

# VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE:

The Senate has called for a vote of no confidence in the leadership of President Mary Surridge.

## RATIONALE:

A no confidence vote is warranted by three primary concerns:

- 1) multiple violations of our governing documents (MAPP and the Faculty and Senate Bylaws);
- 2) a persistently hostile learning/work environment for students, staff, and faculty, especially those of color;
- 3) incompetent leadership.

The material below will assist faculty in understanding the broad scope of the Senate's concern. Faculty may have personal experiences beyond these concerns or weigh her strengths differently to counter these concerns. Faculty will be asked to vote their conscience in any case.

## THE CAUSE FOR NO CONFIDENCE:

### Violations of Governing Documents

1. **MAPP 7.4:** firing of 4 tenured faculty without timely consultation with Faculty Senate, and without effort to find appropriate alternative appointments
2. **MAPP 7.4:** discontinuance of Christian Studies Department and programs without valid MAPP-sanctioned warrant
3. **Full Faculty and Faculty Senate Bylaws, section V:** proposed reimagining of Christian Studies in Seminary violates bylaws-mandated structure for curricular legislation.
4. **MAPP Appendix C. (Guidelines and Procedures for Faculty and Administrative Appointments):** violation of policy regarding diversity in final candidate pool in recent Provost search; President appears to be unaware of both university policy and voluntary affirmative action EEOC provisions
5. **Faculty Bylaws VII, I. 4:** failure to share recent faculty reviews of President and Provost with the full Board

# HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT: TOXIC CLIMATE FOR FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS

## Hostile Environment for Faculty, Staff, and Students of Color

1. Exodus of staff and faculty of color, with pressure to sign NDAs
2. Failure to appoint sufficient people of color to positions of leadership
3. Appointment of white supervisors over people of color who were fully capable of continuing leadership themselves
4. No response or action on December 2019 Full Faculty motion calling for: strategic intercultural visioning team; increased diverse membership among Board, administration, faculty, staff; campus-wide anti-bias training; racial bias audit of institutional policies and practices
5. Poor retention of male athletes of color, especially football players; overwhelmingly white coaching staff
6. Repeated statements demeaning to people of color
7. Repeated refusal to see, speak to, or interact with people of color
8. Intimidation of students who speak out about lack of diversity and inclusion on campus (Feb 2020 Town Hall, Student Fall 2019 Letter to Board)
9. Disrespect for faculty of color who spoke during and following the Feb 2020 Town Hall; obstruction of their work, resulting in dissolution of Courageous Voices

## Hostile Environment for others

10. "Toxic" campus culture of "fear" and "silence"; departures from many departments; exit interviews not routinely conducted
11. Verbal intimidation and micromanagement of former Provost Michael Emerson
12. Hostility towards women who file Title IX complaints; refusal to deal with harassers
13. Failure to establish staff council as proposed in HLC report
14. Top-down decision-making structure; little recourse for faculty/staff who have grievances with their organizational superior
15. Mismanagement of VERIP
16. Mishandling of Chemistry Department harassment

## Incompetence

### Failure to articulate a philosophy of Christian higher education or a compelling vision for North Park's future

1. Very slow to develop any strategic plan to guide academic planning, budgeting, and hiring

2. Gutting of core academic departments; overreliance on adjunct instructors in the core curriculum; full time faculty dramatically smaller than comparable institutions.
3. Failure to communicate a guiding understanding of North Park's core distinctives, and consistent misrepresentation of "intercultural" distinctive as a matter of demographics rather than an educational ideal
4. Failure to support academic initiatives that advance the core distinctives
5. Drastic reduction of graduate program recruitment and promotion resulting in loss of revenue

### Inability to work collaboratively with the faculty

6. Non-responsiveness to motions of the Faculty Senate and the Full Faculty
7. Unilateral decision making, without transparency, collaboration, or accountability (e.g., overruled Faculty Senate recommendations on APRE proposals without acknowledgement or rationale; mischaracterized APRE committee as transparent, autonomous, recommending body)
8. Little understanding of day-to-day activities of classroom or campus; limited understanding of basic practices of higher education, e.g., tenure
9. Excessive insistence on confidentiality
10. Poor to non-existent communication with the Faculty Senate, including unwillingness to meet with the Faculty Senate President since spring 2019; no commitment to or understanding of shared governance
11. Inability to facilitate communication between faculty and board
12. Excessive reliance on interim appointments; e.g., interim Provost assigned to conduct major academic overhaul (APRE) and to preside over early retirement offer (VERIP)
13. Violations of shared governance standard practices in hiring for positions related to academics
14. Arbitrary and capricious hiring and promotion against all standard practice with regard to job postings, job descriptions, search committees

