

# FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT DAVID L. PARKYN

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER TO LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY DONORS  
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*“We will  
engage our  
minds and  
labor with  
our hands,  
and we  
will trust  
in the Lord  
with our  
hearts.”*

## POWER AND AUTHORITY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

This has been an interesting fall semester on our campus.

- In August, we welcomed the largest number of students in history to enroll at North Park University.
- As rain fell for an extended weekend in mid-September, the Chicago River overflowed its banks and flooded parts of campus, forcing us to close the Magnuson Campus Center for several weeks and requiring us to relocate a number of classes scheduled in this building. We also had to move our campus dining room to an alternate location and cook most meals off-campus for a period of time. Repairs to this building are expected to cost \$2 million, and as you can imagine, this is proving to be a considerable challenge to our operating budget.
- Homecoming Weekend brought a large number of guests to campus, and included a block party along Carmen Avenue at which we welcomed not only returning alumni and friends but also a large number of residents from our neighborhood in Albany Park.
- The Board of Trustees met in late October, interested to learn how instability in our national and international economies will affect the financial standing of the University.

There is a constant throughout all these challenges, however: *students continue to learn*. And this remains our high priority. As we celebrate with alumni returning to campus, as we serve meals to 1,000 students each day in a makeshift dining room, as we watch the investment markets—we still give our best attention to students who are preparing for lives of significance and service.

In mid-October Samuel Betances spoke to the campus community for our Wednesday Chapel service, as part of a month-long celebration of Hispanic heritage within our campus and across the nation. At the invitation of the University Ministries team, he spoke on the theme of power and authority.

What is the relationship between power and authority? Betances answered this way: Goliath had the power, but David had divine authority. King Ahasuerus had the power, but Queen Esther had divine authority. The jail keeper had the power, but Paul had divine authority. Pilate had the power, but Jesus had divine authority. (Even as I write these words I can again hear the powerful cadence of this skilled preacher. Can you?)

Lives of Significance and Service

**NORTH PARK  
UNIVERSITY**  
CHICAGO

Belances is right, and remembering this biblical ideal can serve us well, especially in uncertain and challenging times. This does not mean life will always go as we want. It does not even mean we will always get what we think we deserve or what we think we've earned. It does mean that if we, like the Psalmist, will wait on the Lord we will see the goodness of God.

## NORTH PARK'S FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

As we are all aware, the current economic environment, both nationally and internationally, is affecting businesses and corporations, churches and nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities, as well as families and individuals across the country. Most of the news is discouraging and often confusing; we suspect we should be alarmed but we are not sure how we should respond.

In this context many are wondering how North Park University specifically is being affected by these changes in our economy. I appreciate your concern for the University.

Several things are clear to me as North Park's president.

- As a result of very careful management, considerable growth in enrollment, and the faithfulness of donor friends, the financial context of the past five years has been the most stable in North Park's history. For example, not only do we have a number of new and renovated buildings on campus, we have also been able to gradually reach a median benchmark for faculty salaries.
- In spite of the very positive direction of our most recent years we still have considerable work to do. Though we have increased salaries, we still need to give attention to compensation in light of the high cost of living in the urban context. Though our budget is stable, we still need to increase program support in many areas. Though our facilities have been improved, we still have considerable deferred maintenance and we need additional new facilities. Much has been accomplished, and much more is left to be addressed in the future.
- The present national and international economic environment poses an immediate challenge to the University's finances. The value of our endowment has been affected negatively by instability in the investment markets. The volatility of cost structures beyond our control—such as increases in utility and insurance costs—place constant demands on our tightly controlled operating budget. And changes in the national economy may challenge the ability of individual families to pay college-related expenses, which could affect our enrollment at all levels.

Nevertheless, as we face the future I'm encouraged in several ways. (a) We have a strong, highly skilled, and very committed Board of Trustees. These individuals give careful attention to fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities and continue to carefully monitor our investment portfolio and ensure that our investment policies are applied by those who manage these funds. (b) The University's present operating budget is stable. Our fall enrollment is strong resulting in tuition income that is important to our financial well-being. It will be important to build on this strong enrollment in the spring semester. And (c) our faculty and staff are fully committed to building our programs by recruiting new students and retaining those who chose to study with us. Everyone is stepping up to the challenge!

## A PRESSING CHALLENGE

At the same time that our national economy began to falter, the waters of the Chicago River overflowed onto our campus. This was an historic moment. Though we have photographs from the early years at North Park in which floodwaters reach near the back steps of Old Main, no one living today has seen the waters rise as high as they did in September.

For reasons of caution we vacated both Burgh and Anderson Residence Halls for two nights during the flooding. However, the worst damage to campus facilities took place in the basement of the Magnuson Campus Center, which supports the mechanical and utility requirements for both this building and several others. As a result of this damage, we were forced to close the building for several weeks. Classes originally assigned to Magnuson were relocated to various buildings and our central dining service was relocated to Hamming Hall. For several days meals were prepared in the kitchens at Northwestern University and brought to our campus. Subsequently, our contractors were able to make temporary provision for restoring use of the kitchen in the Magnuson Center, though the dining service itself remained in Hamming Hall. Finally, on October 20, we reopened the first and second floors of Magnuson. Some considerable work continues in repairing the building's mechanical systems but it is at least functional at this time.

*A recent cost estimate reaches \$2 million for full recovery of the damaged portions of the Magnuson Campus Center.* Clearly, this will affect the University's current budget significantly, even as we simultaneously respond to the challenges of the national economy.

We are looking to a variety of sources to help cover these expenses—from Chicago-based foundations to government loans—but most will be borne directly by the University.

And so we turn to faithful friends, like you, who have been loyal supporters of North Park for many years. As the calendar year draws to a close, *we ask (indeed, encourage!) that you consider making a special gift to North Park in support of our flood recovery efforts.* This is a one-time, extraordinary expense for us and we ask that you make a one-time, extraordinary gift to assist us in this time of deep need.

## POWER AND AUTHORITY RECONSIDERED

It is easy to feel that the future is out of our control. But the future has always been out of our control, although good times lend a mistaken sense of security in ourselves. We have little power to influence many of the forces around us. Yet we also have faith in divine authority. North Park University does not belong to us; it is part of God's Kingdom. God's caring hand will be upon this school. Our task is to "wait on the Lord."

Waiting on the Lord, however, is not a passive response. Even while we "wait" we will be active. We have students to teach, counsel, and mentor, and we will fulfill these responsibilities. We have a strategic plan to follow, and we will heed this compass. We have priorities to address, and we will satisfy them. We have budgets to monitor and students to recruit, and we will busy ourselves to these ends.

We will engage our minds and labor with our hands, and we will trust in the Lord with our hearts. It is to this end that we have been called, and it is to this end that we will be faithful.

As the recent meeting of the Board of Trustees began, and again as it ended, I proposed that we move into the days and months ahead “with caution.” And together with the Board we outlined steps toward such caution. Simultaneously, I encouraged the Board of Trustees, and I encourage us, to “be hopeful,” to keep an eye toward “things hoped for and things yet unseen.”

God charges us to act responsibly and to live hopefully. And so we will.

Thank you for partnering with us,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David L. Parkyn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David L. Parkyn  
President, North Park University

P.S. The flooding of the Magnuson Campus Center has presented an extraordinary expense for North Park. As the tax year ends we encourage you to make a one-time extraordinary gift to assist us in meeting this unusual need. Thank you for your faithfulness on behalf of our students.