive DESE approval in connection with a MoSTEP review cannot legitimately offer teacher-education certification curriculums. Although

Lindenwood will not receive an official approval until late summer, the MoSTEP team's visit appeared to go very well. Lindenwood has had DESE approval for its programs since the Missouri State government first started requiring periodic MoSTEP evaluations. We have many individuals to thank, in particular, for leading the masterful planning and hosting the most recent DESE visit: Cindy Bice, Cindy Vitale, John Dougherty, and Jan Munro. The entire Lindenwood faculty can take a great deal of satisfaction from the consistently good feedback we receive regarding teacher education at Lindenwood. Certification depends on cooperation and excellent performance by most of our academic divisions.

- I am pleased to announce two new members of the Lindenwood Board of Directors: Mr. Maurice Newberry, President and Chief Operating Officer of the Newberry Group, a rapidly growing Information Technology firm; the Reverend Ronnie Osborn, Pastor of the St. Charles Presbyterian Church. These gentlemen bring much experience and innovative thinking to Lindenwood's active, dedicated Board.
- Professional experience combines effectively with high drive in our Office for Institutional Advancement, and the results of this ideal mixture are becoming ever more apparent. As a part of our Phase II Campaign to support the Lindenwood Center for the Fine and Performing Arts, we recently received gift of \$100,000 from AT&T and a pledge from Charter Communications for \$250,000. Support for this phase of the drive has been coming in at a healthy clip, and we hope the trend continues!
- Congratulations go to Lindenwood's NPA (Non-profit Administrative) program for spearheading a campaign to raise money in support of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The

NPA faculty and students coordinated the efforts of some of our sports teams and student organizations to raise more than \$32,000 for this great cause.

- Lindenwood's Inter-Cultural Club, supervised by Ray Scupin, will hold its Spring International Festival this Friday, from 4:00 PM to 11:15 PM, in the Spellman Center. This always is a delightful experience for all participants. It represents diversity and common human spirit at their best. We can be very proud of the hundreds of international students we have on this campus; they bring so much extra value to our culture and curriculum.
- The annual April Gala for Lindenwood students, Spring Fling, will take place between April 18 and April 25, and it will be conducted at many different locations across campus. This year, our Student Development Office has scheduled 14 special events, including the venerated LU Palooza as well as the new "Foam Party" Dance on the 25th. These campus-community social events are pivotal to the engagement and retention of our students, and they represent personal development opportunities that cannot be created in most classroom settings. In general, Student Development should be praised for the many advancements and enhancements made this year in the student-activities arena.

## **Some Things Never Change at LU: Real Moments in History**

Someone recently sent me a monograph written by one of Lindenwood's many eloquent presidents, Dr. Harry Morehouse Gage. The piece was the response he gave at his presidential inauguration ceremony (October, 1941). A couple of his statements struck me as so contemporary despite their calendar age:

- *"Our chief responsibility is for students and not for experimental procedures which cost large sums of money."*
- *"We are inheritors of a conservative tradition and are in possession of substantial values."*
- *"Student activities have a place in college life. . . . [the] aim is growth and development of personality, social understanding and some skill in communicative art."*

Enjoy the immortal intelligence of President Gage!

## **More True History: The Lindenwood Faculty Administrator**

What is a *faculty administrator*? Isn't combining those two roles potentially as fatuous as attempting to mix oil with water? You might be interested to know that the original LCIE (originally LC4) professors were labeled "faculty administrators" because they were expected to merge management duties with teaching duties in a particular discipline, such as Education, Counseling, or Humanities. Yes, each of those super-pedagogues was expected to teach a cluster three times per year (since LC4 introduced the trimester format at Lindenwood). In addition, however, each was also to advise up to 35 students; schedule curriculum and courses; recruit, train, and evaluate adjunct faculty members; place all book orders for adjuncts in their respective areas; handle all public relations, advertising, and problems in their programs. In effect, each FA was a mini-dean.

The faculty administrator was a different animal in academia of the 1970s but turned out to be a model for what we now call “program manager,” or, in LCIE today, “program director.” Both of those terms refer to professors with significant administrative responsibilities. The once *nouveau* model fits perfectly and works quite effectively at the Lindenwood of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Clearly, this genre of faculty member was ahead of its time and essential to the long-term success of the acclaimed LCIE system.

