

PRESIDENT'S NOTEBOOK NO. 23 Spring 2015

FINAL EDITION

This edition of the *President's Notebook* will be my last. It is time to turn the reins over to someone else – a new leader who has the kind of energy and fresh vision that new presidents bring. The University deserves nothing less than the best. Your next captain, Dr. Michael Shonrock, is that individual. He is a great choice, and I could not be more pleased with our board's hiring decision.

In this final *Notebook* I would like to share with the University community some of the lessons I have learned during my years of service and some of the most important trends I see, as well as their implications for Lindenwood.

Good Lessons to Remember

We rang in the future of higher education. In the 1970s, because we were a very good college facing dire financial straits earlier than many of the other private liberal arts schools, we had to be among the first to

innovate. That we did. By customizing an *avant-garde* model of accelerated higher education, we created LC4/LCIE, now known as the School of Accelerated Degree Programs. That innovation was, along with programs of perhaps two other colleges in the U.S., on the cutting edge of an imminent move in higher education toward an emerging marketplace populated by bright working adults. Our accelerated degree programs saved Lindenwood and kept us above water until 1989-90, when more groundbreaking was called for.

In fiscal 1990, Dennis Spellmann's administration – with support and impetus from the Lindenwood board of directors – instituted creative ideas about recruiting and financial aid that were ahead of their time. Within that system, institution-supplied financial aid should not be in rigidly fixed packages but, rather, should be tailored to each academically qualified student to enable him or her to study at Lindenwood regardless of the student's financial or family situation. The idea was that it was better for the student and better for Lindenwood if we could make it possible for him or her to attend at a reduced rate rather than waste beds, seats, and human talent. It worked. Our student numbers climbed briskly, and capable, promising young men and women soon filled our sidewalks and classrooms. More than a decade later, such flexible funding started catching on around the country. Now it is the norm in the private postsecondary education realm.

If you want to build the traditional-age student body to a critical mass quickly by attracting large numbers of qualified students, invest in expansion of your intercollegiate sports programs. The fact is that participation in sports is a powerful incentive for large numbers of high school athletes who are graduating and looking to extend their athletic days on a college team. Because collegiate athletics associations have instituted academic standards for initial and continuing eligibility, today's student-athletes must be academically able and motivated in order to play their sports. Therefore, by expanding its athletics program, a university can quickly boost its daytime enrollments with recruits who are motivated to persist in college and succeed. Again, Dennis Spellmann was keenly aware of this incentive system and applied it extensively at the St. Charles campus at least a dozen years before many of the other regional private institutions caught on. Now it is the standard practice in the Midwest and several other regions. Jerry Bladdick and I used the same approach in launching our Belleville day college, which is developing beautifully. This strategic system includes a deliberate shift in recruiting patterns over time that eventuates in balanced co-curricular interests within the daytime student population.

At least a decade before many Missouri universities became aware of the rich business opportunities available through relationships with foreign

countries, Lindenwood started to cast recruiting nets in Central and South America, Europe, Asia, and many other regions. Not only has this early entry made us one of the largest higher-education hosts for foreign students in Missouri but it has also enriched the Lindenwood campuses with tremendous cultural and intellectual diversity. Presently other Missouri schools are scrambling to get into that market at the behest of the State's Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

Lindenwood was also among the first independent universities in Missouri to open numerous evening centers in and around St. Louis, a practice eventually adopted by most of our sister institutions.

At the same time all of these bold initiatives were unfolding, we quietly colonized our teacher and administrator education programs at many different locations in Missouri and southwestern Illinois – an outreach enterprise that is catching on but is yet to be matched by other regional private universities.

More recently, we might have sparked yet another future trend in higher education – that of private-sector/public-sector partnerships – when we entered into a major nursing-education agreement with St. Charles Community College. Last month I noticed that one of our St. Louis area

competitors has just announced a similar partnership with a community college in Illinois.

Just as Mary Sibley's Lindenwood helped shape the American frontier, today's Lindenwood has both presaged and influenced the evolving future of higher education in this region and beyond. When I arrived in St. Charles in 1974, I had no idea that I was becoming a part of such a noble juggernaut.

