

# PRESIDENT'S OCCASIONAL CAMPUS COMMUNIQUÉ

June 17, 2011

## The President's Perspective – A Brief Essay

The last of North Park's seven educational ideals commits us to providing an education that "values each student for who he or she is and will become."

Students are the heart of the North Park University. They are the good of this place.

We admit prospective students on the basis of who they are—from the experiences they have faced, to the talents they have developed, to the accomplishments they have achieved, to the grades they have posted in school. We also admit prospective students for their potential—to learn, stretch, grow, thrive, and mature. We value who our students are and who they will become.

This is an act of faith for faculty and staff at North Park University. Students hold promise and they have potential. We count on this, as uncertain and unproven as it may be. And we do not realize until years later the extent our faith has reached until our graduates mature into adulthood.

This is also an act of faith for students. In coming to North Park they express trust in us—we who teach and instruct, who coach and mentor, who counsel and direct. We say they can count on us for their education, but this promise must be measured against the standard of each student's experience over years to come.

We expect our students to change, to become more tomorrow than they are today. With students at the center of this University, we aspire to be a place of formational and transformational learning, shaped by our commitment of faith, our setting in the city, and our relationships across cultures.

We care for our students today—how they act justly, love kindness, and walk with God in the present. And we care for our student's future—how they will do justice, love kindness, and walk with God in every tomorrow. This place where students learn to know (basic facts and formulas) must also be a place where students learn to be (who God intends for them to be) and where they learn to become (who God intends for them to become). We teach more than facts; we form the person, we transform the individual.

North Park University is small enough to know the individual yet large enough to offer a community. Each student is part of, and each student lives within, a community of learning—a place of people of energy, imagination, reflection, care, and commitment.

Our students are, and will become, people who contribute to the broader social community—at home, at work, in the neighborhood, at church.

Our aim is to be with students but for a while. To have hold of them today, so we can send them forth tomorrow. To serve them today, so they may serve the world in every tomorrow.

This is our sacred obligation.

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### **May Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

On the same weekend as commencement we hosted the Board of Trustees for their annual spring meeting. A copy of my written report to the Board will be distributed electronically to all faculty and staff.

- At the spring meeting we recognized the following trustees whose five year term has concluded:
  - Scott Bolinder
  - David Greenidge
  - Mark Lindberg
  - Ted VanDerMeid
  
- The following officers were elected to lead the Board during 2011-2012:
  - Dave Helwig, Chairman
  - Paul Hawkinson, Vice Chairman
  - Karen Tamte, Secretary
  - Dave Hanson, Treasurer

### **Faculty Promotions and Tenure Appointments**

We extend congratulations to the following members of the faculty who were recently approved for tenure and/or promoted in academic rank.

- Tenured, with promotion to Full Professor
  - Paul De Neui
  - Johnny Wei-Bing Lin
- Tenured, with promotion to Associate Professor
  - Laura Burt
  - Nnenna Okore
- Promotion to Full Professor
  - Rachelle Ankney
  - Elizabeth Gray
  - Lida Nedilsky

- Kurt W. Peterson
- Kelly Vanderbrug
- Tenured
  - Ilsup Ahn
  - Joan Andrea
  - Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom
  - Jonathan Rienstra-Kiracofe

We will formally and publically recognize these individuals at an Academic Convocation on September 26, 2011, at 10:30 a.m. in Anderson Chapel

### **Update on the Seminary Leadership Search**

At the May meeting of the Board of Trustees the committee appointed to lead the search for new leadership in the seminary presented a report of its work to date. Over recent months the committee has affirmed the search parameters and the primary search criteria. Applications have been received from several candidates and the committee completed interviews with several of the applicants. The search will continue into the coming academic year.

### **Campaign North Park**

Our work in fund raising has continued on a very active basis this past year focused primarily on activities in the quiet phase for Campaign North Park. During March and April we also held a number of regional events across the country, gathering with friends of North Park to introduce the campaign. In the first week of May we also hosted two gatherings on campus to inform faculty and staff and invite their participation in the campaign. On June 4 we formally launched the public phase of the campaign in a festive gathering and program on campus.

Overall Campaign North Park has a goal of \$57 million, with \$42 million dedicated to a new science and community life building. At the June 4 event we announced that as of that date \$30.3 million had been committed to the building goal. More information on the campaign is available online at [www.northpark.edu/campaign](http://www.northpark.edu/campaign).

### **The Past Year at North Park**

In my annual performance self-appraisal I highlighted several important parts of campus life and activities we've undertaken in these areas over the past year. The following were among the items I discussed.

Accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. We completed the self-study report early in the fall semester and hosted the visiting team in November. In April we received formal notice from the Commission of reaffirmation of our accreditation for a ten-year period. Joe Jones, our provost, provided particular leadership for this task over the past two years.

Undergraduate Recruitment and Retention. Throughout the year we sought to follow-through on recommendations by external consultants in these two areas during 2009-2010. In the area of student recruitment this included greater attention to marketing message and materials, professional development of our recruitment staff, and dedicated efforts to increase the number of applications. In the area of student retention we developed the EARS project which assists faculty and others to identify students in need, introduced Bridge activities to facilitate social engagement of students in their first year, initiated changes in our housing policy and practice to encourage on-campus residency in the junior year, reviewed our work with the first-year experience, and established the Undergraduate Student Persistence Council to guide cross-institutional attention to these needs. Mark Olson, dean of admissions, and Andrea Nevels, vice president for student development, contributed much to these efforts through their direct work and leadership.

Leadership Appointments. We achieved a successful addition to the senior leadership team in December with the appointment of Nate Mouttet as vice president for enrollment and marketing. He has been embraced well by his senior team colleagues, by staff members in the areas that report through him, and by the campus community at large, and I am confident of his ability to lead in these critical parts of our program.

