

Fall Semester 2021

Today, we are pleased to announce that North Park University is planning for a fully open and operational fall semester 2021, with in-person classes and services, residential living, normal on-campus office hours for employees, and the full range of intercollegiate athletics and student activities on our vibrant campus.

As demonstrated for the past year, the Pandemic Response Team will remain alert to changing circumstances, will apply any needed modifications to campus life, and will observe guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and the Illinois and Chicago Departments of Public Health as required.

As the state of Illinois and the city of Chicago continue their planning toward full restoration, positive trends increase and three effective vaccines are becoming increasingly available. Governor Pritzker has affirmed President Biden's national commitment, noting that vaccines will be available to every adult in Illinois by at least the end of May. Our campus community will continue to observe our current wellness protocols throughout the spring semester as long as they remain in place, so that positive trends will continue.

We have learned and lived through so much during this pandemic year. We have seen the assurance of God's promises, we can have faith in His provision, and we have the evidence of His protection as a consistent part of our story throughout this unprecedented year.

We have learned in community that we can persevere through adversity and succeed in our vital work – our Christian calling – to educate the next generation of students, prepared for lives of significance and service.

Our students and campus community have been outstanding -- students have persisted through a challenging, historic time the likes of which not only they, but also, we their elders, teachers, and mentors, have never before encountered. And, thanks to our students, staff, and faculty, by May 2021 of this pandemic year, North Park University will have conferred more than 1,100 undergraduate and graduate degrees to students who will step into the world prepared to serve in a wide variety of significant professions.

We all look forward to being back together on campus and in community. Through 130 years of experience, we have seen that North Park undergraduate students and campus colleagues thrive best in the traditional on-campus educational experience, and through the relationships we develop through personal interaction - academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally.

We have also found many very effective ways for graduate and seminary students to thrive and succeed in cohort and online learning. There is an important future for North Park in innovative segments of online teaching and learning approaches we have developed and improved over the past year, and we will design that future together through **North Park Next**.

In the meantime, we must stress that our optimistic forecast for fall does not change the realities of today. For the remainder of this semester and the summer term, we must continue to follow our plan and faithfully observe all wellness protocols. We will continue to follow all protocols while they remain in place – masking, distancing, hand washing and avoiding crowds - to protect ourselves and each other, and minimize the risk of infection. We have come so far together and achieved so much. And now, we trust God for our future – standing on the evidence of His goodness over our past.

We will share details as our planning continues. Please direct any questions to feedback@northpark.edu.

As we look forward to a full return to life in community, let us remember Romans 12:12 – and remain “joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.”

Mary K. Surridge
President