

THE LINDENWOOD COLLEGES

ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI 63301

November 6, 1970

TO THE STUDENTS AND FACULTY OF THE LINDENWOOD COLLEGES:

In the interest of better understanding and in the hope of achieving the community of purpose which will enable all of us to realize our reason for being here, we present the following statement relative to college policy in regard to the use of illegal drugs. We all do have the same objective: education. We, therefore, have the same need: freedom to perform our tasks. The purposes of both the Town Hall meeting and this letter relate to that need.

Because of this unity of need and objective, we believe we ought also to be able to arrive at a point of agreement about the nature of the problem before us. Knowing the nationwide prevalence of drug usage and knowing the jeopardy in which usage places the user, the threat to academic and social effectiveness which excessive or uninformed usage presents, and the loss of community when polarization occurs between the initiates and those who wish to remain independent, we must reach a level of control which frees us from jeopardy, from ineffectiveness, and from loss of community.

As the result of a request by some faculty members to the Deans, the matter of drug usage was discussed at Faculty Meeting Wednesday, November 4. As a result of the discussion, it was by action of the faculty that a Town Hall meeting was called for Wednesday evening. The concern of the faculty and administration as presented to the students at the Town Hall meeting on Wednesday was to find a way to deal with this problem as a community. The faculty action and the sincere concern of faculty reflect a deep desire of many members of the faculty to deal with a problem humanely, but to recognize that an academic community must give regard to its own problems, or outside forces will enter the scene. The four points which were presented are not just a policy for action. They are also a list of responses which are naturally and inevitably related to the problem. They were faculty originated and were acted on by faculty after some two and a half hours of debate. They are:

1. The administrative role of having to determine the dismissal or retention of a student whose use of drugs threaten himself or the college is one imposed by both of the societies in which we live: the campus and the civil community. There is no other position possible to those who must be accountable - because of state and national laws, if for no other reason. The student's right to appeal is preserved.
2. The role of the faculty as voluntarily available to counsel or help find counsel for students asking for assistance is a basic response to a need. For it to work, it must be separated from the disciplinary function. Students are here to learn; errors in judgment must have a chance to be corrected. The faculty must be free to perform this task - individuals must also be free to refuse to serve in this capacity. The kind of information needed will be provided.

3. Outside or internal rehabilitation services have been valuable on other campuses and perhaps ought to be available here. Our obligation is to make it possible. Student participation in such efforts was recommended as necessary and desirable.
4. Classroom performance being the main criterion for continued membership in the college community, the instructor always has the privilege of dropping a student who is not performing effectively. Both in the interest of the individual and of the class as a whole, inadequate attendance or participation (as determined by the instructor himself) must be dealt with. This matter was mentioned in the context of the drug problem because it is one of the ways to keep the educational objective viable. The instructor here does not have to make any judgment concerning drug usage, only classroom performance.

After the Town Hall meeting Wednesday, a number of students and faculty members had a discussion which continued that of the Town Hall. From that meeting came a suggestion which we will try to implement. We will make an effort to obtain the services of an outside observer who will talk to students and faculty and try to arrive at an objective view of the nature and seriousness of drug usage at Lindenwood. His observations and recommendations will be given full and thoughtful consideration as we try to arrive at the community of purpose so necessary for us at this time.

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