

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES February 2013

David L. Parkyn President

A Promise

Here's what I can promise for our mid-year meeting of the Board of Trustees: When we're together on campus our conversations and meeting discussions will be rudely interrupted with the noise of construction!

Actually it isn't noise (rather it is beautiful music to our ears) and there's nothing rude about it (we've worked for a long time to reach exactly this point in the life of North Park).

Certainly there's great excitement on campus with the beginning of construction for The Johnson Center. Over the next 18 months we'll all eagerly watch as a big hole is dug, a foundation is poured, steel is erected, materials are applied, and the building takes shape.

A Second Promise

Here's a second promise I can make: There won't be quite as much "party-time" at the February meeting as there was during our October meeting. We had a great time, didn't we, celebrating the groundbreaking for The Johnson Center, dedicating the Becker Suite in the Nursing Simulation Laboratory, and participating in a great choral concert.

Updates on Important Matters

I'll comment briefly on a small number of items which were topics of importance at our October meeting, and which continue to be significant in our work throughout the year. More information on each of these topics will be provided during the meeting and in several committee sessions.

<u>Budget</u>. We're getting our hands around this year's budget challenge. When we met in October I indicated that because of a drop in enrollment we faced a deficit of \$2 million in this year's budget. Since that time we've addressed this deficit, and as the Finance Committee will see in detail, our deficit now is close to \$500,000. We've made good

progress and I'm thankful for the many people on campus who cooperated to make this re-balancing of the budget possible—and this includes each member of our faculty and staff as a portion of the deficit-reduction effort included a smaller compensation increase than had been planned.

We're committed to fully erasing the budget deficit before the end of the year. Budget managers across the campus continue to work with us on this, and I'm confident that at year-end we will together be able to celebrate a difficult, yet balanced, budget year.

Spring Enrollment. One aspect of responding to our budget need is linked to enrollment. I'm pleased to report that enrollment for the spring semester is good, with the particular numbers summarized in two tables at the end of this report. Recruitment of new undergraduate students reached close to the mark we anticipated, and more importantly, retention of returning students has been very strong. New students were also enrolled in each of our graduate programs, with a healthy increase among nurses and seminarians.

Student Recruitment for the Year Ahead. We're pleased to report a strong application period through the fall semester for next year's group of new undergraduates. But getting prospective students to apply is not enough. We need to turn those applications into deposits and into students studying at North Park in the fall. I like to think of it like this: From September to December we planted the seeds, watered and fertilized the soil, and watched young plants grow among us. In the spring semester we need to harvest that crop. We need to turn applications into registered students.

Just an hour ago (as I'm writing this on Friday afternoon, the 25th), I addressed all members of our faculty and staff during Gathering Day near the beginning of the fall semester. I told them of the need to harvest the crop, and then asked, "Whose work is this?" The answer is, "Ours." This spring will be filled with visitors to the campus, and we must warmly welcome each one. This spring will also be filled with phone calls, email and text messages, and personal visits with hundreds of prospective students. There's a place in this for each member of the faculty and staff—and we're ready for this, with each of us committed to finding our place and filling it.

A good number of people on the campus are also involved in a related project. Through this past semester and into the spring we are working with consultants from Noel-Levitz. This project has three components: to review our marketing plan and message, to consider how our program offerings should be extended to align with the interests of prospective students, and to develop a multi-year enrollment plan. This is important work, and members of the Board will hear much more of this at the February meeting and in subsequent meetings.

The Student Recruitment and Retention Committee will receive more information on these projects and will have time to assist us in assessing our work to date.

<u>Fundraising</u>. Our Development Office is working on the concluding aspects of Campaign North Park, but equally important is the work they are beginning to envision a robust post-campaign fundraising effort. This will be an important part of the discussion for the Advancement Committee.

Institutional Planning. We continue to plan for the University's future. During January and February I am meeting with 20 groups of faculty and staff from all parts of the campus to consider the strategic and longer term direction of the university. After this we'll revise our draft documents and also combine this with information we learn through the planning work undertaken with the assistance of Noel-Levitz. When the Board meets in May we'll have opportunity to consider important parts of this work, which will then continue through the summer and be brought back for the Board's consideration in the fall.

<u>Transition</u>. Just a few days ago Andrea Nevels told me she will be leaving North Park in mid-February to assume a new position in the Office of Student Affairs at the University of Illinois-Chicago. We'll miss Andrea, but we also wish her well in this new adventure.

As Andrea leaves I am very grateful to Elizabeth Snezek who has agreed to serve through the end of the academic year as Interim Dean of Students. I will be meeting in executive session with the Student Recruitment and Retention Committee to discuss plans for an ongoing leadership appointment.

Walking Alongside Our Students

During the 2011-2012 academic year I may have asked our faculty and staff for the impossible, or at least for something that was going to be difficult to achieve. Last year we had a record enrollment of new first-year and transfer students. And with this highest-enrollment-ever-in-the-history-of-North-Park I asked all of us to "walk alongside our students"—to give extra attention to our students' well-being.

