



Campus Communication, 5/28/2021

Academic Program Review and Enhancement

On Tuesday, May 25, 2021, the North Park University Board of Trustees approved recommendations from the Academic Program Review and Enhancement process (APRE) to pursue data-based feasibility studies of seven potential new academic programs—and to implement strategic curriculum efficiencies in existing programs across all seven schools.

The Board's action marks a major milestone for North Park Next — ensuring that our curriculum is true to mission, compelling to prospective students, relevant to employers, and financially sustainable.

These decisions conclude the long, hard work of the APRE committee — comprising deans and faculty representatives of every academic unit — who undertook the deepest data analysis in University history beginning in May 2020. The process was disciplined, and informed by multiple information threads and data. It included timely consultation with the Faculty Senate, the Deans Council, and the President.

The Board's decisions will help North Park University secure a strong financial future — and the healthy margin we need to invest in our mission, reward innovation, and improve compensation and support for our community.

North Park University will prioritize every student currently enrolled in any restructured or discontinued academic program to make sure that the promise of their completed degrees in their chosen programs is fulfilled.

Potential New Programs

Each of the following potential new programs has a “champion” leading a team in a rigorous feasibility study. Based on the data we have collected with Gray Associates — data on student interest, employer interest and degree of competition from other schools — we are excited about the potential of these programs to attract more students, to inspire our donors, and to earn the attention of employers.

Importantly, we will decide whether to launch any of these potential new programs based on the outcome of rigorous, data-based feasibility studies now under way.

Elements of the feasibility studies include the proposed course's relation to mission; rationale and market niche; student demand and target market; program description, structure, and outcomes; resource requirements; instructional delivery and calendar; recruitment, advising, and learning support requirements; evaluation and assessment; implementation timeline and process; and a four-year detailed financial proforma.

The programs under development are:

- **B.S. in Applied Computer Science**
 - Developed to take advantage of Low-Cost Models for Independent College Consortium (LCMC) program in Computer Science which is sponsored by Google with input from industry leaders.
 - Structured to include a core plus required concentration in Data Analysis, Location Intelligence, Cloud Computing or Cybersecurity
 - In-demand industry certificates to be available to students in any major as add-on
 - Required internship (potentially paid)
 - Possible focus on preparing women and students from underserved backgrounds for technology careers

- **Direct Entry Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)**
 - An innovative and quickly growing pathway approach to nursing education
 - Requires three years for completion
 - Intended for individuals with non-nursing baccalaureate degree who desire a career change to nursing—highly attractive option for adults
 - Builds upon existing NPU nursing curriculum and programs
 - Will be delivered online with an intensive campus residency
 - Will most likely partner with an established online program management (OPM) company to deliver in coordination with nursing school

- **Master of Science in Genetic Counseling**
 - 21-month program including rigorous curriculum focused coursework, clinical training, and graduate research project
 - Healthcare professionals who are trained in both medical genetics and counseling—builds upon existing MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
 - Rapidly growing field with significant unmet degree demand
 - Requires special accreditation through The Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling (ACGC)
 - Will be offered online which would provide NPU with compelling competitive advantage

- **Master of Science in Healthcare Administration and Leadership**
 - Long-Term Care Administration Certification embedded within degree or structured as optional add-on
 - Exploring partnership with Covenant Living (Terri Cunliffe, CEO)
 - Online delivery so as to be available to CMB and other entities worldwide

- **Master of Public Health**
 - Interdisciplinary and interprofessional curricular focus
 - Core curriculum would minimally include five essential areas of study: Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental Health Sciences, Health Services Administration, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Global Health
 - Would include a 3+2 or 4+1 bachelor's degree pathway to the MPH
 - May seek Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation
 - 42-credit degree with two concentration options: MPH Generalist or MPH Geo-Health

- **Bachelor of Arts in Special Education**
 - Would be integrated into existing teacher preparation program
 - Responds to significant shortage in Illinois for Learning Behavior Specialists
 - Would integrate Learning Behavior Specialist endorsement into curriculum so that every student graduates with this marketable credential
 - Program delivery would be a mix of campus-based, online and hybrid

