

# PRESIDENT'S OCCASIONAL CAMPUS COMMUNIQUÉ

May 17, 2010

## **The President's Perspective – A Brief Essay**

As a learning community we celebrated in grand style this past weekend!

The Baccalaureate Service on Friday evening in the sanctuary of Fourth Presbyterian Church, and the three Commencement Convocations on Saturday here on our campus brought our university community together in special way. It was a weekend our graduates and their families will long remember. And we'll remember it with great fondness as well—how could we respond otherwise after walking alongside these students during their time at North Park?

We celebrate the achievements of our students, but we should also embrace their accomplishments as our own. We teach, we coach, we counsel; we pray with our students, serve as their mentors, rejoice with them and cry with them; we walk alongside, we push, we pull, we encourage, we prod; as our students succeed, so we succeed; their achievements are our achievements.

And now we rest. As well we should. This doesn't mean that we stop; rather it means our pace changes, we refocus our priorities, we give attention to things which have been pushed aside during a busy spring semester, we plan for the coming year even as we wrap up the year which is ending.

The summer schedule means different things to each of us, depending on our assigned responsibilities. But in each case it should bring rest and a time for renewal of spirit.

Near the end of the Baccalaureate Service we offered a Prayer of Blessing for our graduates. This was an opportunity to send them on their way, from their days at North Park into the next season of their lives. In turn we might pray portions of this prayer for ourselves, as we enter summer and seek the rest and renewal our bodies and spirits require.

*May God give us faith, so that in leaving this place we know firmly and with conviction who made us, and why, and for what purpose.*

*May God give us peace, a lasting peace that dwells in our heart and enables us to comprehend the breadth and length, the height and depth of Christ's love for us.*

*May God give us leisure, times for refreshment in the course of this busy life, moments to rebuild our body and renew our mind, that our spirit may be open to the goodness of God's creation.*

*May God grant us a quiet confidence, periods of solitude to restore our strength, seasons of stillness to know that God is God.*

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## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

As is our custom, the Board of Trustees gathered on Thursday and Friday of exam week for its spring meeting. Highlights of the meeting include the following:

- The Board recognized the service of several members concluding their five-year term of service. These include:
  - Paul Aley
  - Jimmie Alford
  - Mark Johnson
  - Tim Nelson
  - Kristine Strand
  - Don Wahlquist
- The Seminary Committee received and endorsed a revised statement of mission, core values and institutional distinctives for the seminary.
- The Board approved a plan for assuring effective leadership for the seminary during a transitional year. [See a section below for amplification of this plan].
- The Development Committee reported that, consistent with the commitment of the Board at the October 2009 meeting, 100% of members of the Board have submitted pledges of financial support for the forthcoming fund raising campaign.
- The Student Recruitment and Retention Committee welcomed a report on continued attention to activities focused on increasing student retention, met with newly-elected leaders of the Student Association, and received a report on student recruitment for Fall 2010.
- The Finance Committee noted a substantial recovery of the University's investment portfolio, received a status report on the FY '10 budget, noted ongoing work in preparing the FY '11 budget, and approved a required bond resolution.
- The University Mission Committee dedicated its entire meeting to reviewing a draft of the ten-year accreditation self-study report to be completed over the summer months and submitted in the fall to the Higher Learning Commission.

- The Committee on Trustees recommended a defined calendar for scheduling regular meetings of the board in the fall, winter, and spring, and recommended a slate of Board officers for the coming year, as follows:
  - Chair – David Helwig
  - Vice Chair – Mark Lindberg
  - Secretary – Tomás Ivens
  - Treasurer – David Hanson
  - At-large member of the Executive Committee – Bonnie Pihl
  
- The Academic Committee recommended approval of the Faculty Senate By-Laws and revisions to the Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures. The Committee also heard from faculty representatives to the Board and endorsed a continuing institutional commitment to curricular and co-curricular programming centered on global cultures. The Academic Committee also recommended approval of faculty tenure and promotion actions as presented by the Faculty Personnel Committee, the Provost, and the President. [Approved candidates are noted in a section below.]
  
- The Board affirmed the structure for the president’s performance appraisal as implemented in recent years, and will add the chair of the Faculty Senate as one of the individuals interviewed in this process. The appraisal committee will include David Helwig, Mark Lindberg, and David Hanson.

## **FACULTY PROMOTIONS AND TENURE APPOINTMENTS**

We extend congratulations to the following members of the faculty for their approval as tenured members of the faculty and/or promotions in academic rank. Appointment to tenure and/or promotion in rank reflects the positive recommendation of the Faculty Personnel Committee, the Provost, and the President, as well as review by the Academic Committee of the Board of Trustees and approval by the full Board.

- Promotion to Professor
  - Liza Ann Acosta
  - Kathryn Maier-O’Shea
  - Jonathan Rienstra-Kiracofe
- Promotion to Associate Professor
  - Ilsup Ahn
  - Joel Willitts
- Tenured, with promotion to Associate Professor
  - Kristy Odelius
  - Matthew Schau
- Tenured
  - Angelyn Bartolomei
  - Chad Eric Bergman

- Rachelle Ankney
- Gertrude DeWaters
- Alice Gorguis
- Bradley Nassif

## **TRANSITIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE SEMINARY**

As the search for new leadership for the seminary will continue during 2010-2011 a transitional leadership structure will be in place throughout the academic year.

During the transitional year, the seminary's senior leadership team will include the following individuals:

- Linda Cannell – with continued responsibilities for academics; she also will be responsible to coordinate preparation of a plan for securing funds for programmatic initiatives
- Deb Auger – with continued responsibilities for student life
- Tim Johnson – with continued responsibilities in field education but not longer responsible for chapel planning; on a part-time basis he will also assume some of the church-based responsibilities normally undertaken by the seminary president, with primary emphasis on collaboration with the Council of Superintendents, the Board of the Ordered Ministry, and the Pastoral Relations Committee.

The seminary senior leadership team will report to and collaborate with the University President throughout the year; these four will meet together approximately every three weeks.

Administrative needs not identified above will be addressed on a case-by-case basis throughout the year, in consultation with the seminary's leadership team and the University President.

This structure was considered through the spring semester in conversation with seminary faculty and staff and subsequently recommended to the Board of Trustees by the University President. The supporting rationale for this structure includes the following notes:

- The "cast of characters" is familiar to all; for the most part, individuals will be expected to fulfill their present responsibilities as a means to providing overall leadership for the seminary community throughout the year.
- This model provides a good context for supporting effective working relationships between seminary personnel, the University President, and others on the university's senior leadership team.
- Important administrative, church, and development functions are effectively cared for with only modest disruption to normally assigned responsibilities.
- The impact on North Park's budget is minimal, which is important in a challenging budget year in which we will add a new seminary faculty position.

The search for new seminary leadership will continue through the summer and into the fall semester by the appointed search committee.