SEARCH PROSPECTUS:
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO
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North Park University is seeking a person of active and expressed Christian faith who is a skilled and strategic student life administrator and a champion for student success, to serve as the University’s next Vice President for Student Engagement (VPSE), the chief student affairs 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 VPSE 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 campus administration and a passion for working with diverse student populations, ideally with experience in urban environments.
ABOUT NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY

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 (1) academic programs with an eye toward mission consistency, market relevance, and revenue generation; and (2) administrative structures and use and operations of facilities. This effort is underway with initial recommendations due in spring 2021. Phase III will be the implementation of the university’s strategic plan. Through this process, North Park University is well positioned to build strategically on its existing strengths, think innovatively, 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/.
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 in Fall 2020, with an undergraduate enrollment increase from 522 in Fall 2019 to 532 in Fall 2020. Plans for a fully in-person Fall 2021 semester are underway.

FACTS AT A GLANCE
STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIO: 12:1
STUDENTS ENROLLED: 2,927
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. A three-sport athlete in high school, Mary played in the band and was sports editor of the school paper. 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, Chief of Staff, 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.
STUDENT LIFE

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.

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 EXPERIENCE

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. 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).

THE DIVISION OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement is committed to helping prepare students to lead lives of significance and service by seeing the whole student. We strive to meet students where they are, facilitating opportunities for self-exploration and walking alongside students in their personal, professional, and spiritual growth. The following areas make up the division:

Career Development and Internships
North Park University’s Career Development and Internships Office works with students from their first day on campus throughout the lifetime of their work future. Starting with the admissions process and transitioning into classrooms, continuing through graduation and life as a North Park alum, Career Development and Internship staff are available to help North Parkers navigate the academic experience and work toward career goals. Examples of some services offered include interest inventories, a career planning course, career mapping, resume review and development, interview preparation and planning, as well as career development events throughout the year. This office currently reports to Student Success.

Diversity and Intercultural Life
North Park’s Office of Diversity and Intercultural Life (ODIL) aims to create a campus community that helps students of all backgrounds to feel welcome and included. Working with cultural clubs, student success programming, and promoting student advocacy, ODIL staff encourage greater integration of in-class and out-of-class learning. Diversity clubs often hold
their meetings and events in NPU’s diversity center, known as The Collaboratory. These clubs include: African Cultural Club, Black Student Union, East Asian Student Association, Latin American Student Association, Latinas Unidas, Middle Eastern Student Association, Pacific Cultural Association, Queers and Allies, Rising DREAMERS United, Scandinavian Student Association and South Asian Student Association.

Health and Wellness
This office oversees Counseling Support Services, Disability Access Services, and Health Services. Counseling Support Services offers mental health consultations, individual counseling, group counseling, and referrals to our students from licensed practitioners. Disability Access Services assists with providing accommodations and support for students with disabilities. With support and direction from Swedish Covenant Hospital, North Park University's Health Services provides a variety of services for students to improve or maintain their health, obtain appropriate medical care, and make healthy life choices.

Residence Life and Housing
Residential students (~47% of the undergraduate population) have options between traditional residence halls, apartments, and houses. Residence hall spaces are mostly filled by first- and second-year students with apartments and houses reserved for upperclass students. North Park has two high occupancy apartment buildings as well as several apartments and houses in the local neighborhood. This latter group includes 87 University-owned apartments with 1- to 5-person occupancy and 9 houses with 5- to 8- person occupancy. All living areas are covered by the campus wireless network.

Student Activities
Committed to sustaining a vibrant campus life for students, the Office of Student Activities provides North Park students with extra-curricular opportunities that develop leadership skills and values through the lens of faith, intercultural awareness, and social justice. The office coordinates registered student organizations, student government, and major campus events and activities. There are approximately 30 registered student organizations spanning the following categories: academic and education 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. Student Activities staff work closely with the Commuter Student Association to connect NPU’s commuter students (~53% of undergraduates, as well as the graduate and professional student population).

Student Success
Student Success supports student learning through providing initial academic advising for new students, first-year and transfer student resources, and bridging students to Academic Engagement resources, like the Writing Center and supplemental instruction. This includes coordinating new student orientation programming and other services and programming that help students to connect both academically and socially within the North Park community.

University Ministries
While the North Park community represented various faith backgrounds and belief systems, there are at least two common desires: to become all that one was created to be and to make a difference in the world. University Ministries exists to help students integrate their faith in God with the way they learn and live. Weekly, there are student-led worship services, chapel services led by the campus pastoral team and often engaging guest speakers, prayer groups, and small groups that focus on varying topics. There are two options for musical expression, a student worship team that incorporates various musical styles and languages and a gospel choir. Finally, University Ministries offers opportunities for North Park students to travel domestically and abroad to use their gifts and callings to engage with others. Most unique is the Sankofa Experience, through which students participate in sessions about the social constructions of race, racial reconciliation, and human wholeness; afterward, they go on a 60-hour bus pilgrimage, modeled after historic freedom rides to U.S. destinations where they grapple with what it means to become a beloved community.
THE ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

As the chief student affairs officer, the VPSE provides leadership for the development and implementation of all student engagement planning and policy as well as the budget, reviews, and overall supervision of staff in Student Engagement. Within this role, the VPSE coordinates across all Student Engagement units—Dean of Students, Student Activities, Housing and Residence Life, Health and Wellness, Diversity and Intercultural Life, Student Success, University Ministries and Career Services and Internships. The next Vice President for Student Engagement will guide efforts to foster a campus culture of inclusivity, shared responsibility, communication, transparency, and respect. The ideal candidate will embrace the HSI designation; demonstrate a commitment to a student experience that is Christian, intercultural, and city-centered; and have experience providing leadership to a vibrant and increasingly diverse student body.

