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North Park University is seeking a person of active and expressed Christian faith, a skilled administrator, and an accomplished academic to serve as the University’s next Provost, the chief academic officer. A Christian university in the heart of Chicago, IL, North Park has a historic commitment to three distinctive identities—Christian, city-centered, and intercultural—and recently earned designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

The new Provost will have the unique opportunity to join North Park as the university reimagines and attains its future as a model for Christian higher education in 21st Century America. The successful candidate will have a strong record of both effective academic administration and scholarly productivity along with a passion for small institutional environments. The successful candidate will also be a respectful, engaged, collaborative, analytical, and entrepreneurial leader with a demonstrated commitment to academic excellence, student success, and innovative enrollment growth.
Founded in 1891 by the Evangelical Covenant Church, North Park is located on Chicago’s northwest side, with satellite campuses in Grayslake, Waukegan and Arlington Heights. A values-driven institution, North Park offers a distinctive learning community informed by three institutional values; to be a community that is:

**Christian**  
We nurture faith, balancing commitment, and freedom.

**City-centered**  
We engage Chicago as a dynamic place of learning and service.

**Intercultural**  
We embrace and value all people, celebrate the global cultural tapestry, and support the reconciling mandate of the Christian gospel.

The campus community fondly refers to these values as the “3 distinctives” and looks to them as guideposts for constructing a learning environment. With a deep tradition in the liberal arts and Christian faith, North Park welcomes students from varying faith traditions to serve and learn from the dynamic community around us.

The university serves an increasingly diverse population of students from the city of Chicago, the nation, and the world. In February 2020, North Park was designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) by the U.S. Department of Education. This designation, which recognizes an undergraduate student population that is at least 25% Hispanic and reflects the University’s commitment to expanding educational opportunities and improving attainment for students of diverse backgrounds, is an expression of the intercultural element of University’s 3 distinctives. Also in February 2020, the North Park University Board of Trustees unanimously voiced its endorsement for North Park Next – the exciting, three-phase collaborative enterprise to create an inspiring future and build on North Park’s distinctives to emerge as the model for Christian higher education in 21st Century America. Phase I consists of a comprehensive effort of university-wide data-gathering and review by a cross-campus working group of faculty and staff, deans, the President and senior team, and the Chair of the Board of Trustees. This is the first time that the University has gathered and engaged this level of depth and breadth in institutional data. A university-wide strategic planning process marks Phase II of North Park Next, which includes a full review of academic programs with an eye toward mission consistency, market relevance, and revenue generation. Also under review are administrative structures and use and operations of facilities. This effort is underway with initial recommendations due in spring 2021. Phase III is the implementation of the university’s strategic plan. Through this process, North Park University is well positioned to build strategically on its existing programs of strength, develop innovative new programs, and advance its compelling mission, to achieve a thriving institutional future.

Progress on North Park Next can be followed at: [https://www.northpark.edu/north-park-next/](https://www.northpark.edu/north-park-next/).
MISSION
The mission of North Park University, as the University of the Evangelical Covenant Church, is to prepare students for lives of significance and service through education in the liberal arts, professional studies, and theology.

VISION
Building on our core institutional identity—Christian, city-centered, intercultural—our vision is to create a university of uncommon character and enduring excellence, where faith, learning, and service meet.

COVID-19’S IMPACT
Like all of higher education, North Park has been impacted by the ongoing global pandemic and continues to shift as necessary to respond to new challenges as they arise. The University suspended face-to-face instruction in March 2020 and limited campus access. Classes resumed on campus this fall, with an undergraduate enrollment increase from 522 in Fall 2019 to 532 in Fall 2020.

FACTS AT A GLANCE
STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIO:
12:1
STUDENTS ENROLLED:
2,757
YEAR ESTABLISHED:
1891
ACRES OF CHICAGO:
30
STUDENTS OF COLOR:
42%
GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT RATE:
88%
GOVERNANCE
North Park University is governed by a Board of Trustees that includes both members elected by the Evangelical Covenant Church and others appointed by the Board itself. All members serve a five-year term with a mandatory one-year leave between consecutive terms. The work of the Board is organized according to committees on Academics, University Advancement, Finance, the Seminary, Student Recruitment and Retention and Trustees.