Adaptability is the most valuable asset of a university. Elsewhere I have addressed the importance of Lindenwood's ability to adapt. As noted above, necessity forced us to develop that aptitude very early in the 1970s and hone it to a finely executing habit by the 1990s. Now, even more than before, private higher education is an environment for survival of the fittest.

Lindenwood cannot rest on its laurels. Although we have trumped most of the competition in several interesting ways for some time (as noted earlier), we will have to be constantly looking for new means to deliver our services and attract, retain, and graduate students. It is clear that the University cannot rely on just doing the same things that worked over the past 40 years or even those successful strategies and tactics effected most recently. We must be ready to expand, diversify, and add to what

we know and do and avoid clinging solely to the tried and true. Some of the other schools have caught up with the methodologies that put us ahead yesterday. Now we must move ahead with new approaches. More on this notion will be presented below.

The business of higher education is different from most for-profit businesses – especially the smaller enterprises. It was a struggle for higher education to realize and accept the fact that postsecondary education is a business. Lindenwood was among the earliest institutions to publicly voice that truth, and, at first, we took considerable flak for taking that position. Okay. Now the concept is commonplace, and we have been vindicated. Moreover, we benefited enormously from having that insight earlier than many of our counterparts.

As we advance, it will be key for the University to continue to blend sound business practices with the best educational and developmental practices. Nonetheless, it will be crucial to be cognizant of the differences between the business of higher education and other areas of commerce, such as manufacturing, real estate, banking, and finance, for example.

To start, our mission is not to maximize profit. It is to educate students, and, to that end, we must place the “customer’s” development and

welfare above all other business objectives. That core premise is why universities have *stakeholders* rather than stockholders. Nonetheless, like other successful businesses, *we should always ensure that we generate enough revenue to cover all of the University's expenditures and leave some overage funds for future contingencies* – each year, in perpetuity. That is what we do presently and what we must continue to do, for the sake of our mission and the students it serves.

“The University’s operating reserves and overall financial position are exponentially stronger than the peer group.”

From a financial ratio analysis of Lindenwood University by the independent auditing firm, Rubin Brown, October, 2014

Second, higher-education enterprises are COMPLEX. They entail the effects and management of hundreds or thousands of interacting variables – not just a few dozen. In such a business context there is no small set of codified practices that, if followed regularly and executed properly, suffice to ensure both viability and compliance. It is rarely a straightforward matter to compartmentalize different domains of operations at a university, determine which ones are most profitable, and cull the remaining ones. Rather, a non-profit college or university tends to function according to the fundamental Gestalt principle, “The whole

is greater than [and different from] the sum of its parts.” Academic, co-curricular, and business operations are interlocked in ways that defy simple addition and subtraction. The linear logic that sustains a small, for-profit enterprise does not suffice in higher-education management.

Here is an example: Should the cost of operating and maintaining the Harlan C. Hunter Stadium be charged against our football program? If so, does that program carry its own weight? Probably not – but shouldn't lacrosse and soccer share those costs? Hmmm! How much should be charged against each team's account? But wait! Student Development uses the field for various events, and Lindenwood leases or lends the space to local high schools and donates the space to community organizations, including the St. Louis Rams. How much income do we realize from the auxiliary uses, and how much new-student tuition do we realize from the goodwill our stadium spawns with community organizations? Gosh, the arithmetic is getting complicated, isn't it? Maybe we need to start applying multivariate statistics! Before we do that and decide if it is worth keeping a football program, we also need to accurately estimate what percent of our general daytime student population would attend a university that does not have a varsity football team.

Here is another example: How would reduction of Lindenwood grant money for summer school change the graduation rate, how does the latter impact student recruiting, and what consequences do those linkages have for the funding of capital projects? I think you get the point.

Of course, *if enough reliable information is gathered*, it is possible to identify certain programs and services that are too costly or too ineffective to continue. We have conducted such analyses and made the resulting reductions here on occasion. The large number of interdependencies in a higher education organization simply makes that part of running the business more challenging than one would encounter in some more standardized sectors of the economy.

