

The North Park Promise

North Park University Strategic Plan 2025–30

A commitment to faith, purpose, and flourishing



**NORTH PARK
UNIVERSITY**
CHICAGO



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Mission Statement

The mission of North Park University, as the university of the Evangelical Covenant Church, is to prepare students for lives of significance and service through education in the liberal arts, professional studies, and theology.

Vision Statement

Building on our core institutional identity—Christian, city-centered, intercultural—our vision is to create a university of uncommon character and enduring excellence, where faith, learning, and service meet.

Introduction: A Promise Rooted in Faith, Purpose, and Flourishing

At North Park University, we believe that every person is created in the image of God...(Genesis 1:27)

We believe that every person is fearfully and wonderfully made...(Psalm 139:14)

We believe that every person is God's masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus to do the good work God has prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

These truths form the foundation of the North Park Promise—our commitment to affirm our students in their identity in Christ, help them discover and develop their gifts and talents, and prepare them for their work and service in the world.

The North Park Promise serves not only as an expression of our values, but as a practical framework for institutional decision-making. Over the next five years, this Promise will guide how we prioritize initiatives, allocate resources, and make strategic decisions, ensuring that our choices consistently advance student flourishing, access, and purpose.

The Current Landscape: Strategic Context for the North Park Promise

Higher education is operating within an increasingly competitive and rapidly evolving environment. Demographic shifts—particularly across the Midwest—are reducing the number of traditional college-aged students, intensifying competition among institutions, and placing sustained pressure on enrollment.

At the same time, tuition discount rates continue to rise across the sector, reflecting both competitive pressures and growing concerns among students and families regarding affordability and return on investment. Increasingly, students are making enrollment decisions based on clear pathways to career outcomes, financial stability, and long-term value.

These dynamics have elevated the importance of student success as a core institutional priority. Retention, persistence, and graduation rates are no longer only student-centered measures—they are critical indicators of institutional effectiveness, financial sustainability, and mission fulfillment.

The higher education model itself is also evolving. Institutions are expanding online, hybrid, and flexible program offerings to meet the needs of today's learners, while expectations for personalized support, experiential learning, and career readiness continue to grow.

In parallel, institutional culture and community remain essential differentiators. Universities that foster strong, supportive environments for students, faculty, and staff are better positioned to drive engagement, persistence, and long-term success.

These converging pressures—enrollment volatility, rising discount rates, shifting student expectations, in addition to increasing operational costs—are contributing to significant financial strain across the sector. Institutions that are unable to adapt are facing heightened risk, with closures and consolidations becoming more frequent.

In this context, strategic clarity and disciplined execution are essential. The North Park Promise is designed to align institutional priorities, focus resources, and strengthen outcomes across enrollment, student success, and financial sustainability—ensuring that North Park is positioned not only to navigate this environment, but to lead within it.

Pillar Framing

The four pillars of the North Park Promise—**Flourishing Students**, **Transformational Learning**, **Thriving Community**, and **Sustainable Financial Health**—are intentionally interconnected and grounded in our mission to prepare students for lives of significance and service.

Flourishing Students reflects our commitment to holistic formation—academic, personal, and spiritual—ensuring that each student is supported in discovering their calling and living out their purpose. This flourishing is made possible through Transformational Learning that integrates knowledge, faith, and practice, equipping students with both wisdom and skill.

A Thriving Community embodies our Christian, city-centered, and intercultural identity—fostering belonging, care, and shared purpose among students, faculty, and staff. This community is essential to both student formation and institutional strength.

Sustainable Financial Health reflects our commitment to faithful stewardship—ensuring that resources are aligned with mission, access is expanded, and the university is positioned to serve future generations.

Each pillar contributes to and depends on the others, forming a cohesive, mission-centered framework that advances both student flourishing and the long-term strength of North Park University.

Pillar 1

Flourishing Students— A Commitment to Holistic Success

The Promise

North Park promises to nurture every student's growth—academically, personally, and spiritually—ensuring they graduate prepared for lives of significance, service, and success.

The Promise in Practice

As the cornerstone of the North Park Promise, North Park will deliver an integrated student experience that connects a strong sense of belonging, proactive advising, affordable access, and career preparation—ensuring every student is supported to retain, persist, graduate, and move confidently into lives of purpose and service.

