

May 16, 2008

At last week's annual Baccalaureate Service I began my address to the graduating class with a short story taken from the history of North Park. It was a good story for students to hear, but it has much to teach us as well, especially as we end one school year, move into our summer schedule, and soon anticipate the beginning of the coming year. The essence of the story is true – so far as I can tell – though I've used a bit of poetic license in setting the context.

Seventy-five years ago, in the spring of 1933, a short conversation took place between two men at the corner of Foster and Kedzie Avenues.

The elder of the two men was David Nyvall. He was 70 years old on this spring day, and he had been retired for a decade from his life as the first president of North Park College. David Nyvall was widely recognized as an elder statesman—a wise man—and he looked the part. By this time in life his hair and a full beard had not only grayed but turned completely white. He wore narrow wire-rimmed glasses and carried himself in such a way that you knew you should listen when he spoke.

The younger of the two men was Karl Olsson. He was 20 years old, and he was ready that spring to graduate from North Park College. He was a very capable young man. Some decades later he would complete a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago and return to teach English at North Park and then eventually become the fifth president of this college. But on this spring day, Karl Olsson was just like you. He was young and restless. He was full of adventure, but uncertain about where his life would take him or where he should take his life.

On this spring commencement weekend in 1933 Karl Olsson sought out David Nyvall. Karl was graduating from college and he had an important question: What shall I do with my life? He had studied hard; he had taken full advantage of all that college offered; he was interested in his own career, but he also wanted to serve others, to find a way, through his life, to make this world a better place. Yet how to get there was oh so unclear.

So Karl Olsson sought out David Nyvall on the corner of Foster and Kedzie Avenues. Karl asked, "What shall I do with my life?" And David Nyvall responded with a single, carefully chosen word. Young Karl asked,

“What shall I do with my life?” And the aging President Nyvall responded: “Proceed.”

Careful planning is helpful, indeed necessary. Reflection on the past and a commitment to mission are both very important. Expertise in the field is required for success. Yet all of this is worthless unless we take the first step. This holds true in our personal lives, and it is certainly the case in our professional responsibilities. We move forward, together, one step at a time; we proceed.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – The University’s governing Board met on campus this past week for its regularly scheduled spring meeting. As part of the meeting we recognized the work of Glenn Palmberg over the past ten years in his capacity as president of the Covenant Church. We also recognized the service of several individuals who completed their five-year term of service and will step off the Board, at least for the required one-year gap between terms. These individuals include:

- Jane Applequist
- Sara Jo Forsman
- Rhoda Friesen
- David Helwig
- John Martz
- Laura McConnaughay
- Monica Noel

Each of these members has served the University faithfully over the past five years; we’re grateful for their leadership.

Highlights of the Board’s business session include several items of business:

- The revised Faculty By-Laws were approved
- The FY 09 Operating Budget was endorsed
- Recommendations for faculty promotion and tenure were accepted
- Approval was given to several recommendations on Board governance; these include some reorganization to the Board’s committee structure including renaming the Multicultural Committee to the University Mission Committee, with responsibility

for all aspects of the University’s mission and identity.

Two less routine items were also the subject of discussion and action by the Board.

First, the new Strategic Plan was presented for final deliberation. The Board has worked on this project over the past 18 months, as have many individuals and groups on campus. The Strategic Plan was approved as presented and will now serve as the principle guide for our work together over the next several years. A copy of the approved plan, along with a single-page summary “map” of the plan, will be distributed to all faculty and staff members as the new academic year begins. This plan will also serve as a primary focus of our attention when we come together on Gathering Day in late August.

Second, the Board spent substantial time considering the need to launch a new major fund raising campaign. The consensus of the Board is that we should move forward with this initiative. The senior administrative team received a directive from the Board to initiate planning for this project, with the understanding that the University’s next campaign be “comprehensive” so as to include a variety of projects including facilities improvements, program enhancement, endowment growth, and the annual fund. We will work on such plans over the summer months, and expect that this too will be a focus of attention as we meet on Gathering Day.

FACULTY TENURE AND PROMOTIONS –

We're delighted to celebrate with several people significant advancement in their respective academic careers. On recommendation of the faculty, provost, and president, the Board of Trustees approved the following changes in faculty status and rank:

- Elizabeth Gray – tenured
- Ann Hicks – tenured
- Lida Nedilsky – tenured
- David Johanson – tenured and promoted to associate professor
- Dennis Bricault – tenured and promoted to full professor
- Gianfranco Farruggia – promoted to associate professor
- Max Lee – promoted to associate professor
- Johnny Lin – promoted to associate professor
- David Bennett – promoted to full professor
- Chad Eric Bergman – promoted to full professor
- Alan Bjorkman – promoted to full professor
- Rajkumar Boaz Johnson – promoted to full professor
- D. Brent Laytham – promoted to full professor

Congratulations to each of these members of our faculty. Early in the coming school year (on Monday, September 15) we will gather for an Academic Convocation to honor these individuals for their professional accomplishments.

AXELSON SYMPOSIUM – Pier Rogers and her colleagues in the Axelson Center welcomed to campus nearly 500 professionals from the nonprofit world for the University's annual Axelson Symposium on May 13 and 14. Highlights of the symposium included a day-long pre-conference institute, several keynote addresses, a number of concurrent sessions, and an awards luncheon with

Zoraida Sambolin, anchor at Chicago NBC5, as master of ceremonies.