Mary Karsten Surridge is the 10th president of North Park University and has served since the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year. The first woman to serve as president at North Park, she has brought to life a new era of leadership, engagement, and vision, with her strong conviction that in the sum of the University’s three distinctives – Christian, city-centered and intercultural – North Park finds its unique value, its competitive advantage, and its opportunity to emerge as the model for Christian higher education in 21st Century America.

President Surridge brings a wealth of leadership experiences in higher education. Before becoming President, in a career at North Park that spanned more than 20 years, she served as vice president for advancement, oversaw undergraduate enrollment, and coached women’s basketball. As advancement VP, Surridge led Campaign North Park, the most ambitious fund-raising campaign in the school’s history. It raised $63 million in financial commitments, including $41 million for construction of the Nancy and G. Timothy Johnson Center for Science and Community Life. The cutting-edge edifice opened in 2014.

Before arriving at North Park, Surridge was associate director of planned and major gifts at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois; director of residence life and student activities at Concordia University in Mequon, Wisconsin; and dean of students at Marian College (now Marian University) in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. At Concordia, she earned a master’s degree in student personnel administration. As an undergraduate at Northwestern, Surridge played Division I basketball and earned a bachelor’s degree in speech communication. At Northwestern, she became involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. “My faith became personal and real,” she said, “and my daily walk with Jesus truly began.”

Her sports and communications background led to internship experiences in professional sports. With the Chicago White Sox, she helped with fan requests, marketing and promotions, game broadcasts and other duties. She also worked in the front office of the Milwaukee Bucks, working for the head coach and in promotions.

“I draw on every single one of those experiences,” she said. “Athletics, enrollment and recruiting, plus advancement, student affairs and student development work are all very important pieces for the future of higher education.”

Mary Karsten grew up in Horicon, Wisconsin, the middle of five siblings. From 1998 to 2008, she was also a full-time parent to her daughter, Jessie, leading her homeschool education through the fourth grade. Jessie currently attends Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. President Surridge and her husband, Jack, who served as North Park’s longtime Athletic Director and professor of genetics, are members of North Park Covenant Church.

Led by President Surridge, the Senior Leadership Team is a dynamic, engaged, and collaborative strategic group. In addition to the Provost, the Senior Leadership Team includes the Vice President for Student Engagement, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing, Vice President for Finance and Administration and CFO, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, Executive Director of Operations and Interim Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Church Relations and Dean of the Seminary, Senior Advancement Advisor and Consultant to the President and Senior Consultant for Marketing and Communications.
The university serves an increasingly diverse population of students from the city of Chicago, the nation, and the world. There is no racial or ethnic majority in the undergraduate population, as no racial or ethnic category is represented above 50%. Of traditional undergraduates, 42% identify as students of color. The religious beliefs of students represent a wide variety of faith backgrounds, including the Evangelical Covenant Church, other Protestant denominations, Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Undergraduate students are 62% female, 60% commuter, and 70% from the state of Illinois.

Also contributing to North Park’s student body are 136 adult degree completion students, 636 graduate students, and 368 enrolled in Seminary. These student populations are equally diverse, with 59% female students and 48% white students.

There is a vibrant campus life. In addition to an active student government, there are approximately 30 registered student organizations, and there is a transparent process for starting a new student organization. Existing student organizations fall under five categories: academic and educational clubs, many of which are connected to academic majors; club sports that participate in intramural and extramural competitions; cultural clubs, which focus on advocacy, celebrating diverse backgrounds and providing education on various social identities; social clubs that gather around general areas of interest but commit to a cause or project; and media and periodical publications, which are student-run publications. There are no Greek organizations at North Park.

