

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
May 2012

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President

A Personal Note

I missed part of the spring semester.

As you know, a few weeks ago I needed to give attention to my personal well-being through preventive surgery and then take some time away from work responsibilities for physical recuperation. There's good news in this. First, reports from my physicians are all exactly as I would want them, with a prognosis that includes no areas of concern. And second, I'm now back to work on campus, perhaps not at a 100% energy-level but approaching this.

I deeply appreciate the interest, concern, and wishes for good health members of the Board have expressed in so many ways over recent weeks. Your prayers on my behalf and your love for Linda and me are meaningful expressions of community at North Park.

I am also deeply grateful for the wonderful senior leadership team I work with at North Park. Andrea, Carl, Joe, Mary, and Nate are great colleagues, and this is the perfect recipe for a time like this. Not only was I confident that all would be well at North Park in my absence, it was also the assurance of continuing effective leadership through the senior team that gave me the courage (what an odd word to use here!) to leave the workplace for a few weeks in order to care for myself personally.

A Second Personal Note

There's "grand" news from Linda and me this semester as well. Over the past eight weeks we've celebrated the birth of grandchildren numbers 3, 4, and 5!

On February 21 our daughter and son-in-law in Massachusetts, along with big brother and big sister, Will and Anna, celebrated the birth of Catherine (Cate) Rose. She's beautiful!

And on April 9 our son and daughter-in-law in Pennsylvania became dad and mom with the birth of Carter David (don't you just love this middle name!) and Ella Marie. Both babies are delightfully happy and healthy, though a bit sad because they haven't yet met their grandfather.

We have plans for the extended family to spend a week together in July on vacation in North Carolina on the Outer Banks. (Linda and I have also planned a second week of vacation for rest and recuperation immediately following the week with this growing family!)

Well, enough of family life, let's move on to the University.

Primary Feature of the Board Meeting Agenda

As you receive materials for the Board's committee meetings you'll find an agenda for each group that follows our usual patterns. Each of these meetings will provide an opportunity for members of the senior leadership team to lead discussions with you on topics of importance to the respective committee. You'll discover these to be special moments for celebration—our routine activities, which are so central to student learning, have gone well this year. You'll hear reports on these and engage in good discussion, on topics as varied as the student research symposium, graduate education at North Park, seminary faculty profile, annual fund opportunities, recruitment of the fall class for both undergraduate and graduate students, faculty promotion and tenure recommendations, and other important topics.

Central to our collective deliberation as a Board, however, will be consideration of a recommendation on the fundraising campaign and the new building.

At the February meeting I presented a framework for "Approaching a Decision to Build." This framework identifies three criteria for informing an eventual decision to build. The criteria include (a) building design and cost, (b) funding sources, and (c) plan of finance. At the May meeting of the Board we will consider the present status of each criterion.

In this context, the University's administrative team will present a "Recommendation to Build" and we will facilitate the Board's careful and deliberate review and assessment of our readiness to engage the construction process.

At the meeting's initial plenary session on Thursday afternoon, Mary Surrige, Carl Balsam, and I will present the substance of this recommendation. Subsequently the various criteria which inform this recommendation will be considered in-depth by the Board's committees. Specific action by the Board on the recommendation will take place in Executive Session on Friday afternoon.

As I'm sure you understand, this represents a critical point-of-decision for the Board. We have been working toward this moment over a number of years and with building plans,

funding sources, and a plan of finance coming close to the required synchronization we are now able to consider the appropriate next steps. This is an exciting moment in North Park's history, but it is also a moment which requires careful assessment by the Board of Trustees.

The senior leadership team and I consider construction of the new Science and Community Life Building a matter of urgency and critical importance for a number of reasons.

First, and most important, is the significant impact the new Science and Community Life Building will have on the recruitment and retention of students. The decision of prospective students (especially undergraduates) to attend North Park, the effectiveness of teaching and learning in our academic programs, and the promotion of student formation and transformation through the co-curriculum of North Park all will be shaped by how soon this building is constructed and opened.

Second, as enrollment (especially in the undergraduate program) has increased during the past several years we are facing a growing shortage of available space and flexibility of scheduling for programs and activities in many facilities on campus. We have sufficient residential space, and we have increased space for intercollegiate and intramural athletic activities in our most recent building projects. But space for academic programs (both in the sciences and for general classroom use) has become increasingly tight. Additionally, selective program units which support important co-curricular activities, and which foster active student engagement in the residential, urban, service, global, and spiritual experience are not adequately or effectively supported in our present facilities.

Third, we have engaged a highly effective design and construction team—a team comprised of a number of disciplines and firms, but a group which nonetheless has become a collaborative team with a single focus on this building. The services of this design and construction team will be compromised if we do not soon move forward with a construction schedule. In addition, the cost of construction will escalate if the schedule is extended.

Finally, putting shovel to the ground on this project will keep the flywheel turning (to borrow a phrase from Jim Collins) at North Park. Over recent years we have achieved considerable institutional momentum in a number of important areas, including University mission and identity, fundraising, campus improvements, urban connections, and student learning and engagement. This momentum, which is critical to our ongoing institutional well-being, will accelerate in ways which simply are not possible by any other means than through the construction of this new building.

For these reasons I am encouraging the Board of Trustees to receive our recommendation to begin construction of this building in a most positive light. This decision will require the Board's very careful and deliberate attention for fiduciary

reasons. And this decision requires the Board's full engagement for missional, strategic, and generative reasons as well.

Simply put, please come to the May meeting of the Board of Trustees prepared to work hard, assess critically, and imagine boldly.