It is occasionally suggested that some of the personnel cost at the St. Charles campus should be charged against the Belleville campus' budget. After all, our business office, financial aid office, and executive personnel spend some time processing Belleville-campus business tasks. In conventional business practice, we would make an assumption about the proportion of each office's time that is dedicated to our eastside operations, subtract the corresponding dollars from the personnel-expenditures line of the St. Charles campus and add that same amount to the personnel line of the Belleville budget. However, the fact is that the

Belleville campus operations have not caused the St. Charles campus to add a single employee to *its* workforce. Total additional salary cost to LU-SC to cover LU-BV is \$0. The total amount of St. Charles campus personnel expenditures that would be cut if we eliminated our Belleville campus also equals \$0. The modicum of time that the old-campus crew spends assisting the new campus is simply a part of a week's work for exempt professional employees in a university environment. Having existing LU-SC employees periodically attend to certain matters concerning another branch of the business (LU-BV) is just regular personnel management that can be expected at most non-profit higher education organizations. Granted, this thinking might not conform to conventional business wisdom in the for-profit sector. The fact is that conducting a cost-accounting analysis of LU-SC personnel expenses in the service of LU-BV would be an academic exercise, purely and simply.

As I hope you can now see, University budgeting, especially at larger independents such as Lindenwood, depends as much on informed estimation as it does on accounting *per se*. Experienced discretion is required at both the administrative and the board levels! These realities do not excuse us from exercising the most responsible accounting logic and procedures. They simply mean that we have to do much more than keep excellent books and sustain prudent fiscal behavior.

A university environment is similarly complicated in regard to the communications and conduct of its members, who number in the thousands. What is more, its customers either live at the business site (campus) or regularly spend considerable time on the business's premises or in its cyberspace. The typical business in the United States has well under 100 employees and, depending on the particular enterprise, might issue anywhere from a handful to a few dozen unique communications per day, as well as monitor a few dozen jobs being performed. In the latter situation, things and people are relatively easy to track and control. That is not the case for most institutions of higher learning, and it would not be the case even if we could ignore the seminal ideals of academic freedom and diversity. Compounding that distinguishing difference is the fact that the university is one of the few kinds of business that are held responsible for the communications and misbehavior of their clients.

Management of a university is the art of making the best of change and teachable moments, all within the tenets of the institution's mission and the parameters of financial reality. It incorporates most of the usual principles of business administration, but much, much more as well. Having a doctorate in psychology helps the manager.

Loyalty and teamwork are crucial. Administrations manage by consent of those managed. No administration can succeed without the widespread allegiance and cooperation of both the leaders and the troops within its institution. Since they are focal points of their institutions (i.e., “figures” in the Gestalt “figure-ground” experience), administrations often receive most of the credit for their universities’ achievements and much of the blame for any perceived failures. However, almost everything that is good or great about a university is due to the work of many members of the campus community. Although university leaders generally have to be analytically smart and interpersonally dynamic to succeed, the best ones also command the confidence and collective effort of their staff and faculty. The latter will make or break their respective institutions, and no amount of legitimate or instrumental power can compensate for the absence of group cohesiveness and purpose. I have been very fortunate to have had the most supportive and committed university community imaginable. I believe Jerry Bladdick would say the same of his employees and students.

Everyone is important. Particularly at privately managed and funded universities, there is no community member who is incidental or nonessential. Our students and staff pleasantly greet and hold doors for campus visitors, our housekeepers take personal pride in their clean and

orderly buildings, and our administrative professionals are the welcoming voices for persons calling into Lindenwood. Our security officers and maintenance and grounds professionals are quick to respond to a situation of any size, always with a readiness to listen, help, and resolve. The Lindenwood business office and our financial aid office treat each student as a unique case, because each is. The dedicated student-centeredness of our faculty members is both legendary and real. I have noticed that every person here is essential to make Lindenwood work well every day, and if only one fails to perform – for whatever reason – the effect is felt by many of us and in many ways. Lindenwood cannot do without any one of you! We really are a family.

To that point, I should mention that the substantial seven-figure gift Lindenwood recently received from The Robert W. Plaster Foundation to help construct our new library was the end result of a connection initiated by one of our students and one of our alumni.

