University Update

March 21, 2020

Dear North Park University Faculty, Staff, Students, Parents and Families,

For your continued prayers and support of our students and community, we remain profoundly grateful! The greater North Park community is coming together in a magnificent way, prioritizing care and caution for our students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends.

We have successfully completed the first two days of online learning and express our deep thanks to our students, faculty and staff for keeping our academic mission moving forward. Not surprisingly, there have been many wonderful examples of collaboration and cooperation during the days of preparation leading to our launch on Thursday, March 19. These are clear examples of the BEST that North Park has to offer. We will continue to do collective problem solving and solution sharing on a daily basis, collaborating in every way we can.

As we continue to trust God for His provision and care, we prepare for and respond to our changing environment, prioritizing health and safety.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced yesterday that the state is being ordered to stay at home due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. It is a sweeping order that we hope and pray will have a positive impact in fighting the virus and its threat to public health.

The “Stay-at-Home” order is intended to increase social distancing, while maintaining essential services. It asks people to stay at home except for certain essential activities, such as going to the grocery, the pharmacy, a medical office or hospital, or to get gasoline. Carry-out from restaurants is still allowed. The order closes non-essential businesses. It prohibits nearly all gatherings of people outside the home, prohibits most travel, and directs people whenever possible to stay at least six feet away from the nearest other person when going outside to walk, run, hike, or exercise.

At North Park, we have based all of our institutional and individual responses to the rapidly changing Covid-19 landscape on our two fundamental priorities:

1. Protection of the health, safety and wellness of our students, faculty and staff;
2. Successful completion of the academic semester, delivering the highest quality instruction we can in a safe format, honoring the diligent work invested in this semester to date.

As a result, we had already taken many actions consistent with the Stay-at-Home Order. Most faculty and staff are already working from home, most students have returned to study at home, and most staff still on campus provide essential services for our international and domestic students who have remained in residence. Many services, too, are being provided online, including daily devotionals from University Ministries, health and counseling services, and other student engagement services.

In fact, North Park University itself is deemed “an essential service” and is exempted from this order, which goes into effect at 5pm today. That means North Park employees can come to work if their jobs require them to be on site. It means we can provide campus security 24/7. It means our Aramark dining “grab and go” meals can continue, because they conform with social distancing protocols, and food service is also essential.
for our students. (All meals will be picked up by students in the dining hall in Magnuson Campus Center, packaged in disposable containers, and brought back to students’ dorm rooms for consumption.)

However, we do need to make these changes on campus, and they will be put into effect immediately:

- **At this time, North Park University will continue to work remotely through April 7, 2020, in accordance with the order.**
- We are delaying non-essential work, such as landscaping, and certain maintenance. (We’ll get to it later, for sure.)
- We are further reducing the number of employees working on campus.
- We are creating conditions to allow for social distancing practices for those essential employees who do need to work on campus to provide for the health and safety of our students.

We understand that this is a stressful time for all members of the North Park Community. We know that we will get through this together and celebrate a joyful return to campus. May the Lord bless and guide our students, faculty, and staff, our families, alumni, donors and friends -- may He strengthen us in our work, comfort us if we become discouraged, raise us up if we fall down -- and grant us His peace, now and forever.

With gratitude and respect,

Mary K. Surridge, President  
David Otfinoski, Chair – North Park Board of Trustees  
Craig Johnson, Provost  
David Kersten, Vice President for Church Relations and Dean of Seminary  
Andrea Nevels, Vice President for Student Engagement  
Anthony Scola, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing  
Scott Stenmark, Vice President for Finance and Administration and CFO  
Ingrid Tenglin, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources  
Melissa Vélez-Luce, Executive Director of Operations and Interim Vice President for Advancement  
Jon Heintzelman, Senior Advancement Advisor and Consultant to the President  
Hunt Helm, Senior Consultant, Marketing and Communications

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