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

LEADERSHIP AGENDA
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 the Student Engagement team, the VPSE will work in partnership with the other members of the Senior Leadership Team so that student needs are understood at the highest level of decision-making. The VPSE will also strengthen, develop, and empower the Student Engagement leadership team, focus on their professional development, advocate for additional resources, enhance their functioning as a team and lead efforts to engage and support an increasingly diverse student population.

Working with the Senior Leadership Team, the VPSE will collaborate with the North Park University community to achieve the university’s strategic goals. Toward this end, key priorities will include:
THE ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

Engage an increasingly diverse student body. North Park enrolls a percentage of traditionally underrepresented students that would be the envy of many colleges or universities. 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. With the growing diversity in the student body, there is need for the Vice President for Student Engagement to partner with the Provost and others 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. The new VPSE will work with this group to ensure that the diversity of the student body is fully appreciated, celebrated, and embraced to enhance the educational experience for all.

Increase student success as measured by improved student retention, particularly for students of color. The North Park community looks forward to an inspiring, visionary, decisive, and strategic leader with an unrelenting commitment to outstanding and effective programs that optimize student success and outcomes. Specifically, the University seeks someone who understands that the bridge between Student Engagement and Academic Affairs is vital in retaining students, supporting their success, and strengthening graduation rates. North Park has had great success in attracting a diverse student body. However, the retention of underrepresented students has lagged behind the overall student population. A critical focus of the new VPSE will be to provide leadership to University efforts to support student success especially among diverse students. This includes the implementation of robust and sustainable practices that will help increase student persistence to graduation, including successful collaborations with academic affairs and enrollment management.

Develop a divisional vision and build the team dynamic. Recent years have brought much turnover to the Division of Student Engagement, and the impact of COVID-19 has been exacerbated this—there are unfilled vacancies and an operational need to continue the work of different units while physically distant. The new VPSE must help to reconnect the division by: setting a common vision that connects to North Park’s 3 distinctives and guides the work of Student Engagement, assessing the staffing needs across the division to fill key openings, and helping the staff to increase communication and build familiarity and trust both between functional units and within the larger team.

Embrace the benefits and opportunities of Chicago to enhance Career Development opportunities for students. As the chief advocate for student needs, the VPSE will bolster the work of the Office of Career Services and Internships by partnering with Alumni and Academic Affairs to increase both connections in the city and student internship and employment opportunities. Success in this area will require the new VPSE to develop a strategic vision, set priorities, and cultivate resources to enable success. This will include identifying the staffing needs, programming, alumni engagement, and student outreach necessary to strengthen success in this critical institutional priority.
THE ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

Enhance the commuter and residential student experience. North Park maintains a near even split between residential and commuter students. The growing commuter student population is heavily represented by students who are also first-generation and can benefit from additional academic, financial, and emotional resources and support. Making a “home” on campus for all students is vital to improving the overall campus experience. Providing programs, services, and spaces that serve to engage residential and commuter students with each other and the overall community is critical. The new VPSE is expected to possess the experience and vision to enhance the campus environment for both of these student populations.

Nurture the growth of areas that serve students’ spiritual and emotional needs. At North Park, excellence implies not only a deep tradition in the liberal arts and Christian faith, but a spirit of reaching out to serve and learn from the dynamic community around us. Two areas where North Park students have been especially taxed during the pandemic have been in their spiritual and mental health. As such, the Student Engagement areas that support these needs will require special attention and expertise from a new VPSA: University Ministries, the faith home for many North Park students; and Counseling Support Services.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS
The new Vice President for Student Engagement will be a collaborative change agent with strong communication skills, innovative ideas, proven accomplishments, and a data driven yet equity-minded approach to decision-making. To this end, the successful candidate will demonstrate:

- an active and expressed Christian faith.
- an earned Masters’ degree in student development or related field; a terminal degree is preferred.
- a record of developing programs and services that enhance student success, retention, and graduation, particularly for students of color.
- effectiveness as a student affairs administrator in positions of increasing responsibility

DESIRED ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

- experience with staffing and providing a vision for a student affairs portfolio
- a record of accomplishments in enhancing the career development outcomes for students.
- an accomplished record in advancing student success metrics, including effective collaborations with academic affairs and enrollment management.
- awareness of, and experience with, current systems that are effective in enhancing student success.
- understanding of student affairs theories and frameworks related to resilience, persistence, and belonging.
- the ability to use equity-based and data-driven methods to expand awareness of student needs and outcomes.
- experience with, or knowledge of, Hispanic-Serving Institutions.
- experience engaging online and adult student populations in the life of a campus.
- a proven record of personal engagement with students in a meaningful and personal way that enhances trust and mutual respect.
- commitment to developing theoretical understandings of, and a campus culture that embraces, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- a history of advocating successfully for the student affairs function and student needs.
- effectiveness in managing budgets and personnel.
- ability to think strategically about campus needs and issues, prioritize goals, and to engage others in developing solutions.
- experience with strategic initiatives that created institutional change and engagement.
- ability to work collaboratively within, and represent, both the Senior Leadership Team and the student experience to internal and external audiences.
APPLICATION PROCESS

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 identities 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 NorthParkVPSE@academicsearch.org. The position is open until filled but only applications received by June 11, 2021 can be assured full consideration. Assisting North Park with this search are Mahauganee Shaw (mshaw@academicsearch.org) and Tom Shandley (Thomas.Shandley@academicsearch.org), Senior Consultants with Academic Search. Nominators and prospective candidates may reach out directly to arrange a confidential discussion about this opportunity.

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 the 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.

Committed to IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING LEADERS by providing the highest level of EXECUTIVE SEARCH to our higher education partners.