Our people and their love of Lindenwood are the keys to the University's success. Even when Lindenwood was financially stressed in the 1970s and 1980s, its signature traits of affection for the school and prioritizing students stood out and carried the institution through all manner of challenging times. Even then, every member of the community counted and was needed to deliver the best educational and developmental

experiences to the students. I would marvel at how much dedicated talent we had here and how that quality, and only that quality, was what kept students coming back each fall, persisting toward a degree, and completing their college education right here.

In the present space of time, Lindenwood has some of the best facilities in the region and a robust financial foundation as well. Many universities envy those assets. Still, our employees, boards, and alumni are what make Lindenwood unique, sustainable, and filled with promise. From a perspective spanning 40 years, they are our strongest endowment. In the long run, it is the Lindenwood campus culture – at both of our campuses and all of our sites – that is most important.

Our alumni will always be significant members of the Lindenwood community. By their very nature, independent universities like Lindenwood have quite a durable and significant relationship with their graduates – indeed, truly a lifelong interest in and bond with most of them. In the fall, 2013 edition of this *Notebook*, I detailed the reciprocal ways in which a university and her graduates form their special relationship, the reasons for that relationship, and the mutual benefits derived from the ongoing partnership. I concluded that our alumni are our ambassadors and our stewards and, in a very real sense, the guarantors of our future. I had not realized those truths in such a

profound way until I occupied the office of Lindenwood president. Today I have even more confidence in that opinion. At its very core, the University must consciously be about her students – not only those of the present and future but, vitally, those of the past as well.

Competitive evaluation can belie quality. There are college ranking systems, and then there are competitive peer ratings. Along with many of you, it used to concern me that Lindenwood’s rank in the *U.S. News and World Report’s* “Best Colleges” contest was seriously below what we should reasonably expect based on what we do and produce. That conundrum no longer bothers me very much for the following reason: Lindenwood holds its own, and often does well, in rating systems based only on objective measures of institutional success – a prominent recent example being *Educate to Career*, which ranks us in the top 20% nationally on students’ ROI. Even in the *U.S. News* system, our objective indices, such as retention rate, median ACT score, and alumni giving rate, often trump those of many schools ranked more highly. The difference is that *U.S. News* includes a heavily weighted peer-rating index, on which Lindenwood has received very low peer-institution scores ever since it became *the* awesome force in the St. Louis higher education marketplace. Who are these “peers”? They include presidents, chief academic officers, and enrollment managers (e.g., deans of admissions or vice-presidents of enrollment management) of

competing institutions! My advice is to adjust your confidence and mood in this matter according to what some of the newer ranking systems tell us. Beyond that, always consider the source!

Higher education consumers and regulators help make college expensive in the name of quality and wellbeing. It has been well documented in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and elsewhere that today's university students, particularly the traditional-age students, expect increasingly more amenities and services as a part of their college experience. The schools that cannot keep up with those expectations cannot keep a sustaining share of the student market. Consequently many of them spend an exorbitant amount of money on everything from large aquatic complexes for the general student body to palatial recreational and fitness centers and full-service student counseling and wellness services. For similar reasons, posh residence halls and heavily staffed student "help" centers of various types have materialized across academe. While all of these perks are valuable for the students' health, happiness, and success, they are, *en masse*, quite expensive, and insidiously have escalated the cost of a college education to a distressing level. The students deserve the best learning/living environment money can buy, but, alas, it is *their* money that underwrites most of the costs!

State governments, the U.S. Department of Education, and various accrediting organizations regularly induce increases in university staffing and reporting to comply with ever more demanding and stringent standards, regulations, and quality expectations regarding everything from academics to sexual assault response systems. Again, these desiderata are aimed at improving the wellbeing and educational outcomes of the students – and I am all for boosting the excellence of what we do – but they appreciably hike the price of a degree.

The great irony is that the abovementioned stakeholders are often the most relentless and strident critics of the sticker price of a postsecondary degree. When and how can we effectively communicate the culpable, vicious cause-and-effect cycle in this financial dilemma and start to redress it? How can we engage the cooperation of both the students and their protectors to bring about the changes in thinking, policies, and practices needed to curb the cost of a college education?