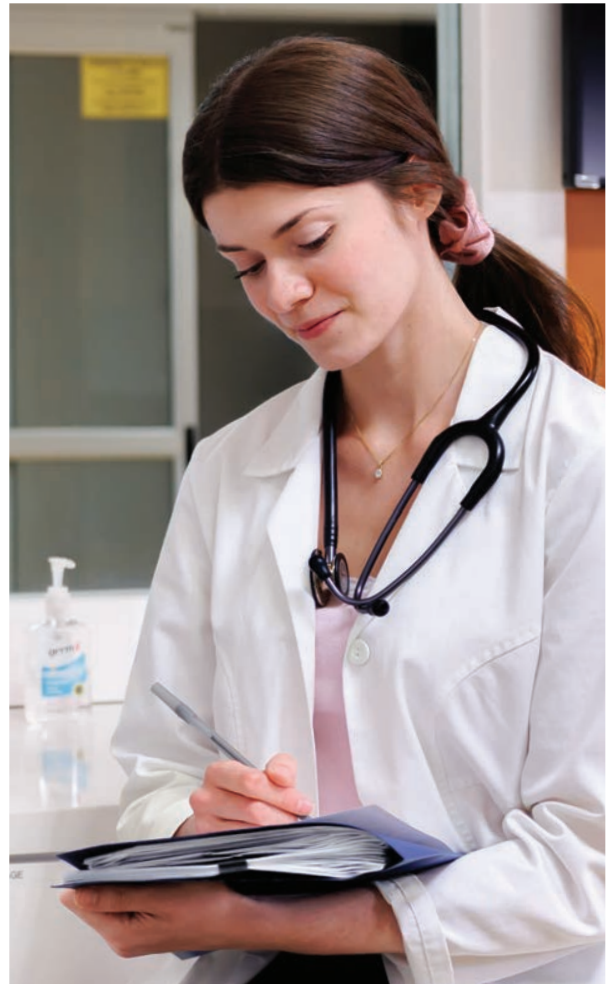
- **Learning in beloved community:** Supportive learning communities that foster belonging and purpose, where every student feels known, valued, and encouraged to flourish academically, personally, and spiritually.
- **Proactive academic advising:** Meeting students where they are—through individualized, relational advising that anticipates needs, identifies barriers early, and builds clear pathways that guide each student toward timely, confident completion.
- **Affordable access:** Ensuring students can pursue and complete a North Park education without overwhelming debt by strengthening financial literacy, expanding aid resources, and designing pathways that support persistence and completion.
- **Future readiness:** Preparing students for meaningful work and service through hands-on learning—alumni mentorship, internships, co-ops, research experiences, and Chicago-based partnerships that build confidence, purpose, and professional readiness.

Key Strategies

- Embed the North Park Promise framework across all departments, aligning programs, services, and student-support practices with a shared, student-centered success model.
- Enhance proactive advising, mentoring, and wellness services for all university and seminary students.
- Expand financial literacy and affordable access initiatives that empower students to steward their resources well and complete a North Park education without overwhelming debt.
- Expand career and vocational discernment, and alumni mentorship programming to support every student's pathway from college to calling.

Why It's Important

This pillar ensures that every student at North Park can succeed and persist to graduation, prepared to serve and lead.



Pillar 2

Transformational Learning— Learning for Purpose and Impact

The Promise

North Park promises to deliver an education that transforms—equipping students with both knowledge and wisdom.

The Promise in Practice

North Park will deliver a transformational, faith-integrated experience that combines innovative academic programs, engaged and supported educators, community-based learning, and a practical liberal arts foundation—equipping students to lead and serve in a changing world.

- **Flexible learning models:** Interdisciplinary and market-driven programs that respond to emerging fields, elevate academic excellence, and create innovative pathways for students to explore their calling in a changing world.
- **Innovative instruction:** Resources, support, and ongoing professional development that empower faculty to innovate in teaching, deepen faith integration, engage in scholarship, and create dynamic learning environments where students thrive.
- **Civic engagement:** Students are meaningfully connected to our neighborhood and the 60625 community, living out their learning through service that strengthens communities and forms lives grounded in purpose, leadership, and faith in action.
- **Practical liberal arts:** Core competencies embedded across all programs, integrating critical thinking, communication, creativity, intercultural fluency, and ethical reasoning so students graduate equipped to lead with wisdom, integrity, and purpose.

