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## **President Perry: Douglas Hall Will Remain Douglas Hall; Education Efforts Will Take Place**

*Jan-12-2011*

### ***A Message from EIU President William L. Perry:***

"This past fall semester, many individuals participated in discussions regarding a proposal from a faculty member regarding changing the name of Douglas Hall, which is part of the Lincoln-Stevenson-Douglas housing complex. The proposal was submitted in December to the University Naming Committee, which has student, faculty and staff membership. After thorough discussion, the committee did not recommend a change of the building name, and subsequently informed me of that action.

"My review of the proposal has included several actions on my part: review of the name change proposal; review of archival information from Booth Library regarding the initial naming of the Lincoln-Douglas housing complex in 1951; review of resolutions by the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate and the Residence Hall Association; reading of material regarding the political careers of Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas and the letters of Stephen Douglas; attending the December 1 campus scholarly presentation by Professor Stewart Winger of Illinois State University; and review of correspondence, letters to newspapers and opinion pieces.

"After thorough consideration, I am affirming the University Naming Committee's recommendation. However, the overall debate leads me to take specific action that will bring positive educational outcomes for the university community.

"The naming of the new residence halls in tandem as Lincoln and Douglas halls was recommended by means of motion, second and vote, to President Buzzard by action in the regular faculty meeting of February 6, 1951. According to the minutes of the meeting, the names were suggested 'in honor of the historical debate that took place in this community.' The president subsequently took the recommendation to the Illinois Teachers College Board for approval, which was granted.

"The campus discussions held this past fall lead me to conclude that we have not taken advantage of the Charleston debate as a way to educate our students about the role of the debates in our history, or about the larger issues surrounding antebellum Illinois and the United States at that time. Certainly, we have significant faculty expertise to bring to bear in such an effort.

"Therefore, I am asking our Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and our Vice President for Student Affairs to collaborate with our Graduate Program in Historical Administration, our Center for Translational Humanities and our Department of Housing to develop a historical display for the Lincoln-Stevenson-Douglas Complex that will address the issues mentioned above and others that may be pertinent. I am asking that the Coles County Historical Society be consulted during the display development. The display could, of course, be built to travel, so that it could be viewed at different campus installations, or even off campus (for example, the local Lincoln-Douglas Debate Museum or nearby schools). I will use non-appropriated funds for the project.

"Other positive educational outcomes may exist. For example, the date of the Charleston Lincoln-Douglas debate was September 18. We currently hold activities on Constitution Day, September 17. Perhaps in tandem with Constitution Day, we could hold discussions, debate re-enactments, lectures or other scholarly activities.

"Universities must be places of open, free debate of issues and expression of opinion. Our experience this past fall shows that EIU is such a university. I thank the university community for civil discussion and debate of the renaming topic."