Word of mouth is very important but not sufficient. For more than two decades we found that statements and testimonies by our students, parents, alumni, and friends to those around them generated more than sufficient interest in Lindenwood to drive our strong admissions-application numbers. That auspicious situation exists no longer, for many reasons. Some segments of the student population have

attenuated, and others have simply opted for online or “competency-based” (i.e., no class/no course) alternatives for earning university degrees. Meanwhile, our competition has adopted some of our winning strategies and tactics for recruiting and, additionally, has poured fortunes into Internet, radio, and television advertising. When our enrollments began to significantly level off last year, we felt that we had to invest a significant sum into (a) professional marketing research and planning and (b) multimedia advertising, including all of the media mentioned above. So far, the results have been very encouraging, and the dip in our inflow of new students appears to have been reversed, due in large part to our investment in high-powered advertising. I believe those measures will have to be our normal approach henceforth, if Lindenwood is to remain fiscally hardy. Excellent word-of-mouth promotion of the University will still be necessary and will still be with us, but we can no longer rely on it to be solely sufficient to fill our supply chain.

We are at a place in history where we can choose to be as good as we want to be (and have the wherewithal to make that happen). At a recent faculty meeting I commented that Lindenwood has become exactly the University I hoped for when I first entered this office. We have the people, programs, facilities, finances, and campus culture that one would expect to read about in a good novel about a great university. Nonetheless, Lindenwood can and will continue to improve. In fact,

when visitors ask me to identify the one thing about Lindenwood that stands out most in my mind and sets us apart from the competition, my immediate response is “the school’s great potential.”

We are in an enviable position, and that status is both a blessing and an obligation to become even better. Because of our many strengths, we have the wherewithal to decide, as a higher education community, just how high we want to elevate our sights and in what direction.

Today’s Lindenwood can be as great as it wants to be in precisely the ways that it wants to be extraordinary. You and your board of directors and your alumni will need to clarify your collective dream of excellence and then make it a reality – and it must be a collective dream. Right now, there is no limit. There is only that magnificent future that is yours for the making.

Things to Prepare For and Do

Respecting and controlling the impact of cyberspace. The Internet, e-mail, and social media have enormously democratized knowledge, both good and evil. I am overjoyed about the availability of information everywhere on just about everything and the fact that I have enough

education to know what to believe amongst the petabytes of information online. It appears that most college educated people are incredibly appreciative of the ready access to information and instant communication capabilities brought to us by the World Wide Web. However, Lindenwood (and all other institutions with foresight) will need to educate not only its students but also its employees in the smart use of Internet presence and marketing, as well as the prudent protection of sensitive information and our reputation in all online communications and media. Moreover, all Lindenwood stakeholders, including members of our boards, will need to be schooled in the art and science of interpreting information “bites” in context.

The University will serve both itself and its students by making the culture of cyberspace an integral part of its curriculum and training. In particular, students, employees, and board members need to be made more acutely aware of the unintended consequences of putting sensitive information on the Web – either consciously or by accident – in the absence of forethought concerning the possible moral, legal, emotional, and reputational ramifications of such releases. We will also have to familiarize ourselves with the potential for psychologically needy or criminal individuals to defame, deceive, misrepresent, extort, or improperly implicate the University and its stakeholders as a result of our having issued poorly conceived or reviewed information about

Lindenwood or ourselves. Simple clerical errors and casual comments can cause gargantuan problems once they make it to the social media – particularly when interpreted outside their context by persons with little information about the particular matters invoked. We must make these issues and phenomena a part of our curriculum and the indoctrination of *all* members of our University community so that we can realize the benefits of having control over our Internet image and Web wellbeing.

On the positive side, the University’s faculty and administration will be better able to promote Lindenwood’s great learning environment and considerable achievements by strengthening our ability to inform and advertise via all online channels – not just social media. Further, we will increase the institution’s success by learning how to *immediately* seize opportunities to broadcast more of our achievements across cyberspace in creative ways that we might not use presently. Just attuning our marketing minds to that way of thinking will meet the largest part of that challenge. The fastest growing colleges and universities have made advanced cyber-marketing a priority, and we need to catch up with those systems. We have, in fact, entered that race, and now we have to focus on advancing our position in the competition.