- **E-Sports**
 - Establishment of a competitive Esports varsity program and gaming center
 - Creation of Esports team would follow same protocols as other new sports within athletic department
 - Interest in gaming is burgeoning — viewership of eSports expected to exceed 646 million by 2023
 - Currently, there are more than 1,700 universities where students have registered to participate in the Collegiate Star League, an organization that hosts online leagues and tournaments including many CCIW schools
 - Also considering adding a course or certificate in E-Sports and Gaming Administration within Sports Management program in SBNM

Strategic Curricular Changes

The Board also approved strategic restructuring of some programs and majors. These decisions include discontinuing 14 programs and one department; pausing one program; eliminating six graduate certificate programs; moving two majors to minors; and 15 other operational savings or curricular efficiencies. The APRE process found that the impacted programs were consistently under-enrolled, or duplicated programs in other divisions. Some of these changes will not take effect until the 2022-2023 academic year.

And in every single case, we will prioritize North Park students currently enrolled in any restructured programs to make sure that the promise of their completed degrees in their chosen programs is fulfilled.

1. College of Arts and Sciences/Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS)

Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies

Due to low enrollment, and staffing considerations, it will be discontinued.

Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies

Due to low enrollment and staffing considerations, this program will be discontinued. However, the academic unit recommends maintaining courses in the catalogue until potential integration into new programs, and into a more focused Communication Arts major, can be determined.

Move the Bachelor of Arts in Scandinavian Studies from a major to a minor

Due to low enrollment, this program will no longer be offered as a major, but it will sustain a presence as a minor. North Park's Swedish heritage and founding identity continue in that minor, and in the Center for Scandinavian Studies (CSS). Endowed by the Hugo A. Anderson Chair in Scandinavian Studies in 1982 and created in 1984, the Center will continue as a major focal point for Scandinavian academic and cultural interests in Chicago. The CSS sponsors visiting professors, lectures, concerts, and exhibits, bringing many talented and accomplished Scandinavians to the city of Chicago. North Park's strong commitment to study abroad programs in Scandinavia will also be maintained, including the Group Exchange program with Södra Vätterbygdens Folkhögskola (SVF) in Jönköping, Sweden.

2. College of Arts and Sciences/Sciences

Discontinue Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science

The Environmental Science program at North Park has had low enrollment over the course of

its existence. Opens an opportunity for a long-term visioning of an interdisciplinary environmental program that is better aligned with the job market, and/or the university's mission.

Discontinue Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science in Physics

Enrollment in the Physics program is low. Discontinuing the Physics program will clear the pathway for the current PHEN department to focus efforts and budget on the Mechanical Engineering program, which is growing.

3. School of Business and Nonprofit Management

Discontinue Economics Concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Business

The Bachelor of Science in Business degree currently offers six options for concentration: Accounting, Economics, Finance, Marketing, Management, and Sport Management. The economics concentration is the lowest enrolled of the six. Without the concentration, the unit will be able to eliminate the advanced level courses, and invite students into other concentrations.

Discontinue the Master of Science in Higher Education Administration

The elimination of this degree will remove six courses that are unique to the degree. Most of these classes are taught by adjuncts since the unit does not have a full-time faculty member dedicated to this discipline.

Discontinue Six Graduate Certificates: Economics; Finance; Higher Education

Administration; Marketing Management; Nonprofit Finance; Operations Management
These certificates are the lowest enrolled of the 16 total certificates in the unit, and this action will result in ten unique classes that could be eliminated.

4. School of Education

Pause the Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education

The Early Childhood Education program, which leads to State of Illinois licensure, will be paused due to low enrollment. If enrollment increases, the program will be able to be restarted within a window of three years from now.

5. School of Music, Art, and Theatre

Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Art — Curatorial Studies Concentration

The Curatorial Studies concentration is under-enrolled. This action may guide new students toward the two concentrations that are very strong, Fine Arts and Graphic Design.

Discontinue the Bachelor of Music in Music in Worship and the Bachelor of Music in Performance

Over the past ten years, the unit's professional degrees in Music Performance and Music in Worship have lacked student enrollment, and students starting these programs have often switched to concentrations within the Bachelor of Arts degree. Restructuring these two professional degrees as concentrations within the BA will provide a more efficient delivery of instruction, while still achieving similar benefits.

