

April 30, 2008

The end of an academic year is a good time to reflect on the meaning of our work together, on the purpose that brings us to this place and which shapes us as a community of learners.

Such purpose, of course, is described in various ways, often depending on the particular context and audience. One of these ways, one which is intended not for a specific school but for the academy more generally, is a prayer framed in the context of Christian worship.

O Eternal God, bless all schools, colleges, and universities [and especially North Park University], that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find you to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Within this framework, how should we assess our year together?

- In what ways might we describe North Park as a “lively center?”
- Where, over the course of this year, has our learning, and that of our students, been most sound; where has our discovery been new; how has our pursuit led to wisdom?
- In what part of our work and through what part of this learning community have we found God to be the source of truth?

May God bless each of us as we draw the semester to a close, as we bid farewell to students who have lived and learned in our presence, and as we await the full coming of spring and the occasions for leisure and rest to which we will be drawn during the summer months.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – Our governance Board meets three times each academic year. Traditionally the spring meeting has been held in April. This year, however, the schedule for this meeting was changed to coincide with the spring commencement convocation. Accordingly, the Board of Trustees will meet on the

campus on Thursday and Friday of next week, May 8 and 9.

In scheduling the meetings in this way, members of the Board have opportunity to be involved in commencement-related activities. On Thursday afternoon, the Board will sponsor a reception for

graduating seniors. This reception offers graduates the opportunity to meet members of the Board in an informal manner, and to share with the Board memories of their student years at North Park.

Additionally, a good portion of the Board of Trustees will stay on campus through part of the weekend to attend the Baccalaureate Service on Friday evening and the Commencement Convocation on Saturday. As you see trustees at these events please greet them and welcome them to these campus celebrations.

A summary of the actions taken by the Board of Trustees will be included in the next Occasional Campus Communiqué.

COMMENCEMENT WEEKEND(S) – Most of us agree that this is the best time of the academic year! Students love to celebrate their accomplishments and we love to join them in this.

The primary schedule of events for our commencement weekends includes the following:

- The Baccalaureate Service is scheduled for 8:00 pm on Friday, May 9. The Service is held off-campus at Queen of All Saints Basilica in Sauganash.
- The Commencement Convocations are held at 10:00 am (undergraduate) and 3:00 pm (GOAL and graduate) on Saturday, May 10. Both programs are held on-campus in the gymnasium.
- The Seminary Commencement Convocation is held the following weekend at 10:00 am on Saturday, May 17. This program is held in Anderson Chapel.

Members of our campus community are welcome to participate in all of these programs.

Attendance of faculty is expected at these programs. Undergraduate faculty should attend the Baccalaureate Service and the 10:00 am Commencement Convocation. Faculty from Schools which offer graduate programs, as well as GOAL faculty, are expected to attend the 3:00 pm Commencement Convocation. And faculty in the Seminary are expected to attend the Commencement Ceremony on May 17.

As is our custom, we will award several honorary degrees at this year's commencement programs.

- In the Undergraduate Convocation two degrees will be awarded:
 - Ivor H. Jenkins, democracy advocate from South Africa, will be presented the Doctor of Laws degree.
 - Brenda Salter McNeil, champion of racial reconciliation, will be presented the Doctor of Humane Letters degree.
- In the Seminary Convocation one honorary degree will be awarded:
 - Jean Lambert, Covenant theologian, will be presented the Doctor of Divinity degree.

We're honored as a University to recognize the important contribution of these three individuals—indeed they are people whose lives give witness to both significance and service.