Future finances. It will be necessary for Lindenwood and almost all other universities to continue to increase the tuition rate in the

foreseeable future, but, for many reasons, large increments will not be viable. Furthermore, even minor tuition nudges will not be acceptable as annual events.

Since price increases will become a less reliable financial resource, Lindenwood will have to implement additional service, program, and site expansion to cover its inevitably higher costs of operation.

However, expansion initiatives must be contemporary, planfully incremental, and fundamentally adaptive. The days of “If we build it, they will come” are mostly passé. More than before, sites and programs will have to be guided by keener marketing information and strategic thought. More generally, we will have to creatively and regularly develop or discover alternative means of financing, with the establishment of programs and locations in foreign lands being an inevitable undertaking that we will have to carry out with much discretion and consistently high quality. I am also presuming much enthusiasm, as that is the Lindenwood way in all that we undertake. Fortunately, for the past couple of years, the Lindenwood Office of International Students and Scholars has been exploring options and establishing key contacts for more than one possible overseas program. We will have a jump on the process when the time is right to move ahead.

As well, we and many other private universities with a future will find it necessary and useful to discover and master unconventional modes of generating operating income. We already have a couple of those revenue sources: University Commons (retail center) and the commercial side of our Wentzville ice rink. What else can we undertake to that end?

Although it is desirable to continue to seek gifts to enhance the quality and distinctiveness of Lindenwood's services (as we have been doing), and even though our present Office of Institutional Advancement has been the most successful one in at least the past four decades, I do not believe that the University should strive to become dependent upon donated money to sustain its core operations. The reasons are manifold and probably obvious.

There will be three, perhaps four, different domains of college education. Where are the students going? That is the prime question on campuses around the country now, particularly in the independent (private) sector and especially among those schools that rely upon traditional on-ground, campus-based classes and programs as their staples. There are several answers. The obvious one is the cost of private higher education is increasingly perceived as being too high relative to (a) available alternatives in the public four-year and two-year

sectors and (b) the recent devaluation of the conventional college degree by government officials and bodies and the general public in this country. To adapt effectively to this ROI issue, we independent universities will need to focus more on cost control and make a better case for the value-added dimensions of a private college experience. That will take not only smarter budgeting and thriftier operations overall but also (and ironically challenging the latter) marketing and advertising investment – a lot of it – and a strong effort on our part to make future promotions work well for recruiting and retention of students. There is no way around these requirements. They are prominent realities in modern American higher education.

The larger picture includes what is perhaps an even more interesting and challenging trend with hefty financial stakes. That trend is based on what a growing proportion of the higher-education customer base is asking for: *quicker, more convenient, cheaper, and easier* pathways to a college degree. The state and federal governments also want these conditions to become more common so that each state and the nation can quickly boost the percent of “college educated citizens.” The latter motivation, in fact, is what gave rise to competency-based university programs, such as Western Governors University and the trailing “wannabes.” Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and the proliferation of online universities, in general, also reflect the power of

the new mood of higher education's customer base. However, that population is not a singular one. It has several distinctively different segments.

Students who elect the exclusively online route to higher education have to be fairly bright, self-disciplined, and strongly motivated to succeed over the Internet. Lindenwood has entered this market, and we need to continue expanding our high-quality programs to meet growing demand. Growth in this part of the customer base can adversely affect our traditional, on-ground evening program – particularly our accelerated degree programs – if we fail to keep pace with this trend, but it will have only a small impact on our daytime population. Presently, online education is our fastest growing program area.

The traditional daytime population, mostly full-time students of ages 18 to 23, consists of young adults who want the complete college experience, socially, athletically, and otherwise, and this group will remain about as large as it presently is for the foreseeable future. It is the most expensive group to educate, but it remains the philosophical and spiritual core of traditional American universities. It will take a large dose of marketing intelligence and effort, but we will hold our own in this domain if we work at it continuously.