Move the Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from a major to a minor

As a major, the program has unsustainably low enrollments. However, North Park students have long enjoyed excellent and memorable exposure to Theatre as a vibrant co-curricular experience — and we will continue to invest in this robust involvement from students across campus.

6. School of Nursing and Health Sciences

Discontinue the Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training

The profession requires a master's degree to be eligible for the Board of Certification exam. Therefore, effective fall 2022, a bachelor's prepared athletic training student will no longer be able to pursue the profession of athletic training in 47 States. As a result, the Exercise & Sport Department proposed the Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) curriculum during the 2016-2017 academic year, and it was approved through all of the appropriate channels

Discontinue the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Completion (RN to BSN)

The RN to BSN Completion program was designed for working Registered Nurses (RNs) who hold a diploma certificate or Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN). While ADN programs have increased, the number of BSN — or Bachelor of Science in Nursing — programs has also increased. At present, there is a decline of 3-6% in RN to BSN completion degree programs nationally. Over the last 20 years, many institutions moved their programs online, obtaining a significant market share. Over the years, the in-person market has continued to decrease. The faculty for this program are currently working in high overload to support it.

7. School of Professional Studies

Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice

Under-enrolled.

Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in Location Intelligence

Low to no enrollment. Location Intelligence could be a component of potential new computer science program.

8. Office of the Provost

Discontinue the Christian Studies Department in the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences — reimagine and redesign it in North Park Theological Seminary.

This will provide undergraduate students with religious educational opportunities that take full advantage of our Seminary's exceptional faculty, programmatic resources, and missional ethos. The Seminary is known for its innovative programs and pedagogy and this change has been discussed at North Park for many years. An enhanced undergraduate theology curriculum taught in our Seminary should become a highly visible and impactful aspect of our emergence as a singularly compelling model for Christian higher education in 21st Century America.

I offer my sincere gratitude to the Board of Trustees for endorsing the Academic Program Review and Enhancement process in the beginning, and for seeing it through to its conclusion. I am also deeply grateful to the APRE committee, and its leaders — Provost Craig Johnson, Professor Mark Gavoor, and our expert consultant, former North Parker Dr. Melissa Morriss-Olson, Distinguished Professor of Higher Education Leadership and Provost Emerita at Bay Path University. I commend them for completing this difficult work.

The time, energy, passion, and intellect invested in this process serve to accelerate our momentum as we live into our three distinctives — Christian, city-centered and intercultural — and energize our aim to become a singularly compelling model of Christian higher education in 21st Century America.

Looking Forward

This just-completed Academic Program Review and Enhancement work is only one major

component of North Park Next. We are also evaluating our administrative operating structures, co-curricular programs, facilities and grounds — and conducting a broad-based strategic planning process with our planning partner Credo — a process that seeks to engage everyone in our community.

Of course, all this work will bring change — change aimed at advancing the mission of North Park, living more fully into our distinctives, and creating our thriving future. We know that for some, the prospect of change can feel unsettling — even the positive change we will ultimately achieve as we create a financially healthy institution with an excellent academic portfolio that is aligned with our mission and our enrollment market, and campus facilities that are appropriately sized and properly deployed.

The evidence of God's provision throughout our history, our strategic planning and future vision, give us confidence that new ideas and necessary changes work together for our students' success, for North Park's long-term viability, for God's glory, and neighbor's good.

We know that some things about North Park will *never* change. We are deeply rooted in our Christian faith. We seek God's wisdom and direction, use every resource available to us, and strategically advance the Christian mission of North Park on behalf of our students. We teach at the intersection of the liberal arts, professional studies, and theology, and we educate and prepare our wonderfully diverse student population for lives of significance and service.

Please watch for additional messages as we keep you updated, check the FAQ on the [North Park Next web site](#), and send any questions to next@northpark.edu.

Thank you for walking with us in purpose and prayer as we move forward with our vital mission in Christian higher education.

With gratitude and respect,

Mary K. Surridge
President