

## OCCASIONAL CAMPUS COMMUNIQUE

October 10, 2013

### The President's Perspective – A Brief Reflection

As I introduced in my September communique, each month this year I will draw our attention to two of the “cultural markers” identified in NPU@125+ as values we claim in order to shape our life and work together at North Park. In September the two cultural markers identified were (a) Follow Mission and (b) Center on Students. The next two markers are these—both worthy of our reflection as we enter the middle of the fall semester.

(3) Partner Well

*We engage the assets of others to support educational initiatives even as we share our resources with others for their well-being. Our primary partners will include the Evangelical Covenant Church, other churches, and the diverse business, medical, educational, nonprofit, civic, and religious contexts of Chicago.*

(4) Collaborate Effectively

*We apportion personnel and build expertise across all educational units at the University. In the unity of our mission we will work side-by-side and across units and departments to accomplish more together than would be possible individually.*

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### Fall 2013 Enrollment Summary and Budget Implications

At the beginning of each year many people ask me how the year is going...are we off to a good start? As you can imagine, there are a lot of different ways to respond, depending on the factors of greatest interest. Some people want to know how construction on the new building is progressing, some want to know where enrollment stands, some want to know if our athletic teams are doing well, and some want to know if we're ready for the next time the river floods.

Because we work at North Park we're interested in each of these areas and in plenty of others as well. As we come to the University each day we're aware of the palpable momentum at North Park—the campus has never looked better and a lot of good things are happening in this learning community. At the same time, because we're familiar with the challenges present in higher education today we also know North Park is not immune to these pressures.

And it is for this reason that I've written this message—to alert each of us, in summary form, to great opportunities before us and challenges as well.

### Enrollment Overview

At the end of this message I have attached our annual enrollment census data for the Fall Semester 2013, with comparison data for the past several years. Please note there are two sets of data—the first covers NEW student enrollment and the second addresses TOTAL enrollment in our various programs. In all cases the data report “headcount” (meaning the number of individual students enrolled) rather than FTE.

In these data you'll notice areas of substantial success and other areas of some disappointment and concern. The purpose of communicating with you is to note these areas, to identify the impact on the FY '14 operating budget, and to request your continued collaboration in student recruitment and retention, program development, and budget management.

In summary format, here are some of the notable data points:

- Enrollment of NEW undergraduate students is higher than last year's low mark; we anticipated this year's enrollment would be somewhat higher than it was last year, but final enrollment this year was marked by unexpected “melt” during the weeks leading to the beginning of the semester as well as the first few weeks of the semester itself. This year's class of 585 new undergraduate students stands mid-way between last year's low of 546 and the high of 675 from two years ago.
- Enrollment of NEW students in SAL is consistent with the relative high mark of the past four years, though total enrollment is lower than we have seen in recent years.
- Enrollment of NEW students in graduate programs in the SBNM is at a record level, with total enrollment reaching 379, or 11.8% higher than last year.
- Enrollment of NEW students in the RN completion program continues a decline noticeable in recent years, whereas enrollment of NEW students in the nursing graduate program is at a record level. Total enrollment in the graduate nursing program (at 190 students) is higher than we had expected to reach, with an increase of 21.8% over last year.
- No NEW students have enrolled in the education certification program, reflecting a trend from the past several years.
- Enrollment of NEW students in the graduate program in education is a bit higher than last year's low mark, yet our total enrollment of 116 is at a disappointing level, 24.7% lower than last year.
- Enrollment of NEW students in the graduate program in music is at a record high of 10, with total enrollment increasing by 62%.
- Enrollment of NEW students in the seminary is low in every level of study (degree-seeking, credential, and non-degree-seeking). Total enrollment of degree-seeking students is 151, which is 17% lower than last year.

Of course there are other data points we should attend to, and perhaps the most important of these—and the most encouraging—is information on student retention. One of the specific points to measure is the rate at which first-year students return for their second-year; that is, the percentage of undergraduates new to college one year who return the following year for their third semester.

Over the past year or more as a campus community we've given considerably increased attention to this topic. We've endeavored to be more attentive to the needs of students in their first year and have tried to support their success at least into the start of their second year. As part of this effort faculty have been more intentional in advising students, educators across the campus have submitted EARS reports when they identify a student who is struggling, and members of the student life staff have closely monitored student progress and helpfully intervened when appropriate.