The traditional evening populations, consisting mostly of persons aged 24 to 60 who have daytime jobs, will be most at risk at the hands of the Internet-based alternatives. The classroom-based evening population has, is, and will continue to shrink as confidence in ROI diminishes and as the quicker and sometimes cheaper and easier online alternatives burgeon. I fear that, over the next decade, a substantial percent – certainly a large minority and perhaps a majority – of our potential evening students may opt for competency-based alternatives that are quick, convenient, often less expensive (because there is little overhead cost for this approach) and only as difficult as their market will bear. *It will be in Lindenwood's best interest to, as soon as possible, to develop and market some competency-based degrees with an emphasis on providing a **high-quality option** among the growing number of competency-based programs.* We will *not* draw those students who are looking mainly for cheap and easy, but I believe we will attract the more capable students in this subpopulation who want a somewhat lower price and the advantages of self-pacing and convenience but with a level of quality that gives them a better ROI in the job market. Why should Lindenwood not be known for offering the best competency-based degree programs for working adults? After all, we have had very successful and respected (by the accreditors and general public) accelerated evening programs of high caliber for more than three

decades. We have shown that we can win by merging quality with speed.

Lindenwood will not lose all of its traditional classroom-based evening population to Internet-based alternatives, because some working adults simply want or need the face-to-face classroom experience. However, we must be prepared to operate our own competency-based curricula to keep or win back the evening students who desire the modern options over classroom meetings. In the same vein, we must continue to develop and expand our online programs.

The benefit of physical facilities expansion soon will become asymptotic from a financial perspective. There is almost no end to further additions that could be made to Lindenwood's outstanding facilities on both of our campuses. Such structures are rewarding in the best sense of enhancing our students' college experience. They are also gratifying to us because they evoke exclamations of amazement and praise from friends, donors, prospective students, and the members of the regional community.

Granted, the material acclaim can be intoxicating. However, we should be bear in mind (a) that we are nearly at the limit on how many additional tuition dollars can be realized by erecting buildings that are desirable but not necessary (at least at the St. Charles campus) and (b) that each new building of much size incurs staffing, IT, maintenance,

insurance, and utilities, and (eventually) repair costs. Such operational costs are permanent and incrementally increasing commitments of tuition dollars that probably cannot be completely offset in the foreseeable future with sufficiently augmented tuition revenues. Operational expenses associated with desirable but not mission-critical facilities have the potential to consume much of the University's discretionary checking account.

The upshot of these observations is that we should be very conservative about adding structures and venues that might not be capable of paying for their own operations. Facilities that have the ability to generate enough money to be self-supporting include residence halls that can be filled, demand-driven classrooms, and heavily subscribed extension centers. Even though other kinds of facilities such a modern library and a student center are necessary overhead to meet educational and retention standards, *we have covered most of those expectations at the present time and should now be very circumspect* about committing to further major capital projects that would be less than revenue-neutral. The points made here also pertain to my earlier consideration of the effect of customer demands and expectations on the cost of pursuing a university degree.

The daily class schedule probably will require a revision. Related to physical plant foresight is the issue of our class-scheduling template. It dates back to the days when Lindenwood was a much smaller institution with convenient proximity amongst our classroom venues. Although the 15-minute inter-class-session transition time on the Tuesday and Thursday schedules remains functional, the 10-minute travel time (inclusive of all personal powder breaks, etc.) of the Monday-Wednesday-Friday template simply does not work with the broader footprint of today's St. Charles campus. The classrooms in the planned Library and Academic Resources Center will be beautiful and equipped to the gills, but they will not lessen the difficulty of timely pedestrian travel from one extreme location to another on our now expansive campus. I could engineer a new MWF scheme, but that is better left to those who will have to live with any novel formulation of the class periods. I just wanted to point out that getting to class on time will remain a problem for our daytime students until the template is brought up to date.

We will need to invest relatively more in IT and focus keeping pace with developments in technology. A floundering wireless system at a campus or site is lethal poison to the business. There is no way around this reality of the 21st century. A gradually increasing proportion of Lindenwood's expenditures will be required to support our technology

in order to stay astride of (a) student and faculty educational needs, (b) the institution's record-keeping requirements, and (c) equipment acquisition and upgrading. Universities that struggle to afford to keep their IT current will struggle to continue their operations. Students increasingly will migrate toward the schools that provide convenient, reliable, state-of-the-art capabilities in the domain of information access. General services to students at those privileged schools will also be viewed as superior in comparison to those of institutions that cannot sustain technological currency, because the efficiency and effectiveness of most offices will be significantly affected by their IT chops.

