



## Report from the President of North Park University

### A POSITIVE YEAR AT NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY

The 2022-2023 academic year was one of positive lift in spirit and progress on the campus at North Park. We began the year with our second consecutive record-breaking incoming class of first-time, full-time students. In the highly competitive, enrollment-dependent landscape of higher education today, many small private institutions like North Park are experiencing significant declines in enrollment.

We praise God for our founding mission, his faithful provision, and for the bright and engaging students we serve. The diverse incoming class of 588 new students came from 30 countries and 30 US states, five continents, and two US territories. One-third (200) were Viking student-athletes, 26 were affiliated with the Covenant, and 12 were enrolled in Crux, our living-learning discipleship community.

Covenant recruitment and enrollment remain a high priority for North Park! Covenant-affiliated undergraduate students, children of Covenant clergy, and students employed as Covenant camp staff are pursued with the highest investment of human resources and financial aid awards of all prospective students.

North Park joins in celebrating the Covenant plans to return to an in-person national Unite event for youth and stands ready to continue our long commitment of partnership and support. Unite has been a historically significant enrollment driver and staff engagement opportunity for North Park.

### NEW COVENANT LEADERS ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We welcomed two new members to our Board of Trustees in fall 2022: Reverend Tammy Swanson-Draheim, president of the Evangelical Covenant Church; and Reverend Dr. Donna Harris, president of

Minnehaha Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. We are delighted for their contributions to leadership and partnership.

### **NORTH PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY—REV. DR. DENNIS EDWARDS**

We began this academic year with new leadership in our seminary. Reverend Dr. Dennis Edwards was unanimously affirmed by North Park's trustees and at all levels of Gather 2022 as dean of North Park Theological Seminary and vice president for church relations. Dennis was installed on campus in September 2022 and brings faithful and excellent leadership to our seminary, innovative thinking and planning, pastoral presence to the seminary and our senior team, and tremendous preaching and leadership skills representing the entire university across the denomination and beyond.

Two significant searches have been engaged in NPTS this year: the Milton B. Engebretson chair in evangelism and justice and the dean of faculty / academic dean. Our candidate for the Engebretson chair will come before Gather 2023 for affirmation.

### **VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT—MIKE NEVERGALL**

On March 6, 2023, Mike Nevergall SBNM '13, CFRE, began service and leadership as vice president for advancement, responsible for our university's fundraising, alumni relations, and engagement, and serving as a member of the president's cabinet.

- He will help to create and execute the next campaign efforts for North Park evolving from our strategic plan, further develop alumni engagement strategies for our rapidly diversifying alumni community, and enhance philanthropic collaboration across the university.
- Mike earned his bachelor of science degree in business administration from Valparaiso University, and his master of nonprofit administration, with a concentration in fund-raising management, here at North Park. He is a person of expressed Christian faith, passionate about our Christian, city-centered, and intercultural distinctives, and energized about this opportunity to advance the mission of North Park.
- "The distinctive core values of North Park spoke to me when I was a student, and they still resonate with me today. I am excited to partner with my fellow North Park alumni and friends to build an exciting next chapter in the university's story," Mike says.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION—LEARNING AND GROWING IN COMMUNITY**

North Park's comprehensive approach to initiatives in diversity, equity, and inclusion continues at all levels through several ongoing initiatives:

- The campus DEI Council with representation of faculty, staff, and students.
- A broad-based climate study endorsed by the Board, undertaken this academic year.
- Antiracism Discipleship Pathway curriculum engaged by the senior leadership team.
- Advancement of the Covenant's Six-Fold Test for Multiethnic Ministry in a framework for higher education.
- Anti-bias training for the university's Board of Trustees led by Covenant representatives.
- Book in Common—*Subversive Witness*, featuring four on-campus conversations with alumni author, Dominique Gilliard.

We were delighted to welcome Rev. Dominique Gilliard, director of racial righteousness and reconciliation for the Covenant and our guest scholar and author, for a yearlong four-part series leading seminars, fireside chats, chapel messages, and panel discussions on North Park's Book in Common for this year, *Subversive Witness*. This engaging series has been informative and encouraging in promoting conversation and learning on our campus around Scripture's call to identify and leverage privilege in ways that reflect our commitment to hold and love all persons as created in the image of God.

## **INCREASED FINANCIAL STABILITY**

North Park has worked steadily over the past few years to reduce and reverse an increasing structural operating budget deficit that resulted from past enrollment and revenue declines. Strategic adjustments and disciplined management of our operational budget, growth and stability in undergraduate enrollment, and the application of federal relief funds allocated to higher education allowed us to stabilize our budget this year and issue compensation increases and retirement benefit restoration for all employees, for the first time in three years. In the current climate of higher education, this positive fiscal performance is a remarkable achievement. Praise God!

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND CAMPUS MASTER PLANNING**

Through collaborative institutional strategic planning, we are elevating and operationalizing the three core distinctives of North Park University: our Christian identity, city-centered engagement, and intercultural community. North Park's Christian mission provides the foundation for our plan and will focus on overarching goals that include:

- measurable improvement in student success,
- measurable improvement in professional life for faculty and staff,
- measurable improvement in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging,
- measurable improvement in organizational best practices,
- measurable and sustainable enrollment growth,
- measurable improvement in institutional financial viability for North Park.

Campus master planning includes properly evaluating, deploying, and stewarding existing facilities, along with exploring and aligning new facility opportunities with our mission and future needs.

## COMMENCEMENTS

North Park celebrated three commencement ceremonies in spring 2023, conferring more than 400 degrees across all levels—undergraduate, graduate, adult degree completion, and North Park Theological Seminary—for residential students and distance students in our Ignite and Equip cohorts. The School of Restorative Arts celebrated a second in-person commencement on May 31, 2023.

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).*

Respectfully submitted,

Mary K. Surridge

President of North Park University