### Administrative incompetence

15. Refusal to fund offices critical to reaccreditation
16. Defunding of offices vital to student retention, persistence, career development, and spiritual formation
17. Underfunding of Brandel Library staff and acquisitions budget, resulting in reduced information literacy instruction in CORE1000 courses and across the curriculum
18. Questionable administrative expenditures, including remodel of President's residence, elaborate inaugural festivities, and hiring of President's spouse at a time when the university was paying three presidents' salaries
19. Lack of capital campaign, poor development outcomes
20. Excessive reliance on paid consultants

# EVIDENCE

## VIOLATIONS OF GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

- Faculty Senate minutes, [April 23, 2021](#); [May 18, 2021](#)
- [Faculty Senate motion](#) requesting meeting with Board, September 13, 2021
- [Report to the Faculty Senate](#): June 23, 2021
- Manual of Academic Personnel Policies ([MAPP](#))
- [Full Faculty and Faculty Senate Bylaws](#)
- [Provost Search MAPP Violation Timeline](#) (spring 2021); in an email to Senate President Rachele Ankney, President Surridge notes that “consistent with EEO process, and as the committee was instructed, once we have the applicant pool, they cannot and should not seek age, race, gender, ethnicity, orientation, etc.” However, this is an incorrect understanding of both EEOC guidelines, which allow organizations to create a “voluntary affirmative action policy” and MAPP, appendix C, which outlines such a policy (requiring every final candidate pool to include at least one person of color and one woman)

## HOSTILE WORK/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

### Hostile Environment for Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color

- [Student Letter to Board of Trustees](#), November 11, 2019
- Vista magazine, “[Update: Student Letter of Clarification](#),” Nov. 9, 2019
  - . . . [“Let Them Speak: A North Park Town Hall,”](#) March 3, 2020
  - . . . [“What They Said: Reflections on the North Park Town Hall,”](#) March 6, 2020
- [SGA President remarks](#), Town Hall, February 2020
- [Letter re Courageous Voices](#), Summer 2020
- [Student testimony to Faculty Senate](#), September 2021
- Hiring of Dean of Chapel (white) to oversee Director of UMin (POC)
  - Position description not made public, no involvement with chapel program, no consultation with UMin in creation or filling of position
- Hiring of white consultant to oversee work of senior person (Asst. VP) of color in University Marketing and Communication; result: departure of capable POC
- No President’s Cabinet level leadership on DEI; Office of Diversity director position vacant for extended period, after previous director left citing repeated administrative undermining of her work
- 80% of the President’s Cabinet are white
- No candidate of color among the finalists for the Provost position; President justifies this by citing misunderstanding of EEOC guidelines, and overlooking NPU policy
- According to a 2020 retention report from SPARK associates, “Male student athletes of color remain one of the highest risk groups at NPU” -- largely attributable to the poor retention performance of the football program. In 2018-19, 49% of first-year football players did not return the following year. In 2019-20, 45% of first year football players

did not return the following year. (This compares to overall first year student non-retention rates of 24% and 25% respectively in those same years.)

- President's Strategic Enrollment Management Advisor left his position as Director of Athletics without a single person of color as the head coach of any official university athletic team

#### Hostile Work/Learning Environment for Others

- Departures from many departments in the university with the exception of athletics.
  - Provost Michael Emerson
  - Dean of College of Arts and Sciences Gregor Thuswaldner
  - VP of Advancement Sheena Keith (appointed to the position in late spring of 2019, resigned within months)
  - VP of Student Engagement Jodi Koslow Martin
  - Assistant VP of Student Engagement Barrington Price
  - Assistant VP of University Marketing and Communications Chris Childers
  - Office of Advancement: Major Gifts Officer Roby Geevarghese
  - Head of Teaching and Learning Services/Librarian for SNHS Marielle McNeal
  - Office of the Provost: Data Coordinator Emma Coyne
  - Assistant Professor of Information Literacy/Head of Reference and Research: Patty Hurley
  - Coordinator of Student Success: First Year Experience: De'Marien Hampton, citing race issues across campus and understaffing
  - Intercultural Program Coordinator Miranda Lonzo
  - University Marketing and Communication operating at 50% staffing
  - Office of Advancement operating at 50% staffing
  - CDIO: staff departures of Career Education Specialist/Assistant Director Renee Tucker Martinez and Career Programs Manager Evie Peterson, unsuccessful hiring of director
- Former Provost [Michael Emerson's exit interview](#) with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee documents his extensive concerns about President Surridge's leadership, including allegations of micromanagement and belittlement of colleagues. Emerson noted his concern about the diminished role of the Office of the Provost and the lack of collaborative interaction between the President and the Senior Team; he further noted that President Surridge did not attend Senior Team meetings herself, but sent messages to the group via the Strategic Enrollment Management Advisor
- Failure to hire for vacant positions in a timely fashion; use of consultants for many searches
  - Campus pastor: 1.5 years
  - Vice President of Student Engagement: 1.5 years
  - Director of the Office of Diversity: 1.5 years
  - Dean of College of Arts and Sciences: 1 year +
- Interim appointments in key positions
  - VP of Student Engagement

