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Gender and dormitories at Lindenwood College 1968-1970

A.J. Medlock

In the fall of 1969, as a result of the creation of a separate men's college, Lindenwood College became faced with the problem of intervisitation, the issue of allowing men and women to visit each other in their dorm rooms. The problems of intervisitation at Lindenwood would illustrate the complexities many college administrations experienced with the doctrine of *In loco parentis*, a Latin term school administrations used to regulate the morals of students. America's changing social mores forced universities to confront students who demanded control over matters concerning their personal lives, including sexual relations between men and women.¹

Although Lindenwood claimed that it would look into the problem of intervisitation and consider the opinions of students in the matter, there could be no question as to what decision the administration would reach. Unlike other schools in the country, such as Barnard College in New York and Webster College in nearby Webster Groves, who attempted to allow students to have a greater control of their lives, Lindenwood would adopt a position which continued to view students as individuals incapable of making the "right decisions."²

When Lindenwood officially created Lindenwood College II for men in the fall of 1969, the administration concerned itself with the problems of women and men in the academic and social fields of the college. The school newspaper, the *Ibis* wrote: "Experienced administrators have realized that there is a difference in ways that men and women live and learn..."³ Despite the fears expressed by the administration and some students, the desire to break the bounds of physical separation were in full

¹ A Position Paper on Dormitory Intervisitation at Lindenwood Colleges, Lindenwood University, Missouri P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Photos_Books_Documents (Accessed March 28, 2010.) 3.

² Ibid 1

³ "Distinct Entities". *The Ibis*, October 13, 1969. Lindenwood University, St. Charles Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970 (Accessed September 29, 2009). 4

force. On November 3, 1969, when the student council met to discuss current student issues, the council pushed most of the topics aside in order to deal with the issue of intervisitation.⁴

At the meeting, Patty Uren, Lindenwood I's student council president, proposed a list of hours for men to visit women's dormitories to the President's Council, an administrative group led by College President John Anthony Brown. Uren believed intervisitation to be critical to student life because, "Our dorm life is a responsibility which we must take upon ourselves and we should have a right to make such a decision."⁵ The women's student council conducted a vote among students, and the results appeared to show that an overwhelming majority of the female students supported intervisitation.⁶ Lindenwood College II's student council agreed with women students' sentiments and proposed that male dormitories be opened for visitation, as well.⁷ According to Marsha Parker, a fellow student, Uren wanted intervisitation because the men on the campus violated the rules regarding female visitors and did not receive the same punishment female students would receive.⁸

Administrators based the rules governing student lives, in this case female student life, in the doctrine of *In loco parentis*, Latin for "in place of the parent."⁹ To some administrators, *in loco parentis* helped oversee the moral development of its students and help them towards maturity.¹⁰ Many colleges and universities developed the doctrine of *in loco parentis* in the beginning of the twentieth century in order to attract female students, colleges established rules regarding female student's social lives in order to ensure their families of their safety. By the mid-twentieth century, colleges strictly enforced *in loco parentis* to monitor female students sexual activities. Many feared that unsupervised

⁴ "Subcommittee to Study Open Dorms" *The Ibis*. November 10, 1969. Lindenwood University, St. Charles P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970 (Accessed September 29,2009). 1.

⁵ Ibid 1.

⁶ "China Doll Complex" *The Ibis* December 15, 1969. Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970 (Accessed September 29,2009) 3.

⁷ "Subcommittee to Study Open Dorms" *The Ibis*. November 10, 1969. 1.

⁸ Marsha Hollander, interview by author, St. Charles Missouri, October 6, 2009.

⁹ Beth Bailey. *Sex in the Heartland*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 199): 87.

¹⁰ Bailey. *Sex in the Heartland*. 87.

women would pose a danger to themselves and damage the reputations of their families. Colleges established rules such as curfews and visiting hours to limit the movement of women students to ensure their safety.¹¹

The women at Lindenwood also experienced a complicated set of rules governing their lives; as early as 1920 Lindenwood instituted guidelines for proper student conduct.¹² The Lindenwood I Student handbook established rules governing quiet hours, sign out procedures, and a judicial structure which punished those who broke dorm rules.¹³ Although the student handbook claimed the student council played a prominent role in establishing rules for student conduct, the administration reserved the right to decide matters such as academics, health and safety, housing, college property, and student conduct; this seemed to negate any meaningful involvement from the student council.¹⁴

