

October 9, 2007

Like many of us at North Park, Linda and I are lifelong educators. This is our vocation. Education is the lens, the “spectacles,” through which we know our place in life. We love learning and we love to help others learn. But learning does not come easily. And we have discovered that learning how to help others learn does not come easily as well. Though we are lifelong educators, over the course of our life we have changed how we approach the responsibility of helping others learn.

Experience is a good teacher, and the experience of being parents has been a great mentor to us in our vocation as educators. This became most apparent as our children (now 26 and 29 years old) approached their college years. We had come to know that Betsy and Nathaniel were two individuals, not just children of the same parents. And as individuals they had distinct interests and different approaches to learning. Until this point in life our tendency (though largely unconscious) had been to approach the classroom as though all students were pretty much the same. We knew they were individuals, of course, but we did not fully realize the distinctive character of each student.

Once our own children were in college we were more sensitive to the variety of opportunities and challenges brought to the classroom by each student. Some learn through taking copious classroom notes and reviewing them extensively throughout the semester. Others are more likely to learn simply through listening and reflecting on what they are hearing. Some learn most quickly through words, others prefer images. Some want to see what is going on, others want to touch it. Some stand back to gage the horizon before they cautiously enter, while others immediately jump into deep waters and learn to swim as they go.

When our children went college we also learned what it means to be parents of college students. During her first semester as an undergraduate our daughter studied in Berlin, Germany. Taking her to college meant driving her to JFK Airport in New York City to board a plane headed to Europe. When we left her we were uncertain, indeed fearful, about what she would experience and how this would change her. As we walked out of the airport tears streamed from our eyes—how could we “abandon” our daughter to the world she was about to enter? Just then our son, three years younger than his sister yet taller than each of us, put his arms around both Linda and me and said, “Tomorrow will be better.”

Now nearly a decade latter, Linda and I celebrated the birth of our first grandchild this summer. Will Cruikshank was born on July 17. Since we first heard of our daughter's pregnancy Linda has posted this brief prayer on a bulletin board in our home:

Almighty God, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children. Give Betsy and Calder calm strength and patient wisdom as they bring up our little boy that we may teach him to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Though Will is just a baby, he needs now exactly what he will need in all his life (and certainly during his years as a college student): to learn to love whatever is just and true and good. This is our responsibility to him as grandparents, and this is our responsibility as educators to the students at North Park. What we pray for Will, our grandson, we also pray for each of the 3251 students who study with us this semester: that they learn to love whatever is just and true and good.

HOMECOMING 2007 – The month of September ended with a grand weekend-long celebration of Homecoming. Blue and gold balloons welcomed to campus alumni/ae and their families from around the country. Events stretched from small receptions to a more formal dinner dance, from breakfast in the gym to a block party on Carmen Avenue, from art exhibits and music recitals to athletic contests.

Hundreds of volunteers led the way in assuring the success of the weekend. This work started and ended with staff members in the Alumni Office, but also included North Parkers from nearly every department and office across the campus. Many thanks to all who helped to make this such a great way to “welcome home” hundreds of graduates.

SEMINARY ACCREDITATION – This week a small team will visit the campus representing the Association of Theological Schools. This group will review the self-study report prepared over the past year, and will interview many members of the seminary community. Accreditation visits occur approximately every ten years, and serve as the primary external channel for assuring the integrity of the seminary program.

Preparation for the visit has been directed by the self-study steering committee comprised of the following individuals:

- Paul Bramer
- Jim Dekker
- Kazi Joshua
- Kimberly Sangster
- Wayne Weld
- Rekcol Williams

GOSPEL CHOIR TOUR – Fall break sometimes seems to come more quickly than it should and this year is no exception for many of us. While some students remain on campus, most take advantage of this “long weekend” to return home or travel to other venues.

Linda and I will be traveling to Kansas with members of the Gospel Choir. This group will perform four concerts over three days introducing many people to North Park University and leading in worship at several churches.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – During the last weekend of October the Board of Trustees will meet on campus for its annual fall meeting. Five new trustees will be

welcomed to membership on the Board.

These include:

- Mark Dennis, Senior Counsel with The Alford Group and Senior Pastor at the 2nd Baptist Church of Evanston
- Jon Heintzelman, Vice President for Advancement at Loyola University Chicago
- Tomás Ivens, Latino Church Planter in Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Bonnie Pihl, Homemaker from Wheaton, IL
- John Snow, Retired Vice President of Auburn Corporation in Oak Lawn, IL

Each of the Board's three annual meetings includes an afternoon reception with members of the University community. The schedule rotates as follows:

- Fall meeting – Faculty
- Winter meeting – Staff members
- Spring meeting – Graduating seniors

The reception for the fall meeting with members of the faculty is scheduled for Friday, October 27, at 3:15 pm. The reception will be held in Ohlson Lounge in

Nyvall Hall. Members of the faculty are encouraged to greet individuals from the Board of Trustees during this time.

ENROLLMENT REPORT – At the beginning of each fall semester we pay close attention to the enrollment report for all of our programs. This year the report is quite positive in nearly all areas. This is great news, and a good point of celebration! Enrollment in several areas is at a record high, including both the traditional undergraduate program and the GOAL program. Overall enrollment has also reach a record total of 3251 students. Specific numbers are included in the two tables attached to the end of this Communiqué.

We often say that student recruitment is everyone's business. This enrollment report then is reason for us all to celebrate. And special recognition goes to members of our student recruitment staff – for undergraduates, graduates, GOAL students, and seminarians. Many, many thanks to each of you.

Exhibit A
New Student Enrollment Summary
Fall Semester 2005, 2006, and 2007

	2005	2006	2007
<i>Undergraduate (traditional)</i>			
First-Year	359	374	373
Transfer	246	229	217
TOTAL	607	603	595
<i>Undergraduate (non-traditional)</i>			
College Bridge	2	0	0
ESL	53	20	22
RN Completion	34	11	33
GOAL	66	41	61
Education Certification	12	26	48
TOTAL	167	98	137
<i>Graduate</i>			
MBA	85	95	88
MS Nursing	40	32	30
Adult Nurse Practitioner	2	5	10
MA Education (all sites)	40	55	61
MA Community Development	10	7	10
Master of Music	7	7	5
TOTAL	184	201	204
<i>Seminary</i>			
Traditional	75	47	61
Cross Registered	0	3	3
TOTAL	75	50	64

Exhibit B
Headcount Report (Total Enrollment)
Fall 2006 and 2007

	2006	2007
<i>Undergraduate (Traditional)</i>		
Returning	1133	1255
First-Year	374	373
Transfer	229	217
Visiting	0	9
TOTAL	1736	1854
<i>Undergraduate (non-traditional)</i>		
ESL	31	29
RN Completion	47	83
GOAL	210	237
Education Certification	42	69
Special (students-at-large)	7	0
TOTAL	337	418
<i>Graduate</i>		
MBA	344	329
MS Nursing	144	136
Adult Nurse Practitioner	15	21
MA Education (all sites)	141	162
MA Community Development	30	28
Master of Music	13	15
TOTAL	687	691
<i>Seminary</i>		
Traditional	287	284
Cross Registered	4	4
TOTAL	291	288
GRAND TOTAL	3069	3251
<i>Other Students (Non-Revenue)</i>		
International Exchange	0	9