



North Park Student Alliance

Ad Hoc Committee Recognized by the North Park University Student Government Association

“We the students of North Park University are entitled to an education at an institution that does not make its students fight for their dignity, education, or acceptance. We are dedicated to actively seeking truth, healing, and restoration at North Park University. The goal of this committee is to amplify the student voice in hopes of prompting administrative changes that improve the lives of our peers.”

Access to Supporting Documents:
<https://linktr.ee/NPUStudentVoices>

Grievances Outlined by the North Park Student Body

We, the Student Body, rise above the chaos and conflict taking place on our campus. While our leadership bickers with one another and clings to false forms of power, we actively seek truth, healing, and restoration at North Park University. We would like to begin by affirming President Mary Surridge's intentions to serve this university to the best of her abilities. She has shown to be an efficient fundraiser, politician, and reliable leader to certain percentages of past generations of North Parkers. However, we acknowledge that intentions mean nothing without a positive and lasting impact. The truth is that President Surridge falls short in attributes that are critical to fulfilling North Park's potential culturally, spiritually, and professionally. **We are asking that President Mary Surridge resigns from her position as University President and for the Board of Trustees to be reanalyzed.** We can no longer be silent while our people are suffering. We are no longer content with neutrality, as it has proven an effective method of plateauing our growth towards a truly Christian, city-centered, and intercultural university. We are demanding that this University puts our core values into action, and finally confronts the blindspots in our administration head-on. In summary – we, the student body, demand that North Park University becomes an institution that does not make its students fight for their dignity, education, or acceptance.

We find no fault in President Surridge's intentions to serve the North Park Community. We simply claim that intentions are not enough. North Park needs a leader with expertise in all

areas regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This institution is at a crucial moment in our history. NPU's Student Body looks radically different than it did even twenty years ago, yet we still operate on an outdated model that serves the North Parkers of yesterday. President Surridge's clear lack of confidence with navigating nonwhite spaces and bridging gaps of inequality for BIPOC is deeply concerning for students who attend this institution, drawn in by the promises of our core distinctives. We acknowledge and admire the President's desire to become more informed on these topics. The unfortunate truth is that North Park can't afford another decade of stagnant leadership. The systems and structures that encourage the reign of whiteness and white supremacy at our University must be confronted and dismantled for good. We cannot emphasize this enough – *North Park is in crisis*. Students of color are suffering while our leadership covers up their pain with kind words and good intentions. North Park University deserves a leader who is both willing and qualified to confront the fractures of inequality on our campus. We need someone who will bring healing to the wounds inflicted on the students who were brought to a university that was not yet prepared to support them. We say these things because we believe in a North Park that is capable of welcoming, supporting, and celebrating its students through actions rather than words. Please take the time to read through this list of grievances and the lived experiences of students who shoulder the weight of this university's shortcomings.

List of Grievances

1. North Park University Falls Short in its Responsibilities as a Hispanic Serving Institution

- a. In order to qualify as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), a university needs to have 25% of students who identify as Hispanic. As of right now, North Park has 51.9% of students of color and over 25% of this is made up of the Hispanic student body.
- b. Failure to provide Hispanic students with adequate structures of support such as scholarships and mentorships.
- c. Failure to equitably hire Hispanic faculty and staff on campus
- d. Failure to adequately disclose information regarding HSI grants, scholarships, and mentoring opportunities.

2. Diversity

- a. NPU boasts of a diverse student population (51.9% of the student population identifies as students of color), yet struggles to retain these students beyond their first year.
- b. Recurring pattern at North Park that coats the efforts and actions of people of color in a layer of whiteness that is suffocating and unproductive.

- i. “A group of Black women organized a march to honor Breonna Taylor. White North Park employees dismissed this initiative led by Black women, and sought to hold their own performative form of “protest” that was composed entirely of white individuals. After being confronted by students of color, it was only after their ignorance became public on social media that they agreed to cancel this harmful form of protest.” - Student Leader

- c. Failure to retain and support athletes of color that NPU continues to recruit.

3. North Park’s Academic Structure is not Conducive to a Safe, Stable Learning Environment

- a. Failure to communicate the status of majors to NPU students, faculty, and staff.
- b. Failure to support students whose majors were discontinued.

- i. “I was very disappointed in North Park when I found out they cut environmental science, especially since it’s such an important and up-and-coming field. All of my higher-level science classes are now taught by adjuncts. Just not the kind of quality education I was looking for. I’d transfer to a school with a stronger program (that still had environmental science) if I could.” -Environmental Science Major

- c. Failure to retain staff and faculty, leaving students without a reliable and consistent academic support system.

- i. “I came back to campus this year to find out my major was being “sunset”, my advisor had been “paid to retire”, and one of my favorite professors had been “fired on an hours notice.” How am I supposed to build a relationship with professors if they’re all gone?” -Physics Student

- d. Failure to prioritize Office of Career Services, thus failure to prioritize the future wellbeing and success of students.

- e. Failure to provide adequate advising services for students.