Key Strategies

- Launch distinctive undergraduate, graduate, and theological programs in emerging fields to meet student demand and expand North Park's academic reach.
- Foster faculty innovation through professional development and pedagogical support that strengthens teaching, scholarship, and faith integration.
- Expand internships, research, and community-based learning opportunities that enrich classroom learning and prepare students for meaningful work and service.
- Redesign the general education curriculum to strengthen faith integration, intercultural engagement, and experiential learning.

Why It's Important

Education at North Park is about preparing graduates for purposeful lives and impactful leadership.



Pillar 3

Thriving Community—Building a Beloved and Welcoming Campus

The Promise

North Park will build a thriving and welcoming community where students, faculty, and staff feel valued and supported.

The Promise in Practice

North Park will cultivate a welcoming and thriving community by investing in people and culture, enhancing campus spaces, advancing intercultural excellence, and supporting faculty and staff development—ensuring a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose across the institution.

- **People and culture:** Promoting well-being and professional growth by cultivating a supportive, mission-centered workplace where faculty and staff are equipped, encouraged, and empowered to succeed in their roles and contribute meaningfully to the flourishing of our students and community.
- **Space and place:** Designing and renewing cutting-edge facilities that inspire learning, collaboration, and belonging. North Park will create modern, mission-driven spaces—classrooms, residence halls, gathering areas, and athletic facilities—that reflect our excellence, elevate the student experience, and strengthen community across every corner of campus.
- **Intercultural excellence:** Advancing North Park's multiethnic mosaic by building structures, practices, and partnerships that honor the dignity of every individual, celebrate our intercultural identity, and ensure that all students experience belonging, support, and academic success.
- **Faculty and staff flourishing:** Competitive compensation and development that recognize the extraordinary contributions of our employees, support their long-term success, and provide opportunities for continuous learning, leadership development, and career advancement.

Key Strategies

- Faculty and staff are supported in their professional growth through clear, consistent performance conversations that align goals, strengthen communication, and encourage ongoing development.
- Transform campus facilities to foster belonging, collaboration, and learning by creating modern, mission-driven spaces where students live, study, compete, and grow.
- Advance our intercultural campus in ways that allow every community member to feel a true sense of belonging, be supported in their journey and have the opportunity to succeed.
- Strengthening faculty and staff development, compensation, and recognition to support a thriving workplace.

Why It's Important

A thriving community ensures North Park is a place where every individual flourishes.



Pillar 4

Sustainable Financial Health— Securing the Future

The Promise

North Park will build a sustainable financial foundation, aligning resources with our mission to secure a thriving future.

The Promise in Practice

North Park will strengthen its financial foundation by growing enrollment, expanding philanthropic support, aligning resources with strategic priorities, and elevating its institutional identity—ensuring long-term sustainability and mission impact.

- **Fiscal health:** Strategic allocation and sustainability that ensure resources are invested in mission-critical priorities, promote long-term financial strength, and position the university to innovate, adapt, and thrive in an increasingly complex higher education landscape.
- **Philanthropic growth:** Expanding fundraising for all areas of the institution, including scholarships and financial aid, faculty support, capital priorities and endowment through a bold, relationship-driven approach that engages alumni, parents, churches, foundations, and friends—fueling student access, academic excellence, and the future growth of North Park.
- **Enrollment and retention:** Coordinated recruitment and retention strategies that drive enrollment growth, strengthen academic and co-curricular engagement, and ensure every student is supported from their first point of contact through graduation.
- **Elevated brand and identity:** A compelling brand that inspires engagement by clearly articulating our distinct Christian, city-centered, and intercultural identity—amplifying North Park’s story, deepening stakeholder pride, and strengthening our presence in Chicago and beyond.

Key Strategies

- Increase university and seminary enrollment through coordinated recruitment and retention efforts that enhance student success and drive multi-year growth.
- Expand fundraising campaigns to advance scholarships, endowment growth, and facility improvements that position North Park for long-term sustainability.
- Optimize resource allocation and operational efficiencies by aligning budgets, staffing, and operations with mission and strategic priorities.
- Enhance North Park's brand identity through a cohesive, multi-channel strategy that elevates visibility, strengthens engagement, and deepens institutional pride.

Why It's Important

**Sustainable financial health ensures
North Park thrives for generations to come.**



**Impact:
A Promise Rooted
in Faith, Purpose,
and Flourishing**

Every North Park student will experience a clearly guided pathway from orientation through graduation, supported by a community that affirms their identity, calling, and purpose.

As the university of the Evangelical Covenant Church, North Park will be established as the new model for Christian higher education: undergraduate, graduate, and seminary.







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