Athletics are an integral part of North Park University. The Vikings compete at the NCAA Division III level as members of the prestigious College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) in 17 varsity sports. One third of undergraduate students are student-athletes and are expected to work for academic and athletic success. Coaches recruit students who want a college education and encourage their athletes to perform to their best levels in the classroom. Through the University’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, student-athletes participate in the deliberation of policies and welfare issues. The athletics programs enjoy the support of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other friends of the University.
The academic program at North Park is delivered through six colleges and schools: College of Arts and Sciences; School of Business & Nonprofit Management; School of Education; School of Nursing & Health Sciences; School of Music, Art and Theater; and School of Professional Studies. The University is also home to the North Park Theological Seminary, the denominational seminary of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

The undergraduate experience at North Park includes more than 40 majors and programs in the liberal arts and sciences, including pre-professional options like law, medicine, and art therapy, all in a world-class city and a diverse faith community.

The College of Arts and Sciences houses two divisions. The Division of Humanities and Social Sciences offers degree programs in biblical and theological studies, communication arts, English, modern languages, history, philosophy, politics and government, and sociology. The Division of Sciences offers degree programs in biology, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, physics and psychology.

The School of Business & Nonprofit Management offers bachelor’s degrees in advertising, business and economics and nonprofit management, with specializations in areas such as finance, international business, marketing and sport management, among others. The School also offers five master’s degrees and 16 graduate certificates. All graduate degree programs and some certificates offer the option of attending completely online. Finally, the Axelson Center for Nonprofit Management, curates professional development opportunities, services and resources for individuals and organizations in the nonprofit sector.

The School of Education offers bachelor’s degrees and credentialing for teaching in early childhood, elementary, secondary, or K-12 school programs; a post-bachelor’s teacher licensure program; and five approval or endorsement options in areas such as bilingual, English as a Second Language; and special education. Additionally, the School offers four master’s degrees, in education; educational leadership; literacy, language, and culture; and teaching.

The School of Nursing & Health Sciences offers programs in both areas. In nursing, students can pursue a bachelor’s in nursing (BSN); master’s degrees in leadership and management and advanced practice nursing that lead to specializations in adult-gerontology or family practice; and two post-master’s certificates. Additionally, the School offers a RN-to-BSN program, helping registered nurses complete a bachelor’s degree in a blended classroom format while continuing to work full-time. Health Sciences offers three bachelor’s degrees in exercise science, health sciences, and physical education; and a master’s degree in athletic training. Students also have the option of pursuing a 3+2 program in athletic training.
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (CONT.)

The School of Music, Art and Theatre offers programs and degrees in each of these areas. The Music Department offers four bachelor’s degrees, in music, music education, music in performance, and music in worship; two master’s degrees in collaborative piano/vocal coaching and vocal performance; a music minor; and two certificates in arts management and music for social change and human values. The Arts Department offers bachelor’s degrees with three concentration options in fine arts, graphic design, and curatorial studies; a pre-professional program in art therapy; and an arts management certificate. The Theatre Department includes both the major and a production company developed around a distinctive storefront model that creates productions, at least one of which is produced off-campus at a professional theatre space in Chicago. This active learning enables cross-training for students to develop practical skills that production members need to be successful.

The School of Professional Studies offers Bachelor’s degree completion and certificate programs online, on campus in Chicago or Grayslake, or in a combination of online and face-to-face courses. Prior Learning Assessment also enables students to get credit for that occurred as a result of an experience outside a traditional academic environment.

The North Park Theological Seminary (NPTS) offers specialized graduate certificates and graduate degrees. Additionally, the NPTS runs the School for Restorative Arts, a unique program housed at Stateville Correctional Center where free and incarcerated students study and learn together.

North Park also offers continuing education, including foundational courses necessary for credentialing as well as many kinds of fieldwork and other opportunities for covenant pastors.

