

-- John Anthony Brown, President
December 11, 1969

The student proposal for intervisitation in men's and women's rooms has been carefully reviewed--in the light of (1) student arguments for and against; (2) current conditions on campus; (3) responses from parents, faculty, alumnae, friends of the college, and individual students who chose to make their views known privately; (4) policy, practice, and experience at other colleges; and (5) the long-range mission of The Lindenwood Colleges.

To respond to the proposal requires that we recognize two questions, rather than one. The first is who shall decide the issue; the second is what the decision should be.

The administration recognizes the importance of student participation in the processes by which decisions are made. We have provided for this participation in the past and wish to extend its range into every relevant aspect of the college. We believe that there are many decisions which the students alone can make and intend to delegate much of the determination of the programs and social life of the college to student action. As evidence of this intent, one should consider dormitory and student government practices, student representation on administrative and faculty committees, student participation in interviewing faculty candidates, and student dominance in determining what programs shall be designated convocations. Wherever majority rule is clearly the process by which the college community best achieves its goals, student dominance in decision-making is appropriate and will be accommodated.

On some issues, however, neither majority rule nor executive order is appropriate. On some issues what is needed is the right decision--that is, 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. Majority vote on a question affecting the life of every person on campus would come upon the right decision only by accident. Because of the long-range effect of a decision on intervisitation, moreover, the weight of making the determination falls upon those who are held responsible for the future of the college. The administration and only the administration is accountable for this and must bear the consequences of whatever decision is made.

These things being true, we ask your indulgence as we enumerate the stages of objective review by which we believe the right decision becomes apparent and as we state the nature of our responsibility for implementing the decision. The value of student participation in the decision-making process will be obvious in this enumeration, since much of the information and many of the issues originated with student spokesmen, who have acted with responsibility in consideration of the issue.

As this position paper is drafted, we are possessed of views and dialogue which had impact on all of us at three President's Council meetings, where we all spoke freely. The women's student government representatives, after a careful vote of the women students by ballot, have withdrawn their

proposal for intervisitation in the women's residence halls. Their action evidently reflects an awareness on the part of many students in Lindenwood College for Women that intervisitation at this time would adversely affect enrollment, as well as parental and alumnae relations. Some women students see intervisitation as an invasion of privacy. We are fortunate that the leadership of the women was willing to carefully study the issues.

The women of Lindenwood College for Women do not see the same factors pertaining for the men of Lindenwood College II. The Special Committee of the President's Council feels that there could be intervisitation in the men's residence hall without adverse impact on Lindenwood College for Women. The men students overwhelmingly favor the idea; and many of them feel that they should not be denied the privilege because the women have withdrawn their request.

The leadership of the men students has also acted in good faith; they believe there must be differences between the colleges and that this privilege should be one of them.

With all this in mind, the administration has the responsibility to respond, and we have chosen to do so in writing so our position can be known. As we see it:

1. The diversity of attitudes on the subject of intervisitation indicates that no campus-wide agreement, for or against, is possible.
2. While a university or a college of three or four thousand students can accommodate a diversity of life-styles given full expression, The Lindenwood Colleges are too small for this. The advantages of smallness are many, and a sense of community is one of them-- but a disadvantage is that a large measure of freedom exercised by one segment becomes an invasion of privacy for another.
3. The above points, leading as they do to a position unfavorable to intervisitation, could be answered by reference to the facts that society is changing and that the kind of freedom represented in intervisitation is more and more universally accepted. From this light, the minority (if it is one) would seem to be a group who would have to catch up with the times and make the adjustment which all of us have to make as society evolves. As one student expressed it: if students are to acquire "an awareness of man's unique capability for guiding his own destiny," the colleges themselves must "confront change fearlessly" and recognize that academic and social freedom cannot be separated.
4. The colleges, indeed, must deal with the interrelationship of academic and social freedom; but they must do so by remembering that it is part of the contemporary world in which intellectual and social questions are in a state of change unparalleled in recent history. We cannot pretend that what we do on this campus is our own affair, unless we are to abandon all claims to relevance.
5. We now reach the most important stage of our review of this issue. The right decision can only be the one which relates positively to the mission of The Lindenwood Colleges. What are we supposed to

be doing in these times? What is a relevant academic and social milieu in the 1970's? To find the answers to these questions, we turn to the social changes which relate to the topic of this paper:

- a. Greatly increased frankness in discussing the relationships between men and women
 - b. Much earlier dating and greater intimacy between young, unmarried men and women
 - c. Greatly reduced social stigma attached to premarital sexual relationships
 - d. Reduction in the influence of religious and social moral codes
 - e. To some extent, a loss of confidence in the institutions which once prescribed social relationships and established pressures for "respectability": the family and the church particularly
 - f. A strong sensitivity to hypocrisy and double standards
 - g. Widespread acceptance of birth-control pills and other contraceptive measures as a means of freeing women from the fear which once inhibited them.
6. A careful examination of these changes which affect the young, college-age generation more profoundly than any other group leads us to the realization that here is the context in which our decision must be found. What is the mission of The Lindenwood Colleges in an age of social change with the above mentioned characteristics?

We see the mission of the college to be (1) a realistic and honest response to the educational needs of this generation, (2) therefore, a program of examination working toward solutions to current social and intellectual issues, and (3) consequently, an investigation of the changes of our times rather than a drifting with the tide. Put more simply, The Lindenwood Colleges did not create the change in social behavior and social attitudes which have placed such an issue before us, and we do not propose to turn our backs on them. Nor can we allow those changes to rule us. To discover our capacity for guiding our own destiny requires not abandonment to change, but mastery of it.

We see these social changes, left to themselves, as productive of confusion and insecurity. In an age when institutions, codes, and social pressures have lost their force, the availability of nearly unlimited opportunities for experimentation and innovation may undermine the basis for responsible human relationships. The birth-control pill, in the absence of other restraints, does not free the young, unmarried woman but enslaves her to a relationship which should be responsive first to affection rather than physical desire. The pill, in the absence of other restraints, does not free the young man but enslaves him to physical needs which no longer are checked by his sensitivity to the life and happiness of a young woman. Freedom--absolute freedom to do "one's own thing"--creates an infinity of choice quite beyond

the ability of many people. They stop deciding what to do and do the popular, the "in" thing. They are caught by what Erich Fromm long ago called "the ambiguity of freedom."

While the relationships between young men and women are personal and not the concern of the college, a campus policy imposing the pressures of current social change on all students is inescapably a college responsibility. It stacks the cards in favor of the so-called "new morality." The impact of the moral drift in our times is part of our concern as a college which involves its students in realities. We see the institution of a policy for intervisitation at this time, at either college, as abandonment to the drift itself. We see it as creating a style of life on this campus which would defeat us in our mission.

This decision is not made as a moral judgment on those institutions which have chosen to allow dating in dormitory rooms, nor is it a restatement of traditional ethical codes. We recognize that young people do need opportunities for privacy; they do need opportunities to discover each other as persons, and we propose to do everything we can to provide an environment appropriate to these needs. We do not claim to have the answers to the question of the meaning of the present sexual freedoms.

We do, however, propose to assume the responsibility which we cannot disregard. This is to make clear that the mission of The Lindenwood Colleges is to provide a milieu in which social relationships are orderly and to help its students find these meanings. Many Lindenwood College for Women parents presently see dormitory intervisitation as occasion for "sexual exploitation." Young men say it is up to the women to take care of themselves. It is obvious to us that we do not have the conditions under which intervisitation would contribute toward a vital educational environment.

We choose, therefore, to maintain the privacy of dormitory rooms. We ask those students who have chosen to study with us to enter into the intellectual and social life of The Lindenwood Colleges in such a way that they may find their direction in these changing times. We ask those students who will be coming to study here to accept the pattern of social order which we think necessary if we are to carry out our mission. Those who find this policy too restrictive should realize that they have probably come to the wrong school for them, that they may be better off in a larger institution. We have not abridged their freedom to go elsewhere; they should not abridge our freedom here to refuse to be like everywhere else.

So, after weeks of study and reflection, we hold the issue of intervisitation to be one not open to decision by student referendum, for it could--and we believe would--change the very nature of our community, deflect us from our educational mission, align us with a position we could call "social drift" and violate the freedom of those in our community who have serious objections to intervisitation. We see the possibility that the two colleges could eventually emerge with policy which is not the same on this issue, but for this year and the next year, at least, our student body is too small, and the record of responsible student government in the men's college is too limited.