However, the College did not impose standards to govern male student life. Rather than establish guidelines for student conduct, the only authority figure that governed male student life was a residence council which consisted of the student's community manager, the student body and faculty members when they chose to participate.¹⁵ The male student handbook stated: "Prudent conduct requires more common sense than a list of specific do's and don'ts. Since a great deal of responsibility for personal conduct has been assumed of each student of Lindenwood II, the general guidelines for student life in Ayres Hall are to be shaped by the residents as a corporate body."¹⁶

Compared to other colleges, Lindenwood lagged behind the rest of the nation in terms of greater freedom for students to retain personal control of their lives. Webster College, located in Webster Groves Missouri, also experienced a change from a single- sex college to a coeducational

¹¹ Renee N Lansley. *College Women or College Girls? Gender Sexuality, and In Loco Parentis on Campus.*(Doctorate thesis. Ohio State University, 2004) 28-29, 108-110.

¹² Student Handbook 1920-1921. B.3600 f.1, Mary E. Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University, Missouri.34-37.

¹³ Student Handbook. 1969-1970. Lindenwood College For Women. B.3,601 f.1. Mary E. Ambler Archives. Lindenwood University, Missouri. 17, 23, 25.

¹⁴ Student Handbook 1966-1967. B.3,601 F.1. Mary E. Ambler Archives. Lindenwood University, Missouri. 11.

¹⁵ Student Handbook. 1969-1970. Lindenwood College II. B.3601 F. 1 Mary E. Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University, Missouri. 5.

¹⁶ Ibid 6.

facility, but gradually incorporation of men into the campus from 1961-1969.¹⁷ Although one would think that the school would express concerns over a growing male presence on campus, the available evidence does not seem to support this hypothesis. In the 1966 Webster student handbook, it acknowledged that society was in a state of flux and wanted to make sure it adapted to the times. The handbook gave students a few basic rules: No liquor on campus and that whenever they left campus they needed to sign out, and listed the dorm's hours. The handbook covered the rules in one paragraph and did not list the possible punishments a student could incur if they received male guests in their rooms.¹⁸

Lindenwood, however, did not accept such a relaxed view. College president John Anthony Brown decided to form a sub-committee of the President's Council to Investigate Dormitory Intervisitation.¹⁹ The sub-committee consisted of students and faculty including Dean Sandra Thomas, Dean of Students, Dean Howard A. Barnett, Vice-President of the college and Dean Gary Quehl, vice president and dean of the college.²⁰ The administration claimed it needed time to study the policy and see if there were alternative forms of privacy available for members of the opposite sex.²¹

However, there was more on the administration's mind than careful study of a new policy. The possibility of uncontrolled sexual intercourse between men and women seemed to be a serious concern among the administrators. Dean Gary Quehl asked rhetorically: "Will the Lindenwood Colleges as an institution condone sexual intercourse in the dormitory rooms?"²² Even students feared the possibility

¹⁷ "Report on Coeducation status of the College." Webster University Archives, Webster Groves Missouri. 1-3.

¹⁸ "Webster Student Handbook 1966." B.1 F.10 Webster University Archives, Webster Groves, Missouri.

¹⁹ "China Doll Complex." *The Ibis*. December 15, 1969. 3.

²⁰ Lindenwood Yearbook 1969-1970. Lindenwood University, St. Charles Mo.. P:\Huffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Yearbooks. (Accessed November 6, 2009). 23. Subcommittee to Study Open Dorms." *The Ibis*. November 10, 1969. 6.

²¹ "Open Dorms Not a Unilateral Decision by Students." *The Ibis*. November 10, 1969. Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970. (Accessed March 30, 2009). 6.

²² Ibid 6.

of being in close quarters with men; one student named Patsy Holloway believed it would invade female student's privacy and create a problem of sharing bathrooms.²³

While Lindenwood concerned itself over the problems of both sexes sharing restrooms, other colleges and universities in the nation liberalized their dorm policies and seemed to take a relaxed view of the policy of *in loco parentis*, or so it appeared. Barnard College, a college for women in New York City, held a liberal policy concerning dorm rooms; students could entertain the opposite sex in their rooms but could not live on their own outside the campus with the opposite sex.²⁴ In 1968, a national scandal erupted over student housing, which forced the school administration to decide how far it was willing to do away with *in loco parentis*. The issue erupted when the New York Times published a story about couples living together off campus. One of the couples assumed fake names and identified themselves as Peter and Susan²⁵; Barnard's Dean of Students identified Susan as Linda LeClair, in the story LeClair identified herself as an attendee of Barnard College.²⁶ The case itself would elicit emotional responses from many; one man wrote Barnard: "If you let Linda stay in college, I can finally prove to my wife with a front page news story about that bunch of glorified whores going to eastern colleges."²⁷