What has been the result? Well, look at the numbers in the chart below:

<b>Fall-to-Fall "First-Year Student" Retention</b>			
<i>Entrance Year</i>	<i>Number Enrolled</i>	<i>Number Returning in Semester 3</i>	<i>Percentage Returning in Semester 3</i>
2009	364	248	68.1
2010	381	278	73.0
2011	425	305	71.8
2012	346	279	<b>80.6</b>

Over the past four years retention to semester three has increased from 68.1% to 80.6%, and in the most recent year the increase measured 8.8% in that single year!

Congratulations to everyone. This is a great accomplishment, one we can be proud of certainly, but also one we know is very important to the success of our students.

### FY '14 Operating Budget

In the aggregate these high and low marks in enrollment have an impact on our annual operating budget. To assess the impact, headcounts (as shown on the attachments) are converted to FTEs (full-time equivalent students) to calculate gross revenue and then financial aid (the tuition discount given to students by North Park) is subtracted to establish the net revenue variances for program units.

In the aggregate, the resources available to us this year (as identified through the FTE and financial aid analysis) stand at \$740,000 under the established budget. This doesn't rise to the level of a crisis, but it does point to the need to reduce our expenditures and to identify ways to increase revenue through the school year (i.e., increased mid-year retention and stronger enrollments at entry points throughout the year). We are

committed to operating with a balanced budget so we must be dedicated to resolving the revenue deficit before the end of the fiscal year.

More than this, a variance of this magnitude points to the critical need to invest our energy, creativity, and commitment to identify and implement necessary changes to effectively respond to the rapidly evolving context of higher education nationally and of North Park particularly.

### Enrollment Appraisal and Renewed Attention

Throughout this past year we have given careful and concerted attention to both the recruitment of new students and the retention of continuing students at all levels of study. In many ways this has served us well: (a) retention of returning undergraduates has increased, (b) recruitment of new undergraduates is stronger than last year's uncharacteristically low new student enrollment, (c) and recruitment of new students in select graduate programs is especially strong. These accomplishments come in large measure through dedicated recruiters, involvement of faculty and staff at all levels, and effective leadership in recruitment, student life, and academics.

We also realize certain lower performing aspects of our efforts this past year. In response to these we have gathered four summit sessions to identify factors which detained our recruitment efforts and steps required for improved performance in the coming year for four critical areas: enrollment of (a) undergraduates from congregations of the Evangelical Covenant Church, (b) undergraduates in SAL, (c) graduate students in the School of Education, and (d) degree-seeking students in the seminary.

Yet our environment is changing very rapidly, and in some ways it is becoming more complex and challenging. For this reason during this past year we initiated the Strategic Enrollment Planning project, in conjunction with the final stages of preparing a new institutional plan for North Park, popularly known as *NPU@125+*. Because of this effort we are ready to launch several new academic programs and other recruitment- and retention-supporting initiatives that we believe will positively impact future enrollment. In addition, the SEP process will lead to additional programs proposed for approval throughout this academic year and into the next. The work of SEP and the design and implementation of selective new academic and co-curricular programs is critical to our institutional well-being, and will continue through this coming year and beyond.

Through recent and continuing projects we have addressed critical facility needs and have also strategically strengthened our institutional appeal to prospective students in making certain capital investments. Most notably these developments include improvement in our campus frontage and institutional identity along Foster and Kedzie Avenues and substantial improvements to our dining facility, as well as construction of the Johnson Center. These investments are made from capital funds separate from the University's annual operating budget. These improvements are complementary to a strong SEP effort and we expect they will make North Park a more desirable place for our students' educational experience. North Park's ability to recruit, enroll, and retain—

and ultimately to graduate—students is directly related to the adoption of new educational programs combined with the completion of new and renewed facilities.

These combined factors identify both the promise and the challenge of our future. We have much going for us, and like all institutions we face challenges that slow our momentum. It is critical that we align all of our programs with the priority markers identified in *NPU@125+* so as to locate the University in a position of strength. Simultaneously, we must develop new student offerings in line with these priorities and with areas of strong market demand. And we must apply our resources carefully and deliberately, always spending wisely and investing strategically.

Throughout, I am encouraged because we work together. More than at any other time during my eight years at North Park the momentum at the University is palpable, our will is strong, and our commitment to partnering together for the best of North Park’s future is exceptional.

