
**Report to the Board of Trustees
October 2006**

David L. Parkyn, President



All Things New

Linda and I are honored and delighted to be part of the North Park University community! The past year brought substantial change to our lives and quite clearly the most important aspect of this change has been my appointment as president of the university. This decision required careful discernment by both you and us, discernment which was guided by the prayers of many. In making the decision to move to North Park Linda and I often prayed a prayer for guidance which is included in the *Book of Common Prayer*. We said these words:

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and the light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You can imagine my delight when in the middle of the presidential search I discovered that one of the scripture phrases found in this prayer for guidance is also engraved in the university's seal: "...that in your light we may see light." What divine coincidence!

Though guided by prayer, the past three months have been a whirlwind of activity with everything, and everyone, being new. We now live in a new home in a new city, we work with new people and are meeting new friends, and we follow new traditions and discover new challenges and opportunities. I am nearly always introduced as "the new president at North Park." I recently asked someone when I would no longer be "new." We agreed that it might take a year of so.

Our goal during these "new" days has been to learn as much as we can about North Park, the people who comprise this place, our past story, and our present life. As this happens, of course, we also anticipate the future for the university, both near and longer term.

What have we learned? We have discovered that . . .

- North Park is a place of warm hospitality;
- there is a strong legacy tradition at North Park—alumni/ae care so much for their alma mater that they repeatedly send their own children, and their grandchildren, and sometimes even their great grandchildren to study at this place;
- the university is well-regarded in the immediate neighborhoods surrounding the campus;
- people on campus are anxious to talk about the future of the university;

- many graduates and friends of the university evidence a “spirit of optimism” about the school’s future; and
- much, much more.

First-Year Goals

The Board made clear to me that by the end of my first three months in office I was to have articulated a set of goals for my first year. This list is included as Exhibit A, and as we meet we will have opportunity to discuss these goals. You will note, as you read this exhibit, that the goal statements are not mine alone. I have chosen to address this task more fully by including (a) institutional priorities for the year, (b) priorities for the president, and (c) priorities for each member of the senior administrative team. As these were compiled we also prepared a table to identify how the goals of each administrator support the institutional priorities.

NPU@125

We should hasten to ask, however, what our goals are, what our vision is, beyond this first year. In fact, this is the question I’m asked more often than any other. It is a good question. It is a question which must be answered.

Because we are an academic institution we’ll seek to answer this question in a consultative manner wherein the voices of many are heard and considered. We’ll organize ways to do this, both on- and off-campus, during the coming semester.

As a means to quickly call attention to our quest for an institutional vision I have already begun to talk about NPU@125. Specifically, what do we envision North Park University to be when we celebrate the school’s 125th anniversary in 2016? I hope that by this time next year we will affirm a document which answers this question. Once we know the ends we seek to attain, we’ll then be able to put a plan in place with strategies identified for accomplishing the vision.

Though the vision is achieved in consultation with others, you and I have special responsibilities to influence this vision. And it is for this reason that we will allocate a major portion of our time together on Friday afternoon to consider the NPU@125 project. The basic framework for this discussion is presented in Exhibit B. Please review this before we meet, and come prepared to engage in this very important “generative” discussion.

A Positive Fall Report

Based on events and activities of the past three months, I have many good things to report about the day-to-day operations at the university. I will mention a few of these

briefly below, and you will want to read more fully of them in reports prepared by the senior administrative team and their colleagues. These more extensive reports are attached to my report as various exhibits.

I'm pleased to note the following:

- We ended Fiscal Year 2006 with a strong margin. Projections for FY 2007 are also very positive. (Note Exhibit D)
- Enrollment for 2006-2007 is very strong overall due to (a) increased retention levels for continuing students and (b) positive results in recruiting new students. We do have concerns for new student recruitment in a small number of areas (namely GOAL, RN completion, graduate nursing, and traditional seminary enrollments). Jay Phelan and Dan Tepke are consulting with the relevant groups and preparing reports on each area. (Note Exhibits C and F)
- Our experience in the 2nd year of the tuition and financial aid restructuring project has proven to be very successful. We have achieved desired goals in all three areas: (a) increased enrollment, (b) improved student academic quality, and (c) increased net revenue. (Note Exhibits D and F)
- Both the dedication of the Helwig Recreation Center and this year's Homecoming Weekend proved to be important moments of celebration.
- We have modestly reorganized the University Council (formerly called the Executive Cabinet) to include a broader campus representation. This group is also engaging the NPU@125 project through guided discussion of Jim Collins' booklet, *Good to Great for the Social Sectors*.
- We are seeking to increase communication effectiveness on campus. This takes on various forms which include visiting with new students and their parents on move-in day, having an open office day each month for employees and students, inviting faculty to the President's Residence each "First Thursday" and opening the residence to other campus groups throughout the semester, writing the Occasional Campus Communiqué, and joining students in the Electric Slide at the Homecoming Dance. The External Relations Office is also working hard, often in cooperation with other departments, to enhance our overall communication effectiveness. (Note Exhibit F)
- In my first months I have given some attention to meeting external audiences. I expect this to increase in the months ahead. This includes meeting major donors, participating in audiences with business and civic leaders in Chicago, cooperating with higher education colleagues and associations in Illinois, and being active with the Council of Administrators and Executive Board of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

- I have chosen to include the Dean of Students as a member of the senior administrative team. This increases the voices and perspectives around this table, allows me to be more directly linked to student life, and modestly reduces Dan Tepke's portfolio allowing him to direct more of his attention to development efforts.
- Over the summer months, in addition to opening the Helwig Recreation Center, we completed several smaller, though necessary, facilities improvement projects. (Note Exhibit D)
- The intellectual and artistic life on campus is alive and well, as illustrated through an active (and often well attended) series of lectures, music concerts, art exhibits, and (later in the semester) theater performances. These are too extensive to list here, but information can easily be accessed through the university's web site.
- The Annual Fund for 2005-2006 reached \$1.6 million, slightly higher than the previous year. Receipts-to-date for this year's fund are modestly ahead of last year as well. (Note Exhibit F)

Presidential Inauguration

Though focused on the appointment of a new president, the presidential inauguration provides another occasion to "celebrate North Park." Activities are planned throughout the weekend with the inauguration ceremony scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 12. Trustees have received information on several occasions about the weekend, so further notice here is unnecessary. As you have opportunity, please join us.

Finally, I thank you for your love for North Park University and your dedication to advancing our work together through your service on the Board of Trustees. I'm honored to be your colleague.

Sincerely,

David L. Parkyn
President

Exhibits:

- A – Administrative Goals and Priorities 2006-2007
- B – Discussion Guidelines for NPU@125
- C – Enrollment Summary 2006-2007
- D – Report of the Executive Vice President and CFO
- E – Report of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
- F – Report of the Senior Vice President
- G – Report of the Dean of Students