

PRESIDENT'S OCCASIONAL CAMPUS COMMUNIQUÉ

April 5, 2011

The President's Perspective – A Brief Essay

The sixth of North Park's seven educational ideals commits us to providing an education that "seeks to form and transform the whole student (intellectually, socially, and spiritually)."

The first five ideals draw attention to the basis for a North Park education, the ends toward which a North Park education is directed, and the method through which these outcomes are achieved. With this sixth ideal the focus is shifted directly to the individual student and the breadth of interests the student brings to the learning context.

At North Park we assume responsibility for educating the whole student, the individual in the full complexity of what it means to be human. Jesus embraced the full complexity of being human when he was asked, as a teacher(!), to identify the greatest commandment. He replied: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all you soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:39). These three aspects of being human are reflected in the concluding phrase of the University's Vision Statement: ". . . where faith, learning, and service meet."

Just as loving God to the fullest requires all of one's being, so at North Park we hold that education should embrace our whole person. We are people of intellect (mind), we are people of faith (heart), and we have a social nature (soul). A good education addresses the full complexity of our being.

Our commitment is to form and transform the whole person—to mold and remold, shape and reshape, direct and redirect the student's personal essence in heart, mind, and soul—toward becoming the person of God's intent. We embrace the responsibility to graduate students who love God and serve their neighbor as broadly as humanly possible—in heart, soul, and mind.

The formation and transformation of students toward these purposes is powerfully influenced by the character of our learning community and the presence of a corresponding institutional culture at North Park. In turn, the integrity of this learning community and the vitality of our institutional culture rests on the values, actions, and contributions—the character—of its various members. The learning community molds us, and we in turn shape the learning community. We form the culture of this place and we also are transformed by this same culture.

Reaching this educational ideal requires an intentional learning community and a distinctive institutional culture. Such a commitment to educating the whole student does not succeed by chance; it must, rather, be part of the very fabric—the agenda—which pervades, brings color to, and adorns all of who we are and the full breadth of what we do. We form and transform students not by virtue of how we describe ourselves but rather as a direct outcome of who we are, individually and collectively. We form and transform in heart, soul, and mind because as members of this community we ourselves have been (and continue to be) formed and transformed intellectually, socially, and spiritually.

We love God and we love our neighbor—with heart and soul and mind.

Faculty and Staff Professional Development

The institutional character which I address in the essay above is molded by who each of us is as a member of the faculty and staff at North Park and by whom each of us is becoming. To this end, each spring semester on the Monday following Easter Sunday, we devote a full day toward our individual and collective professional development.

Scheduled this year for Monday, April 25, the program features an array of workshops designed to foster our collective institutional life. We'll gather together for breakfast and from there go our individual and group ways to select from the scheduled workshops and seminars. The program opportunities are planned to involve each of us with our individual interests and areas of responsibility. From students in crisis, to Moodle, to justice education, to marketing, to Dialogue...there's a seminar and then another for each of us. The full list of workshops has been distributed to all faculty and staff in recent days and will be available again as we come closer to this day. Pick your favorites, attend alone or in a group, and in doing so be better prepared for your work responsibilities and ministry to students.

Recognizing Student Accomplishments

The end of the school year means we pause, on a number of occasions, to recognize student accomplishments. This culminates in our three commencement convocations but it extends far beyond this as well. From senior music recitals and art exhibits to athletic awards, from inductions into honor societies to recognition of student employees. Most of these programs take place on a divisional level—within an academic department, in one of our schools or the seminary, in a particular workplace, for graduate students and undergraduates. And as it is your pleasure to have worked with certain students during their years here please take time to participate in those moments in which their work and accomplishments are recognized.

As a University we host three programs of recognition which are dedicated to cross-departmental awards for undergraduate students. I encourage wide-spread participation

in these programs—our presence at each of these events serves as a wonderful means of encouragement for students. These three include:

- The Multicultural Awards Banquet and Dance on Friday, April 8 – Sponsored by our Collaboratory for Urban and Intercultural Learning and hosted at the Irish American Heritage Center. Tickets are required and are available through the Collaboratory.
- The Undergraduate Honors Convocation on Monday, April 18 – Sponsored by the Provost's Office with support from several academic units this event recognizes the academic and leadership accomplishments of students in an array of program areas. Seating is open for this event in Anderson Chapel at 10:30 a.m.
- The 5th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium on May 4 – Planned by the Ad Hoc Committee on Undergraduate Research this afternoon program offers select students the opportunity to present their senior-year research projects and honors work. Attendance at the Symposium is open to students, faculty and staff.

Faculty Authors

In recent weeks two books edited by North Park faculty have been published. Congratulations to Paul De Neui and Boaz Johnson.

- Paul H. De Neui, ed., *Suffering: Christian Reflections on Buddhist Dukkha* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2011) – Volume 8 in the SEANET Series
- Roger E. Hedlund, Sebastian Kim, and Rajkumar Boaz Johnson, eds., *Indian and Christian: The Life and Legacy of Pandita Ramabai* (London: MIIS/CMS/SPCK, 2011) – Funding for this project was provided by Cambridge University through the Christianity in Asia project.

Lent, Holy Week and Easter

This is a special time in the church year and thereby in the calendar of our spiritual lives. In these days we walk in the way of Christ's suffering, and we also share in the resurrection of Christ; herein we discover that the way of cross is "none other than the way of life and peace." May these be days in which we rise with Christ to newness of life.