Lindenwood's poise and moral fiber will be tested. As will be true of most postsecondary institutions in the foreseeable future, our character and ethics will be put to the test – more tryingly than ever – by pragmatic needs, ruthless competition, and politics. Academia is in a challenging period that will spawn a lot more stress before colleges and universities begin to settle into the new normal of this century and re-equilibrate their high-level directions and systems. Perhaps needless to state, highest principles and good leadership and at all levels must remain the governors of our institutional character under all circumstances.

I hasten to add that weakness of integrity should not be a presumption directed at Lindenwood's employees – especially from within the organization. This University has been, is, and will always be good down to its core because all of us, both living and dead, have made that trait our priority for the school. We must continue to be jealous of this University's basic goodness and protect and strengthen it consciously in all that we do.

Proudest Intangible Accomplishments

If I were asked to list certain features of Lindenwood's campus spirit, culture, and profile that have pleased me the most in this century, the following would be included:

Visibility of Lindenwood's Best: From our extraordinarily impressive physical plant and the size and quality of our student body to the many publicly visible academic advancements and the intercollegiate athletics acclaim the University has realized, I do not think we are still the "best kept secret" in the region – nor do we want to be!

Communications Systems: Our campuses have greatly increased the number and quality of their daily, weekly, and seasonal publications, as

well as Web and social-media capabilities and activity – one might say all the way up to a large-university scale.

Comprehensive Human Resources System: Where once there was none, the University has assembled a very competent (though still small) HR staff and personnel management system, including bringing job classifications, employee-evaluation, and management procedures up to – and often beyond – standard.

Quality of Day-to-Day Operations: Phone calls are answered reliably, all offices have become more customer-service conscious, we respond much more promptly to student requests and complaints, we more systematically track purchasing and financial transactions, student and personnel issues are better documented and more thoroughly addressed, and there is more participative internal governance in day-to-day operations and the academic programs.

Cleanliness, Condition, and Appearance of our Campuses: Since a view is worth a thousand words, I will not have to comment much at all on this feature, but I can't avoid crowing about the beautiful trees and gardens that our grounds crews at both campuses have installed or caused to be created over the past several years. The splendor of both

campuses transcends mere words, and, as one student was heard to exclaim, is “sacred.”

National and Regional Recognition as a Great Place to Work: Based on surveys of Lindenwood employees, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ranked the University among the top schools in the nation on workplace climate for 5 of the 7 years that we pursued the honor, owing chiefly to very high ratings on (1) *shared governance* and (2) *confidence in senior leadership*. Administrative life does not get any better than that!

Culture of Positive Expectations: Most members of the Lindenwood community appear to expect the University to improve continuously and to earn its place among the best in every area of endeavor. I can detect no trace of the survival anxiety and feelings of doubt that hovered over our campus in the 1980s.

In Closing

As I was exiting Roemer toward the parking lot a few days ago, I was greeted by two of our female students, who said “Have a good summer, President Evans!” I thanked them as I contemplated the existential significance of their well wish.

With a similar poignancy, very recently I had the good fortune of being paid a visit by recently retired former CFO, David Kandel. He said retirement has been very good for his health and happiness, and, indeed, he looked and sounded enviably well. Then, following a thoughtful pause, he commented on the only major drawbacks of entering retirement. “You miss seeing all the wonderful people each day. And it’s kinda like leaving a great movie before it’s finished!”

David, I could not have said it better myself.

During my terms as President of Lindenwood, I merely opened the gate to the vineyard for all of you and gave you the freedom to do the things that yielded the many bounties that we now see at this grand University. You, the citizens of the Lindenwood Nation, made it happen, and you deserve most of the credit and all of the thanks. I will be watching with great satisfaction and even greater anticipation as you and Dr. Shonrock raise the profile, the recognition, and the level of service even higher!

JDE

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