- Office of Diversity Assistant Director
- Provost
- Co-Deans, College of Arts and Sciences
- Dean, School of Education
- Dean, School of Music, Art, and Theater
- Hiring processes frequently conducted without input from constituents
- Dismissed/minimized concerns of Chemistry department faculty facing harassment, including erasing of death threat from classroom whiteboard
- Inflexibility in accommodating alternative working/teaching/learning modalities for parents of small children and others concerned about their safety during COVID-19

## INCOMPETENCE

Failure to articulate a philosophy of Christian higher education or a compelling vision for North Park's future

- President has celebrated last year's Academic Program Review and Enhancement (APRE) committee process as a collaborative strategic planning effort, culminating in recommendations to the Board, when in fact:
  - the APRE agenda, membership, and leadership were determined by the administration
  - administration resisted calls for greater inclusion and transparency
  - the group's efforts focused on enrollment data and budgets, not strategic planning principles or frameworks
  - the group did not make recommendations, and was not permitted to see the Provost's final report to the Board
  - no faculty members attended the relevant Board meeting ([Report to the Faculty Senate, 6/21/2021](#))
- President ignored multiple Faculty Senate motions regarding APRE process and proposals (Faculty Senate meeting, 5/18/2021, [video recording](#), [minutes](#))
- President has made no effort to engage faculty, staff, or students in sustained mutual reflection about the distinctive character of our institution and has given no public or written remarks to demonstrate her own in-depth thought on these questions. Events branded "Town Halls" have been highly controlled, with the President talking to (rather than with) the community and questions required to be submitted in advance. Although President Surridge routinely mentions the three core distinctives, she has yet to offer a well-considered presentation or invite discussion of these concepts, and how they inform our institutional mission
- Similarly, the repeated claim that North Park "aspires to be a model for 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian higher education" has no substance, no context, no vision. No invitation to the campus community to help define same
- President appears to understand our "intercultural" distinctive as a demographic category, rather than an educational ideal (frequent references to "our intercultural student body")
- Undermining Catalyst program; three Americorps VISTA positions eliminated, despite most of the cost being underwritten by federal government

- Steady “chipping away” at faculty staffing in core academic departments; vast majority of Core Curriculum courses taught by adjuncts. The following statistics give an idea of the crisis facing the faculty at North Park:
  - Elmhurst University: 2596 students/158 FT faculty
  - North Central College: 2538 students/ 151 FT faculty
  - Dominican University: 2768 students/ 142 FT faculty
  - North Park University: 2865 students/ 97 FT faculty (including 3 teaching on terminal one-year contracts)

#### Inability to work collaboratively with faculty

- Advisory motions from the Faculty Senate and the Full Faculty routinely ignored, including those calling for a specific action or response.
  - [December 9, 2019](#), Special Meeting of the Full Faculty, motions calling for 1) pausing academic restructuring; 2) a defined plan to increase diversity at all levels (Board, administration, staff, faculty), constitution of a strategic visioning team to promote the intercultural distinctive, anti-racism training for all campus constituencies, and racial bias audit of institutional policies and practices for past 5 years; 3) more diverse representation on the campus co-pastor search committee; 4) need to fully resource re-accreditation effort (all 4 motions passed by overwhelming majority vote)
  - [March 29, 2021](#), Faculty Senate Meeting (motion defining process for “timely consultation” in event of program discontinuance)
  - [April 23, 2021](#), Faculty Senate Meeting (motion concerning MAPP 7.4, motion concerning Provost search compliance with MAPP)
  - [May 18, 2021](#), Faculty Senate Meeting (motions expressing disagreement with select APRE proposals, including those concerning Christian Studies, Theater, Environmental Science, and Physics)
- Inaction on MAPP and Faculty Bylaws revisions ([MAPP revision timeline](#))

#### ADMINISTRATIVE INCOMPETENCE

- Conflict of interest: hiring of President’s spouse as Strategic Enrollment Management Advisor to the President (7/1/19)
- Remodeling of Hawkinson House (presidential home)/elaborate Inaugural festivities - soon after, the President spoke at Gathering Days and faculty/staff meetings imploring them to tighten budgets in order to cover a \$1.2 million shortfall
- Appointment of a Chief of Staff, in addition to an Administrative Assistant, in time of budget challenges
- Hiring of two long-term Cabinet level consultants, without standard practice job postings, searches, etc.
- Budget cuts in library resulting in reduced Core Curriculum information literacy instruction and reduced acquisitions budget

- Despite multiple requests from the [Office of the Provost](#), a supporting motion from the Faculty Senate, and funding approval from the Board, the President impeded reaccreditation efforts by refusing to authorize necessary funding,