



Update from President Surridge

As we enter the final weeks of the semester, I write to offer deep thanks for your perseverance and resilience over this 2021-22 academic year. Our collective faithfulness and commitment to remain in partnership together - meeting the challenges and complications of North Park life on campus and in community - reflects strength for today and hope for our future.

I have some relevant updates and upcoming invitations to share as we look forward with anticipation to the Commencement celebration for our students.

Surridge family update

First, I share some news about our family - in early March while preparing for travel and engagement with North Park alumni and friends, our family was presented with a major medical challenge. Relatively routine cardiac tests for my husband Jack revealed a significant cardiac issue requiring immediate surgical intervention. Jack underwent quadruple coronary bypass surgery on March 8 at Swedish Hospital.

After a post-surgical week in the ICU, we were grateful that he was discharged home to begin recovery and eventual cardiac rehab. With thanks for your personal prayers and good wishes I can report that he is progressing, increasing walking, and (very) anxious to return to normal activity. It has been an intense time for our family as you can imagine, but we are grateful for good care and many elements of God's provision and protection. We have a road ahead of us, but we have hope and expectation for a full recovery.

My thanks to our Board and campus colleagues for their support and continued thanks for your prayers and encouragement for Jack, Jessie and me.

Staff Council

I am delighted to share that our inaugural Staff Council has been established and is working collaboratively with liaisons Ingrid Tenglin and Melissa Vélez-Luce to move this new initiative forward. You can look forward to hearing updates from the Council as they continue to do their good work. Please join me in thanking the following individuals for their service as

representatives of the North Park staff community:

Ellen Almer
Katie Anderson
Adrian Battle
Leah Blanchfield, Co-Chair
Viviana Belisle
Monica Guarisco
Luke Johnson
Ralitza Kourteva
Jim Meyer, Co-Chair
Elman McClain
Krystal Miranda
Luke Palmerlee
Melinda Peterson
Rochelle Robinson-Levant
Vanessa Serrano
Allison Valentin
Baily Warman
Tessa Zanoni

Spring Commencement

We are delighted to be planning our third consecutive in-person Commencement and will host our May 14 ceremony in the Helwig Recreation Center, beautifully transformed for the occasion and allowing for maximum seating for graduates and families.

We expect approximately 570 graduates across all programs, including: undergraduate, graduate, School of Professional Studies and North Park Theological Seminary (which includes our first graduating cohort of students from the School of Restorative Arts, at Stateville Correctional Institution, in a ceremony to be held in June.)

We return to Fourth Presbyterian Church on Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago for the Friday evening, May 13 baccalaureate worship service as well, a significant element of graduation weekend. This magnificent worship venue reflects our three core distinctives in beauty and grace.

The David Nyvall Medallion for Outstanding Service to North Park University will be bestowed on Rev. Dr. David W. Kersten at the undergraduate commencement on Saturday morning. Dean Kersten will also be honored at the NPTS Commencement on Saturday evening.

Blue and Gold Day

Our 7th annual Blue and Gold Day of Giving, North Park's 24-hour fundraising effort, is scheduled for May 4, 2022. Join us after chapel on the Johnson Center campus green, wear your blue and gold, join our campus photo and MAKE A GIFT to support our students!

Gathering Day

Save the date for our spring Gathering Day – May 17! We have received campus updates from a range of sources over recent months regarding cross-campus initiatives and we will use Gathering Day for additional in-person updates on major campus initiatives, such as campus master planning and strategic planning. Invitations and opportunities for valuable faculty and staff engagement and involvement will be outlined there and I encourage your attendance and participation.

Additionally, members of the senior leadership team will join me in sharing information and updates from the meeting of our Board of Trustees - a new practice we will launch this May and include going forward. Additional updates will include information regarding the DEI Council, the Staff Council, and efforts to promote better communication and collaboration across the community.

On Gathering Day, we will also be so pleased to honor the members of our faculty and staff community who are concluding their years of service to North Park and celebrating retirement at the end of the semester and over the summer.

May God bless you in the final weeks of the semester as we finish well, supporting and encouraging one another.

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope that we profess, because He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...encouraging one another all the more...” Hebrews 10:23-25