When Barnard's student-faculty board summoned LeClair, she stated: "Although I am old enough by law to marry without my parents consent, support myself, which I am doing, live anywhere I want, without parental control, I am not old enough, according to Barnard, to live outside the dorm except as a domestic."²⁸ The student-faculty board gave LeClair a light punishment, banishment from the cafeteria, and decided to revise its rules in the fall of 1968 to allow students to live off campus if they received permission from their parents. Barnard officials denied that the LeClair case influenced

²³ Ibid 1

²⁴ Rosalind Rosenberg. *Changing the Subject: How the Women of Columbia Changed the Way We Think about Sex and Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): 234, 235

²⁵ Judy Klemesrud. 'An Arrangement: Living Together for Convenience, Security, Sex.' *The New York Times*, March 4, 1968. 40

²⁶ Rosenberg *Changing the Subject*. 234-235

²⁷ Bailey. *Sex in the Heartland*. 202

²⁸ Rosenberg. *Changing the Subject*. 237

their decision, citing that the administration formed a committee earlier in the year to study the colleges housing policy.²⁹

Although Lindenwood did not experience a national outcry over the issue, on December 11, 1969, the Lindenwood College's administration issued a position paper on the intervisitation controversy. The administration claimed that while students deserved to have some input on some matters concerning their lives, it believed only the school administration could be entrusted to make a right decision in regards to matters that concerned the lives of students, and that could pose long-term effects on the college. The administration defined a right decision as: "A decision which stands the test of objective review and which proves or disproves itself by the consequences for which those making the decision are held accountable. The issue of intervisitation on this campus clearly is a matter requiring a right decision."³⁰

After stating that students did not have the competency to make a "right"³¹ decision, the administration asserted that one of its deciding factors in halting intervisitation was the final vote held by women students, which despite winning a majority, failed to gain a two-thirds majority,³² It believed the vote reflected student fears over privacy. On the other hand, the administration believed the leadership of Lindenwood College II acted favorably and saw the possibility in the future for male students to be able to have intervisitation in their dormitories.³³ Later, in the spring semester, however, the male students would soon learn that *In loco parentis* could apply to them as much as it did to the women.

²⁹ Deirdre Carmody. "Barnard Eases its Rules for Off-Campus Housing. *The New York Times*. August 23, 1968. <http://proquest.umi.com.gatekeeper.lindenwood.edu/pgdweb?index> (Accessed October 1, 2009) 41.

³⁰Ibid.. 1

³¹ Ibid 1.

³² Ibid.. 1.

"Intervisitation becomes an Absurd Situation." *The Ibis*. December 15, 1969. Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 IBIS\1969-1970. (Accessed October 1, 2009). 1

³³ A Position Paper on Dormitory Intervisitation at Lindenwood Colleges 2

Interestingly, the administration also looked to the changing society in the United States as one of the major factors for its decision against intervisitation. It acknowledged that the United States was experiencing alarming social changes: More Americans became frank in their discussions of sexual relations between men and women and younger American's began to date and experience intimacy at an earlier age along with a reduced sense of social stigma with premarital sex and birth control. The report also noted that many of the nation's youth lost their confidence in institutions which monitored relationships between men and women.³⁴

The administration claimed that Lindenwood's mission in accordance with the changing times was to express, "A realistic and honest response to the educational needs of this generation, therefore, a program of examination working towards solutions to current social and intellectual issues, and consequently, an investigation of the changes of our times rather than drifting with the times."³⁵ The report feared that the new social issues possessed the potential to cause confusion among male and female students. If, social institutions such as Lindenwood removed the restraints between men and women, it would harm those relationships.³⁶

One of the biggest consequences the administration feared would be the cause of this moral drift would be usage of birth control pills on campus. In relation to female students who used the pill, the administration believed it "enslaves her to a relationship which should be responsive first to affection rather than physical desire." For men, the pill "enslaves him to physical needs which no longer are checked by his sensitivity to the life and happiness of a young woman." Much worse, the social freedoms of the pill and increased sexual activity would create too much choice for students who they believed were incapable of dealing with these new freedoms.³⁷

³⁴ Ibid 2

³⁵ Ibid 2

³⁶ Ibid 2

³⁷ Ibid 3-4

Because of the fears among the administration over the pill and other social freedoms, the policy of *in loco parentis* would remain to govern student lives in the matter of dormitories. It hoped that a future resolution would be arrived at this issue, but forbid further discussion on the topic for the rest of the school year and the next school year. The Lindenwood College's administration wanted to wait until Lindenwood could increase its student enrollment, and for the male students to have a competent record of governance.³⁸ The report did not note the inconsistency of closing off the debate for intervisitation, yet at the same time holding open the chance for males to discuss the issue for their dormitories.