Each of the academic units make a unique contribution to the North Park mission, but they also collaborate through Catalyst 606, an innovative program that allows the campus community to engage both experiential learning and community outreach. Operating with both curricular and co-curricular components, Catalyst has become a signature feature of the undergraduate experience. No classes are held on Wednesday afternoons, so that students can be sent into the local community to engage with Chicago as their classroom and Chicagoans as their teachers. This distinctive program enables North Park students to engage with different Chicago neighborhoods (each with a zip code that begins with 606, thus inspiring the name of the program).
As the chief academic officer, the Provost provides leadership for the development and implementation of all academic planning and policy as well as the academic budget; reviews and approves academic appointments; and makes recommendations to the president on promotion and tenure decisions. Within this role, the Provost coordinates across all academic units—College of Arts and Sciences; School of Business & Nonprofit Management; School of Education; School of Nursing & Health Sciences; School of Music, Art and Theatre; School of Professional Studies; and Theological Seminary. All deans are direct reports to the Provost, except the Dean of the Seminary. North Park operates with a policy of shared governance, which deems that collaboration between and among administrators, staff and faculty is reflective of the University’s unique mission and distinctive values. The next Provost will help foster a campus culture of shared governance, shared responsibility, communication, transparency, and respect.

To reinforce the University’s identity as an evangelical Christian institution, all North Park faculty identify as Christian. Yet there is broad diversity in the faith traditions represented among the faculty. The Provost will have deep resonance with the University’s mission, with a commitment to support and advance the faith mission.

AGENDA FOR LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEXT PROVOST OF NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY
North Park seeks an inspiring leader with strong interpersonal skills who feels a calling to serve and support the University’s mission and students. The successful candidate will join the University at a critical time and integrate into a dynamic and collaborative leadership team committed to the needs of the institution for long term success. As the voice for academic affairs, the provost will work in partnership with the other members of the Senior Leadership Team so that academic needs, shared governance and tenure and promotion processes are understood at the highest level of decision-making. The Provost will also strengthen, develop and empower the academic leadership team, and ensure transparency in communication about the complexity of financial, enrollment and other considerations in academic decision-making.

Working with President Surridge, the Provost will collaborate with the North Park University community to achieve the university’s strategic goals. Toward this end, key priorities for the new Provost will include:

Identifying and prioritizing academic needs. North Park has recently undergone a comprehensive academic review. Using the available data and documentation, the Provost must identify priorities and opportunities, particularly in online program delivery, and develop a strategic vision for achieving those. Additionally, the Provost will help build an effective and enduring administrative structure that makes academic policies and procedures visible,
THE ROLE OF THE PROVOST (CONT.)

accessible, and equitable. This will need to be implemented in a manner that accounts for the roles of both staff and faculty in achieving the academic goals of the University, formalizing administrative systems to ensure consistency and continuity.

**Exercising financial acumen in academic administration.** As the chief champion for academic needs, the Provost works in partnership with the chief financial officer in the development of the academic budget and helping to contextualize curricular and hiring decisions for the campus community. Success in this area will require the Provost to cultivate a strategic vision and priorities for academic affairs, identifying innovative new academic programs and revenue sources that align with the competitive marketplace and contribute to the university’s long-term financial sustainability and thriving.

**Contributing to enrollment management efforts.** Recruitment and retention of students is a shared function across campus divisions. The new Provost must champion faculty involvement in achieving enrollment goals. This will include a strategic approach to continually developing as an intercultural institution, expanding market-relevant curricular offerings, including additional graduate programs, and advancing pedagogical methods that resonate with an increasingly diverse student body.

**Expanding impact of the University’s intercultural identity.** The new Provost must have an eye toward the continued diversification of North Park’s student body, faculty, and staff. In 2015, North Park’s student enrollment reached a level of compositional diversity in which no racial or ethnic group made up more than 50% of the student body. As of 2019, no racial or ethnic group exceeds 40%. Additionally, the growing Latina/o student population earned the University designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution. North Park’s commitment to diversity, and the recognition of the importance of students having mentors with whom they identify, is an expression of its Christian faith. The Provost will ensure that this commitment is carried out through programs, initiatives, and practices across Academic Affairs.

**Considering the educational relationship to the city.** In alignment with North Park’s value of being city-centered, the Provost will be energized by the urban context and the opportunities it affords to identify and develop a curricular response to workforce and community needs in the greater Chicago area and the region. One way that North Park already extends into the local community is through the Catalyst 606 program. As part of this charge, the new Provost will review the impact of the Catalyst program and explore how the academic program can best leverage the rich learning, service, internship, and employment opportunities that its urban location lends to North Park’s distinctiveness.