SUMMER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS –

The summer months offer a good time each year to address select facility improvement projects. Some have already been initiated, others will take place in the coming weeks:

- Burgh Hall Renovation – this will involve substantial improvement to this aging facility including new flooring in the residence rooms; replacement of all furniture; painting throughout; substantial renovation of the building's common areas; new ceilings, carpeting, and lighting in the hallways; upgraded electrical service; wiring for cable; and installation of a fire sprinkler system. Previous work in this building has provided complete renovation of the rest rooms.
- Completion of a multi-year apartment accessibility project.
- Installation of security video surveillance cameras in our residence halls.
- Several administrative office moves and improvements, with renovation of existing space along Foster Avenue being vacated by the ECC Central Conference.
- Critical repairs to concrete steps and sidewalks across several parts of the campus, damaged by our harsh winter weather.

SUCCESSFUL FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE SEARCHES –

This has been an active spring at North Park as several faculty and administrative searches have been undertaken. A few searches continue but we are able to announce several appointments, as follows:

- Linda Cannell – Dean of Seminary Academic Life; presently serving as Lois W. Bennett Distinguished Professor of Educational Ministries at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; (B.R.E. Central Baptist Seminary; B.A.

University of Manitoba; M.R.E. and Ed.D. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)

- Rebecca L. Nelson – Dean of the School of Education; presently serving as Superintendent of Schools in Skokie, Illinois; (B.A. North Park University; M.A. DePaul University; Ph.D. Loyola University)
- Terry A. Lindsay – Dean of Diversity and Intercultural Programs; presently serving as Dean of Student Development and Associate Professor at Harper College; (B.A. and M.Ed. State University of New York at Buffalo; Ed.D. Argosy University)
- Ter-Yun (Timothy) Lin – faculty in biology; presently serving as assistant professor at the University of Iowa; (B.S. Taichung University, Taiwan; M.S. Louisiana State University; Ph.D. University of Iowa)
- Paul Priester – GOAL faculty in psychology; presently serving as graduate faculty at Cardinal Stritch University; (B.A. and M.A. University of Iowa, Ph.D. Loyola University)
- Rachel Schmale – faculty in psychology; presently serving as graduate research assistant at Purdue University; (B.A. University of California, Berkeley; M.S. and Ph.D. Purdue University)
- Mary Veeneman – faculty in biblical and theological studies; presently serving as graduate assistant at Fordham University; (B.A. and M.A. Wheaton College; M.Phil. and Ph.D. Fordham University)

In addition, Colette Hands, who has worked for several years in the School of Business and Nonprofit Management will assume responsibilities this summer as the new Director of Career Development and Internships.

We look forward to welcoming these individuals to the North Park community as they join us for the fall semester.

RETIREMENTS – Even as we celebrate new people joining our community we also bid farewell to several who have been part of North Park for a good number of years. This list includes:

- Haddon Klingberg, professor of psychology
- Larry Knipp, professor of biology
- Charles Olson, director of career planning services
- Virginia Schelbert, assistant professor of nursing, and
- Warren Wade, professor of political science

Each of these individuals has contributed in important ways to the education provided to students at North Park. Our deepest thanks are extended to each of them.

REASSIGNMENTS IN SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

– I'm pleased to announce further enhancement to the senior administrative team. These changes come in response to two critical leadership needs.

First, the University's recently adopted Strategic Plan identifies several initiatives which require dedicated and effective leadership. We expect to give increased attention to external audiences, with an emphasis on engaging the city of Chicago, and we have identified a number of potential "Creative Initiatives and Bold Ambitions" which must be considered in the near future. These collective features of the plan require careful planning, implementation, and review, as well as close collaboration and partnership with both internal and external audiences.

Second, the short- and long-term well-being of the University requires a robust development operation. Fund raising is a key to the University's future, both for maintaining current programs, facilities, and practices as well as embracing new ventures, including new facilities. Such a program is best accomplished with dedicated and highly effective leadership.

To address these challenges I am making two changes on the senior administrative team. Both changes will be effective on July 1.

Dan Tepke, Senior Vice President, will assume responsibility for strategic initiatives and Chicagoland activities. He will do so while maintaining his present responsibilities for athletics, enrollment management, and external relations. He will no longer be responsible for the development office. This change will allow Dan to maintain many of his present responsibilities while also leading the University's engagement with the city of Chicago and assisting departments across the campus in developing new initiatives.

Mary Surridge will serve as Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs. In this capacity she will oversee all work in this area, including major gifts and planned giving, alumni affairs and annual fund, corporate and foundation relations, development administrative services, and university events.

Mary is well-known in the North Park community through her very active involvement in University life for the past decade.

What many of us don't know about Mary, however, is her previous work as a development officer and fund raiser. At Northwestern University she worked under the leadership of Jon Heintzleman (one of

the North Park's current Board members). As Associate Director of Planned and Major Gifts at Northwestern, Mary was active in three significant fund raising campaigns: The Campaign for Athletic Excellence (with a goal of \$20 million the total raised was \$37 million), the Campaign for Scholarships, and Campaign Northwestern (with a goal of \$1.0 billion the total raised was \$1.5 billion). Previously she worked in student development at Concordia University Wisconsin. Mary holds a B.S. from Northwestern University and M.S. from Concordia University. With her family she is active in the North Park Covenant Church.

With this vice presidential appointment Mary will join the University's senior administrative team. I will work closely with her as together we advance the University's development efforts, and I will continue to work closely with Dan as he oversees new initiatives and enhanced engagement with the city of Chicago.

As you have occasion, please thank both Mary and Dan for their willingness to assume these important new responsibilities which are central to the long-term well-being of the University.

SUMMER'S DIRECTIVE – Proceed! Enjoy moments of leisure. Plan for the fall semester. Vacation well. Write a brief note to a student you think needs to hear from you. Take in some sun. Proceed!