It would be easy to conceive how we might give extra attention to fewer students. But giving extra attention to more students? How could this be possible, or at least how could we reasonably expect to accomplish it very well? Yet, though it may have been a stretch challenge, I asked us to "walk alongside our students" better than we had ever done before.

So how did we do? Well, the evidence came in this past fall semester.

For several years we've asked first-year and senior undergraduates to complete an assessment survey during the spring semester. This national instrument, called the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE), is designed to measure how extensively college students engage important aspects of the student experience. The research in higher education has demonstrated that certain student behaviors and institutional features are powerful contributors to learning and personal development.

The more students participate in these activities the more they learn; the less students participate, the less they learn.

To be sure, NSSE doesn't use my words—to "walk alongside our students." Yet, this is one aspect of the student experience that NSSE measures. In this survey, a number of important student behaviors and institutional features are clustered in five benchmarks, and one of these is described as "Supportive Campus Environment." Here are the specific elements that contribute to such a campus environment, according to the NSSE research:

- The campus environment provides the support students need to succeed academically
- The campus environment helps students cope with their non-academic responsibilities
- The campus environment provides the support students need to thrive socially
- The quality of a student's relationships with other students
- ...and with faculty members
- ...and with administrative personnel and offices.

Taken together, these six items identify what it means to "walk alongside students."

This past semester we received the results of the spring 2012 survey. And guess what! Both first-year and senior students this past year (when we had a record enrollment) rated how we "walk alongside our students" more highly than these two groups rated us three years earlier. In this survey, students at North Park told us very clearly that last year they experienced an increase in personal attention from faculty and staff. (For more details keep reading into the next section of this report.)

We achieved the stretch challenge—we walked alongside students more effectively this past year than we had done in earlier years.

This makes me deeply grateful for the dedication of faculty and staff at North Park. Each day we're involved in the particular tasks assigned to us...we teach, we counsel, we coach, we clean, we keep the IT network up, and we do the specific tasks assigned to each of us. But much more than this, we care for students; we walk alongside; we create a "supportive campus environment." We work, with significance and in service.

More on NSSE

So, how does the student experience at North Park compare with the experience of students at other colleges and universities? One answer to this important question comes through the extensive benchmark data available through the NSSE instrument, as I introduced above.

To identify the multi-dimensional nature of student engagement, NSSE has developed five indicators of effective educational practice. Each indicator involves a number of individual factors or questions which form the content to these five clusters.

The comparative response of North Park students is summarized in the table below. In the two columns representing the comparison groups a "+" symbol indicates that North Park's score is higher than the comparison group and a "-" symbol indicates a score which is lower. Both symbols represent differences which statistically are identified as significantly different. When no symbol is entered it indicates there is no meaningful difference between North Park's score and the average score for the respective comparison group.

Two comparison groups are identified. The "Carnegie Class" represents all schools nationwide which are similar to North Park—we are mid-size comprehensive universities which offer both undergraduate and master's programs. The "NSSE 2012" group represents the aggregate scores for all students who completed the survey, regardless of the type of school they attend.

	Student Class	Comparisor Carnegie Class	n Groups NSSE 2012
Level of Academic Challenge How challenging is your institution's intellectual and creative work?	First-Year Senior		
Active & Collaborative Learning Are your students actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others?	First-Year Senior	+	+ +
Student-Faculty Interaction Do your students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom?	First-Year Senior	+ +	+ +
Enriching Educational Experiences Do your students take advantage of complementary learning opportunities?	First-Year Senior	+ +	+ +
Supportive Campus Environment Do your students feel the institution is committed to their success?	First-Year Senior	+	+

What does this tell us? First, it's important to note that in no category, for either first-year or senior students, do we score below the Carnegie group or aggregate-NSSE average. Second, in many categories, in fact in a majority of categories, we score above the benchmark average, indicated by a "+" symbol in the respective column.

There are many other things to learn about the undergraduate experience at North Park based on the NSSE results. Some are deeply encouraging, others point to areas for improvement. Here's just a sampling:

- 77% of first-year (FY) students feel North Park places substantial emphasis on academics and 57% work harder than they thought they could to meet faculty expectations.
- Yet, only 33% of FY students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class and 13% spend five hours or less.
- 66% of FY students frequently discuss readings or ideas from courses outside of class.
- By their senior year, 74% of North Park undergraduates participate in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, or clinical assignment.
- 86% of FY students say their faculty are available, helpful, and sympathetic.
- 94% of seniors have discussed career plans with faculty.
- 63% of FY students frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs.
- 59% of FY students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race or ethnicity.
- By the senior year, 74% of students participate in community service or volunteer work.
- 88% of FY students rate their experience as good or excellent; 76% of seniors would choose North Park again if they could start their college career over.
- 84% of FY students feel North Park provides substantial support for their academic success; and 66% of FY students perceive substantial support for their social needs.