Later, in March of 1970, the controversy of intervisitation would appear again. As a result of the intervisitation sub-committee, the administration agreed to allow two rooms in Ayres Hall to be opened for female guests of the male students.³⁹ However, the male students did not feel that simply having two rooms opened for male and female students was enough. Barton Gill, a student at Lindenwood II, prepared a petition for the administration to open the lounge in Ayres Hall to female students. The petition also called for access for females in the basement where students resided.⁴⁰ Apparently, the male students took to heart President Brown's promise that the committee would search for alternative spaces where male and females could have privacy.⁴¹ Dean Gary H. Quehl rejected the request and stated, "Two life styles cannot be maintained on this campus in a single facility unless the nature of that facility allows each style to exist with a high degree of physical separation."⁴²

³⁸ Ibid 4.

³⁹ "Terrace Opened in Ayres Hall for Residents and Female Guests on a Twenty-Four Hours a Day Basis." *The Ibis*. March 2, 1970. Lindenwood University. St. Charles, Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970 (Accessed September 30, 2009) 1.

⁴⁰ "Danger of Split Seen." *The Ibis*. March 16, 1970. Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970 (Accessed September 30, 2009) 1.

⁴¹ "Subcommittee to Study Open Dorms." *The Ibis*. November 10, 1969. 6.

⁴² "Annex Lounge Still Closed to Females." *The Ibis*. April 20, 1970. Lindenwood University, St. Charles Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970 (Accessed September 30, 2009). 1.

In the spring, the Lindenwood College I Student council attempted to pass another proposal for intervisitation, only this time they called it an open-house policy; the student council claimed an open-house policy would allow men to visit female dormitories on alternating Saturdays; the president's council defeated the motion.⁴³ Later in May of 1970, in Brown's report to the Board of Lindenwood College for Women, he reiterated his decision to keep the debate on intervisitation closed. Brown believed intervisitation would anger parents who chose Lindenwood for their children because it did not adhere to the liberal morals of other campuses.⁴⁴

Later, in June of 1971, however, the administration appeared to relent on the issue and allowed for a limited visitation policy in the men's dormitories. By the 1980s, Lindenwood seemed to have moved from its policy of *in loco parentis* and went as far as to allow coed dorms on campus.⁴⁵ This would change with the arrival of college president Dennis Spellman in 1989; Spellman reinstated a strict visitation policy in order to return the university to "traditional values."⁴⁶ Today the Lindenwood rules regarding dorm intervisitation have struck a precarious balance; residence housing allows members of the opposite sex to visit each other in their rooms, but only at specified hours.⁴⁷ It would appear that

⁴³ "President's Council Defeats Proposal 'Open House.'" April 20, 1970. Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Student Newspapers (1924 to present)\1969-1980 Ibis\1969-1970. (Accessed September 30, 2009) 2.

⁴⁴ "President's Report to the Board of Lindenwood College for Women. Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\President's Reports and annual reports (1871 to present)\1970 President's Report. (Accessed October 1, 2009) 7.

⁴⁵ Steve Schepker. "Spellman Meets Student Body." Lindenworld. April 14, 2010. Lindenwood University, St. Charles Mo. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital_Format\Student Newspapers (1945 to present)\1985-1997 Linden World\1988-1989\1989 (Accessed April 13, 2010): 1

⁴⁶ "Spellman Reflects on Decade of Revival, Expansion at LU. St. Charles Journal April 7, 1999. B.1004. F.5. Mary E. Ambler Archives. Lindenwood University, Missouri. 1
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Lindenwood College II Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Mo.. P:\PHuffman\Archive-Public Folder\Lindenwood Publications_Digital Format\Board of Directors Minutes\1961-1971 (Accessed October 1, 2009) 7-8.

⁴⁷ 2009-2010 Annual Report. Student Right to Know and Campus Security."
<http://www.lindenwood.edu/studentdevelopment/securityreports.cfm>

Lindenwood has reverted to its original position in 1969 and still distrusts students to make the “right decisions.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ “A Position Paper on Dormitory Intervisitation at the Lindenwood Colleges. 1.

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