Summary Comments

Several responses are required:

- The senior leadership team and budget managers will monitor expenditures throughout the fiscal year and identify a plan to restore a balanced budget by fiscal year end.
- Attention will be focused on recruiting new undergraduate, graduate, and seminary students for entry points throughout the rest of the academic year.
- Continued attention will be directed to retention of undergraduate students, and new efforts to realize increased retention in SAL and all graduate programs will be directed by the respective school deans.
- The good work of SEP will be continued with urgency, and faculty leaders in select disciplines will be invited to participate in curriculum development in areas consistent with our institutional mission and priority markers identified in *NPU@125+*, and which hold market promise.

Thank you for fulfilling so well the responsibilities assigned to you, and for working side-by-side with the member of the senior leadership team responsible for your part of North Park’s program.

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**New Student Enrollment Summary  
Fall Semester – Annual Census Data**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<i>Undergraduate (traditional)</i>									
First-Year	359	374	373	415	364	381	425	346	373
Transfer	246	229	217	179	205	211	244	192	210
Visiting				12	7	10	6	8	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>585</b>

*Undergraduate (non-traditional)*

College Bridge	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
ESL	53	20	22	19	4	12	5	0	0
RN Completion	34	11	33	15	16	10	9	10	7
SAL	66	41	61	45	33	61	54	62	59
Education Certification	12	26	48	19	8	10	1	6	0
TOTAL	167	98	137	99	61	93	69	78	66

*Graduate*

SBNM	85	95	88	88	74	95	91	76	101
MS Nursing	40	32	30	39	29	26	29	27	39
Adult Nurse Practitioner	2	5	10	2	2	5	1	2	3
MA Education (all sites)	40	55	61	61	67	41	70	22	41
MA Community Development	10	7	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master of Music	7	7	5	4	3	4	5	5	10
TOTAL	184	201	204	194	175	171	196	132	194

*Seminary*

Degree-Seeking*	75	47	61	40	75	47	40	28	19
Dual Degree**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	3	5
Credential	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	5	8	2
Other Non-Degree Seeking	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	17	16	14
TOTAL	75	47	61	40	75	61	62	55	40

GRAND TOTAL New Students 1,033 949 997 939 887 927 1002 811 885

International Exchange (non-revenue) 18 10 21 9 23 19 23 18

NPTS Cross Registered 0 3 3 0 5 4 3 3 5

\*Prior to 2010 all seminary enrollment data does not distinguish between degree-seeking, credential, and other non-degree seeking students.

\*\*Beginning in 2012 seminary students enrollment for dual degree are identified separately from those seeking a single degree.

**Headcount Report (Total Enrollment)  
Fall Semester – Annual Census Data**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<i>Undergraduate (traditional)</i>								
Returning	1133	1255	1276	1266	1244	1249	1343	1334
First-Year	374	373	415	364	381	425	346	373
Transfer	229	217	179	205	211	244	192	210
Visiting		9	12	17	14	11	15	8

TOTAL	1736	1854	1882	1852	1850	1929	1896	1925
<i>Undergraduate (non-traditional)</i>								
College Bridge	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
ESL	31	29	24	6	15	5	0	0
RN Completion	47	83	81	83	78	50	45	46
SAL	210	237	240	214	252	228	245	228
Education Certification	42	69	63	44	46	23	17	6
Special (students-at-large)	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	337	418	409	347	391	306	307	280
<i>Graduate</i>								
SBNM	344	329	353	337	382	372	339	379
MS Nursing	144	136	151	167	169	161	156	190
Adult Nurse Practitioner	15	21	20	21	16	16	12	12
MA Education (all sites)	141	162	169	188	154	168	154	116
MA Community Development	30	28	13	5	0	0	0	0
Master of Music	13	15	14	10	10	11	13	21
TOTAL	687	691	720	728	731	728	674	718
TOTAL Undergraduate & Graduate	2782	2967	3016	2932	2977	2963	2877	2923
<i>Seminary</i>								
Degree-Seeking*	287	284	269	269	213	188	179	143
Dual Degree**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0	3	8
Credential	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	11	20	15
Other Non-Degree Seeking	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	56	61	63	52
TOTAL	287	284	269	269	277	260	265	218
GRAND TOTAL Headcount	3069	3251	3285	3201	3254	3223	3142	3141
International Exchange (non-revenue)	0	9	23	9	24	23	23	19
NPTS Cross Registered	4	4	5	5	5	3	6	5

\*Prior to 2010 all seminary enrollment data does not distinguish between degree-seeking, credential, and other non-degree seeking students.

\*\*Beginning in 2012 seminary students enrollment for dual degrees are identified separately from those seeking a single degree.