Again, this list is just a sampling of the items identified in the NSSE survey. But taken together, the results mean that overall, students at North Park are often involved in the types of good practices that promote learning, and as an institution we provide the kind of environment which also promotes student learning. Can we do it better? Certainly. But are we doing it well? According to the NSSE results the learning environment provided at North Park, and the frequency with which students participate in best-practice activities, is strong.

This is great news for our students—both those who study with us today and those who will enroll here next year and in succeeding years.

It's important to note that student success in each of these areas depends on the work of our faculty and staff. Or to put it in my words: student success at North Park depends on our walk alongside them. Our students succeed through the diligent efforts of the many people who have dedicated their professional lives and careers to the students of North Park.

You'll soon be on campus, and when you're here I'll be encouraging you to seek out members of our faculty and staff and thank them for their dedicated service to our students.

Closing

For now this is all from me...except to thank you for your dedication to the responsibilities assigned to you as a trustee, and for your faithful embrace of all that it means to be North Park.

Travel safely; the senior leadership team and I look forward to our time together with you.

New Student Enrollment Summary Spring Semester – Annual Census Data IN PROCESS – 1/25/2013

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Undergraduate (traditional)	4.4	40	40	4.0	-	47	40	4.0	40
First-Year Transfer	14 45	12 57	16 92	10 59	7 54	17 67	16 78	10 72	16 78
Special	43	2	92	59	34	67	70	12	70
Readmits	1	2							
Visiting	•		7	3	2	9		9	7
TOTAL	60	71	115	72	63	93	99	91	101
Undergraduate (non-traditional)									
College Bridge	9	2	5	1	1				
ESL	31	23	14	21	10	7	7	1	
RN Completion	6	5	18	19	15	7	11	4	7
School of Adult Learning	30	58	39	38	26	41	44	52	53
Education Certification	5	_	14	8	6	9	2		2
Special (Students at Large)	12	5	00	07	50	64	64	5 7	60
TOTAL	93	93	90	87	58	64	64	57	62
Graduate									
SBNM	54	65	63	54	71	63	53	67	58
MS Nursing	22	10	24	27	24	30	23	17	25
Adult Nurse Practitioner	4	7	2		5		1	3	2
MA Education (all sites)	9	5	12	13	20	20	24	30	18
MA Community Development	6	7	3						
Master of Music TOTAL	95	1 95	1 105	94	120	113	101	117	103
IOTAL	95	93	103	94	120	113	101	117	103
Seminary									
Traditional	24	24	21	17	17	45	7	11	19
Dual Degree									
Credential							3	3	4
Non-Degree Seeking	24	24	24	47	47	AE	20	8	15
TOTAL	24	24	21	17	17	45	30	22	38
GRAND TOTAL New Students	304	283	331	270	258	315	294	287	304
Interntnl Exchange (non-revenue)	32	24	16	20	26	28	30	36	35
NPTS Cross Registered		11	12	9	5	10	11	0	2

Headcount Report (Total Enrollment) Spring Semester – Annual Census Data IN PROCESS – 1/25/2013

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Undergraduate (traditional)	4000	4.450	4505	4000	4040	4000	4000	4000	4050
Returning	1300	1450	1565	1633	1646	1603	1628	1698	1656
New First-Year	14 45	12	16	10	7 54	17	18	10	16
New Transfer	45	57	92	59	54	67	78 -	72	78 7
New Visiting	1	2	7	8	7	14	5 8	9 7	7
Returning Visiting TOTAL	1360	1521	1682	1710	1714	1701	1735	1796	12 1769
TOTAL	1300	1321	1002	1710	1714	1701	1733	1790	1709
Undergraduate (non-traditional)									
College Bridge	9	2	5	1	2	0	0	0	
ESL	43	43	26	28	19	7	12	1	
RN Completion	45	50	57	87	77	76	70	44	46
School of Adult Learning	217	231	218	209	222	225	242	245	247
Education Certification	38	29	87	58	49	47	37	15	17
Special (students-at-large)	15	8							
TOTAL	367	363	363	342	369	355	361	305	310
Graduate									
SBNM	263	312	331	351	350	353	371	364	353
MS Nursing	138	122	140	139	149	163	162	148	182
Adult Nurse Practitioner	14	14	13	17	25	16	10	16	9
MA Education (all sites)	107	107	132	134	162	162	143	148	134
MA Community Development	46	29	24	23	11	4	0	0	0
Master of Music	7	11	13	13	12	9	9	12	13
TOTAL	575	595	653	677	709	707	695	688	691
Seminary									
Traditional	414	273	245	238	219	293	205	190	179
Dual Degree									3
Credential							7	11	14
Non-Degree Seeking							69	53	76
TOTAL	414	273	245	238	219	293	281	254	272
GRAND TOTAL Headcount	2751	2752	2943	2967	3011	3056	3072	3043	3042
Interntnl Exchange (non-revenue)	35	24	10	22	34	28	37	46	42
NPTS Cross Registered		14	15	12	5	12	12	2	7