Faculty Senate. This was the first year for the new governance structure for the faculty. Nancy Arneson chaired the Senate as it sought to understand its role and determine how to be most effective. Provost Jones served as the primary liaison of the senior leadership team with the Senate.

Athletics. Increased attention to student recruitment and retention through the athletics program was continued this year, building on initiatives of the previous year which established clear expectations for each coach and also introduced graduate assistants in several areas. The coaching staff also participated in several recruitment training sessions with admission personnel. Additionally, team conference championships were achieved in men's soccer and baseball.

FY'11 Budget. With assistance from all budget managers, and with leadership from Carl Balsam, executive vice president, our budget this year has been carefully monitored. The year-end surplus will be applied to campus improvement projects, in large part because we do not fund for depreciation in our annual operating budget.

Campaign North Park. This has been an active year in the campaign. We have produced print, web, and video communication pieces. We also continued our work with lead donors in the campaign's quiet phase. Through the spring semester we hosted public events in a number of locations across the country and in early June hosted a formal launch event on campus. Though our work-to-date has been quite successful we are still challenged by the informal goal of completing fund-raising for the building portion of the campaign by the end of 2011. The leadership and hard work of Mary

SurrIDGE, vice president for development, has been critical to the success we have achieved.

Trustee Leadership. Throughout the year I gave concerted attention to recruiting individuals to serve on the University's Board of Trustees. The seven trustees who will join the Board this summer is a particularly strong group. This has been an important project, and is one that will demand equal attention in coming years.

Reaching Out. This was an important year for increasing our presence in Chicago and around the world. The introduction of the David Nyvall Medallion presented an opportunity to recognize the work of Richard M. Daley on his retirement from service as mayor of the city. The annual symposium organized by the Axelson Center was moved to a downtown location this year and continued to successfully engage a wide audience in the Chicagoland non-profit community. The participation by Mayor Rahm Emmanuel in the symposium program also affirmed the important space occupied by the Axelson Center in this community. Our visit to China in January, and the faculty and student exchange activity that is part of the Memos of Understanding signed with five Chinese universities, confirms that this may be a significant new avenue for learning and scholarship for our students and faculty, even as the SVF program has offered an international learning opportunity for the past 35 years.

## **Books to Recommend**

I have a habit at the end of each academic year of looking over the list of books I've read during the past 12 months. I've "met" some 40 new authors this year, and from the abbreviated list below you may appreciate adding one or two of the following to your summer reading list.

Richard H. Bailey, *Coherence: How Telling the Truth Will Advance Your Cause (and Save the World)*

- You may not be able to judge a book by its cover, but a book with your notes in the margins is probably a very good thing. (p. i)
- Respect the discerning customer. Describe a product honestly, then stand back and let buyers decide if they want it, and how badly. (p. 34)
- Coherence is aligning what we deliver with what we say we deliver. (p. 46)
- We get so accustomed to *us*, we fail to notice how special we are. (p. 63)

Edward Glasser, *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*

- Athens flowered because of small random events that then multiplied through urban interaction. One smart person met another and sparked a new idea. That idea inspired someone else, and all of a sudden something really important occurred.... Ideas move from person to person within dense urban spaces, and this exchange occasionally creates miracles of human creativity. (p. 19)
- Cities enable the collaboration that makes humanity shine brightly. Because humans learn so much from other humans, we learn more when there are more

people around us. Urban density creates a constant flow of new information that comes from observing others' successes and failures. In a big city, people can choose peers who share their interests, just as Monet and Cézanne found each other in 19<sup>th</sup> century Paris, or Belushi and Aykroyd found each other in 20<sup>th</sup> century Chicago. Cities make it easier to watch and listen and learn. Because the essential characteristic of humanity is our ability to learn from each other, cities make us more human. (p. 247)

John and Doris Naisbitt, *China's Megatrends: The Eight Pillars of a New Society*

- The American eagle is being challenged by a once clumsy panda. (p. 7)
- In 1978 168,000 students received undergraduate degrees from universities in China. By 2007 this number had exceeded 4.5 million annually. (paraphrased, p. 14)
- China and the United States constitute the most important bilateral relationship in the world. (p. 156)
- If America's problem is that children and employees are too undisciplined China's problem is that they are too disciplined. (p. 198)

Stanley Hauerwas, *Hannah's Child: A Theologian's Memoir*

- There is no substitute for learning to be a Christian by being in the presence of significant lives made significant by being Christian. (p. 95)
- Marriages are forged from the everyday. We are given time through our promises to have our lives joined in a common history that does not require the loss of our differences. (p. 250)

Gail Caldwell, *Let's Take the Long Way Home. A Memoir of Friendship*

- It's an old, old story: I had a friend and we shared everything, and then she died and we shared that too. (p. 3)
- My life had made so much sense alongside hers: For years we had played the easy, daily game of catch that intimate connection implies. One ball, two gloves, equal joy in the throw and the return. Now I was in the field without her: one glove, no game. Grief is what tells you who you are alone. (p. 3)
- The real hell of this is that you're going to get through it. (p. 163)
- The heart endures its amputation. (p. 163)

Judith Shulevitz, *The Sabbath World: Glimpses of a Different Order of Time*

- We have to remember to stop because we have to stop to remember. (p. 217)

## **Summer**

During the summer our campus is quieter, but our work continues: recruiting and registering students, planning for the upcoming academic year, addressing needed maintenance projects, and continuing to visit with friends of the university.

My hope is that while our responsibilities and work continue in their respective areas throughout the summer we will also find moments of leisure with family and friends along with periods for personal rest and restoration of spirit. Blessings to each of you.