

An Update from President Surridge

February 8, 2021

Dear North Park Faculty and Staff,

Thank you for getting us off to a great start this semester! In a year like no other, we are keeping our two highest priorities front and center: Protecting the health and safety of our campus community; and ensuring the successful educational progress of our students.

Collaboration and creativity across our University have been the hallmarks of this good work -- and they have been valuable key attributes in our continued work together on **North Park Next**, our three-phase strategic planning initiative, as well.

As you know, we completed Phase I of North Park Next -- months of intensive data gathering followed by a two-day workshop with Gray Associates including broad campus representation and collaboration. It is the deepest data-dive ever undertaken at North Park University.

We are progressing steadily now through Phase II, which includes Academic Review and Enhancement based on that data -- and broad institutional strategic planning for the University. (Phase III of North Park Next will be the implementation of the strategic plan.)

In Phase II, the broadly representative Academic Prioritization, Review and Enhancement Team of faculty members and Deans is reviewing our entire academic portfolio -- to identify new programs that could help us increase enrollment and net revenue; to consider existing programs we can enhance to attract more students; and to review under-enrolled programs we can adjust to steward our resources well.

Also part of Phase II, our broad institutional strategic planning process will include a review of our operating and administrative structures, co-curricular programs, and campus facilities as well -- and it will be underway in the days and weeks ahead. This work will result in a strategy map to propel us forward with a detailed plan to guide our work and investment in the coming months and years.

As promised, we have identified a professional strategic planning firm to help us with this work. I am happy to announce that we are partnering with Credo, a higher education consulting firm focused on independent colleges and universities, with particular focus on the Christian college market. The Credo team has served more than 460 independent colleges since 1995 in campus master planning and architecture, strategic planning, leadership development, administrative and academic efficiency work, student success and retention,

and enrollment and financial aid. Their work is rooted in years of research and partnership in making institutions successful, articulated in their [Thriving Framework](#).

Credo's focus in partnership with us will keep students and mission at the center of strategy and decision-making, and bringing expertise, structure, support, and accountability toward institutional goals.

They believe in rich and ongoing campus community engagement in planning and efficiency work, and they look forward to bringing your voices into the conversation as we move ahead with North Park Next! **Plan to join a North Park Campus Connection later this month where we will meet our Credo partners and be introduced to their effective process. Watch for more details to come.**

Through North Park Next, our 130-year-old Christian university will meet the present-day and future challenges facing all of higher education – demographic shifts and a decline in the number of high school graduates over the next decade; increased competition from alternatives to the traditional college campus experience; the pandemic's financial impact on students and families already concerned about college affordability; and barriers to graduation. Through North Park Next, we will secure a strong financial future and the healthy margin we need to advance our mission, reward innovation, and improve compensation and support. And as part of North Park Next, we will engage in measurable improvements and a focused commitment to issues of equity for a more inclusive and productive, intercultural campus community.

Finally, our strategic planning through North Park Next will put us in a position not just to survive, but to thrive. For we know that in the sum and interaction of our three distinctives – Christian, city-centered, and intercultural – North Park has a unique value, a clear competitive advantage, and an unmistakable opportunity to become a singularly compelling model for Christian higher education in 21st Century America. That is our calling. And that, North Parkers, is where we are going!

Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and your devotion to our beloved University. We give thanks to God for His daily presence in our vital Christian mission, and for giving us the capacity to do the essential work ahead, collaboratively, and well.

Let's keep moving!

Mary K. Surridge

President