**Focusing on student success.** North Park’s faculty and staff look forward to an inspiring, visionary, decisive, and strategic leader with an unrelenting commitment to outstanding undergraduate and graduate education that optimizes student success and outcomes. Specifically, North Park seeks someone who understands that the bridge between Academic Affairs and Student Engagement is vital in retaining students, supporting their success, and strengthening graduation rates. The Provost must embrace the value of colleagues in Student Engagement working collaboratively alongside faculty and academic staff. Additionally, with the growing diversity in the student body, there is need for the Provost to partner with the Vice President for Student Engagement and work across the Senior Leadership Team to think creatively and plan efficiently about how the student experience and student success initiatives need to reflect campus demographics.
REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS
The new Provost will be a collaborative change manager with strong communication skills, innovative ideas and accomplishments, and an analytical approach to decision-making. The ideal candidate will possess an understanding of the academic evolution needed to embrace an HSI designation, and a commitment to an educational environment that is Christian, intercultural, and city-centered. To this end, the successful candidate will demonstrate:

- an active and expressed Christian faith
- an earned terminal degree
- effectiveness as an academic administrator in positions of increasing responsibility
- a distinguished record in teaching and scholarship or other forms of professional accomplishment commensurate with appointment at the level of professor

DESIRED ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

- a distinguished record of transformational leadership in a university environment;
- financial acumen and effectiveness in managing academic budgets and personnel;
- commitment to a campus culture of productivity and accountability;
- understanding of revenue generation and the financial context for decision-making;
- knowledge of course and program assessment;
- familiarity with disciplinary and institutional accreditation;
- the ability to support the faculty's innovative teaching, research and service to the institution;
- understanding of enrollment in a tuition-dependent institution;
- ability to think strategically about campus needs and issues, prioritize goals, and to engage others (deans, faculty, staff, administrative colleagues) in developing solutions;
- active listening, consensus building, and collaborative problem-solving;
- experience developing campus environments and offerings to sustain growth in diverse student enrollment;
- experience with, or knowledge of, Hispanic-Serving Institutions;
- commitment to a campus culture of diversity, equity and inclusion;
- a deep sense of compassion, empathy and humanity;
- experience making data-informed decisions;
- ability to work collaboratively within, and represent, both the Senior Leadership Team and the academic mission to internal and external audiences;
- ability to work within and with people's unique gifts to advance processes and derive solutions; and
- appreciation for quality standards across scholarly pursuits in the disciplines represented on campus.
This search is assisted by Academic Search. Applications should consist of:

1. a detailed cover letter addressing the expectations of the position;
2. a written statement that describes your understanding, experience and commitment to North Park’s three core distinctives of being Christian, city-centered, and intercultural; and describes your faith journey and how it aligns with the mission and values of the university
3. a current curriculum vitae (CV); and
4. a list of five professional references with contact information and a brief description explaining the working relationship of each to the applicant.

References will not be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate. All documents should be in PDF format.

Nominations and applications should be sent to NorthParkProvost@academicsearch.org. The position is open until filled but only applications received by March 18, 2021 can be assured full consideration. Nominators and prospective candidates may arrange a confidential discussion about this opportunity with Andrea Warren Hamos, senior consultant, at andrea.hamos@academicsearch.org or Mahauganee Shaw, consultant, at mshaw@academicsearch.org.

North Park is committed to providing and maintaining a welcoming environment, and will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, retaliation, or any form of intimidation by any person in any form directed against students, faculty, or staff of the institution. To assure that its commitment is met, North Park has adopted a Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, and Retaliation. The Policy prohibits discrimination or harassment of any member of the University community because of his or her race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran’s status, or other protected status, as those terms are defined by applicable local, state, and federal law, subject to North Park’s right, as a religious institution, to make decisions on the basis of religious beliefs and lifestyle consistent with the religious principles espoused by the Evangelical Covenant Church.
ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting North Park University in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations. Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute. For more information, visit www.academicsearch.org.