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Leaders of Tomorrow: Students Participate in Missouri Governor's Leadership Forum

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Three Lindenwood University students attended the annual Missouri Governor's Student Leadership Forum on Faith and Values in Jefferson City last month, where they heard from presenters of different real-world professions.

Seniors Elleana Lopez and Betsy Medlovits, and junior Jacob Behnen represented Lindenwood at the three-day event which welcomed 80 college students from universities across the state. All three were selected for different reasons. Lopez, majoring in philosophy and religion, was chosen for her academic excellence and leadership in the classroom. Medlovits, majoring in chemistry, was invited to attend because she is a leader of a student religious group on campus, and Behnen, a political science major, was also chosen for his academic excellence and leadership in the classroom.

All three Lindenwood students' majors and involvement in student groups aligned with the purpose of the forum. Additionally, all three students gained invaluable insight from speakers in different professions, which will enable them to thrive in their professional careers beyond Lindenwood by utilizing the knowledge they gained. By attending the forum, students enhanced their classroom learning with practical experience and collaborative discussions.

The leadership forum challenges students' character development by encouraging them to reflect on their decision-making skills, values, and belief systems. The forum's guiding principle is teaching students to embrace altruism rather than egotism. During the forum, students learned how to reconcile relationships, stand for truth, and love others as they love themselves. Missouri Gov. Mike Parson welcomed students to the forum and held a meet-and-greet in his office. They attended a panel discussion about the importance of community and relationships.

Behnen enjoyed the weekend in Jefferson City and said he will use the knowledge he gained from the forum when he enters the business world.

"It was an enlightening experience listening to speakers from different backgrounds and careers, especially Gov. Parson, share their experiences and the importance of servant leadership and connecting with others in any profession," Behnen said. "Their insights, as well as those of the other college students in attendance, will stick with me now and as I move forward into my career."