- i. “As a student for three years at North Park University, I feel like the lack of responsibility amongst the advising and the lack of care put my entire college career in jeopardy. The negligence I have received from my nursing advisor set me back an entire year and it gets dismissed as if it meant nothing. They treat us like little kids and keep us out of the loop for everything.” -Junior at NPU

- ii. “In the words of a high-ranking authority figure within the Center for Student Engagement, “Transfer students are the step-children of North Park University. They tend to fall through the cracks.” It is deeply concerning to know that those in authority within Student Engagement recognize that this is a common issue, but nothing has been done to solve it. If this had happened at a major university with tens of thousands of students, it wouldn’t have been surprising. In an environment like that, I’m

sure situations like mine are bound to occur. However, North Park University boasts a small student body, a tightly-knit campus community, and the opportunity for each student to receive individualized help in every aspect of their education. I, along with many others, have not received that.” - Current North Park Student

- f. Failure to provide a curriculum that does not prioritize white, male voices but reflects a wide range of literature and academic works of women, nonbinary individuals, and people of color.
 - i. “I was a history major for the beginning of my time at NPU. I will never forget the *world* history class I took my freshman year. We spent almost all of our time covering Europe and the United States, as if I hadn’t already received a biased westernized education in grade school.” -Student

4. North Park Faculty and Staff Overworked and Overwhelmed

- a. Adjunct professors expected to cover the gap caused by faculty shortage and major cuts.
- b. North Park’s faculty and staff are not representative of the Student Body.
 - i. “Non white students like myself experience extreme burnout educating white professors on the gaps in their DEI exposure, and how a predominantly eurocentric-curricular approach is harmful. It is extremely apparent to BIPOC students, specifically those who weren’t raised navigating white spaces, that many Professors are not equipped to navigate non white spaces and topics. Many white professors have only interacted with intercity people and cultures like mine behind a lense of research and through a textbook. This doesn’t reflect the budding diversity growing in this university and almost always leads to those students being used as the voice of their infinity group. Students like myself are not only expected to educate our teachers on these inequities in a way that’s palatable for them, but must navigate a classroom climate that doesn’t make us feel safe.” - Student Leader
 - ii. NPU Faculty size is significantly smaller compared to institutions of a similar size.
 - iii. Elmhurst University: 2596 students/158 full-time faculty
 - 1. ~16 students to 1 full-time faculty member
 - iv. North Central: 2538 students/151 full-time faculty
 - 1. ~16 students to 1 full-time faculty member
 - v. Dominican University: 2768 students/142 full-time faculty
 - 1. ~19 students to 1 full-time faculty member
 - vi. North Park University: 2865 students/97 full-time faculty (3 on terminal one-year contracts)
 - 1. ~29 students to 1 full-time faculty member

- c. Unclear/untrue claims regarding NPU's student to faculty ratio.
 - i. Admissions claims there is a 12:1 student to faculty ratio and NPU website claims 10:1 student to faculty ratio

5. North Park University Counseling Services is Under Resourced, and Doesn't Represent the Current Diversity On Campus.

- a. Failure to provide adequate mental healthcare services.
 - i. "There aren't enough mental health resources at this school. It's as if we didn't just live through a solid year of a pandemic, and now students have to try functioning as if friends weren't lost and loved ones didn't pass away." -Concerned Student
 - ii. "My sophomore year, a friend was dealing with lots of mental health issues. Instead of helping this student emotionally and providing academic aid, North Park kicked this student out, immediately locking them out of their dorm room and taking away any voice they had on campus. This friend was turned away from their university in a time of huge need. My junior year, my friend committed suicide." -Former North Parker
- b. Much of the burden being placed on Residence Life and Housing workers as NPU only provides access to trained mental health professionals from 9:00am-4:30pm.

6. Residence Life and Housing Under-Resourced, Inaccessible, and Inequitable

- a. Failure to provide the necessary resources for safe and healthy residential experience.
- b. Failure to accurately disclose information about living conditions on campus.
 - i. Anderson Hall, Park North, and Ohlson House are the only campus housing options with the dimensions of their spaces listed on the website.
- c. Residential Spaces are not fully ADA compliant, making the residential experience inaccessible to students with disabilities.
- d. Many residents find living conditions inadequate due to roach or mice infestations.
- e. Failure to provide gender-inclusive housing and a clear policy of support for transgender and gender nonconforming students.
 - i. "I decided to move off campus just because I felt unsafe. As a gender nonconforming student, it felt like a lot of staff didn't take it seriously and talking to housing was draining, it felt like they found accommodations for students draining and didn't seem to find them as a priority." -Student
- f. Failure to provide adequate information regarding food in the dining hall
 - i. "I have a few allergies, and eating at the dining hall has become very difficult for me. I never know what is in the food, and when I ask, the staff usually can't tell me. I almost never eat at the dining hall anymore, and living in dorms, it's really hard for me to find any food to eat. I think the

food should be labeled with ingredients or at least main allergens.”

-Student

- g. Resident Assistants overworked and underpaid.
 - i. Illinois Wesleyan (2,113 students) (Population-wise, this is the closest to NPU within our conference according to information provided online)
 - 1. <https://www.iwu.edu/residential-life/staff/join/ra/>
 - 2. RAs aren't required to sit desk; RAs are given the option to sit desk and receive a stipend for it.
 - ii. Wheaton College (2,282 students)
 - 1. <https://wheatoncollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Resident-Advisor-Information-Packet-2021-2022.pdf>
 - 2. No desk shifts
 - iii. Carthage (2,374 students)
 - 1. <https://www.carthage.edu/live/news/33943-interested-in-being-a-resident-assistant>
 - 2. No desk shifts
 - iv. Carroll University (2,789 students)
 - 1. https://my.carrollu.edu/ICS/icsfs/2020-2021_Resident_Assistant_Position_Description.pdf?target=849aef67-7bcf-483b-b6b3-37368c75a429
 - 2. Same work expectations, including desk shifts
 - 3. Compensation: Room and board, block meal plan, additional meals for extra functions, and a stipend paid in 10 installments
 - v. Each RA's budget for hall decorations, event planning, and other expenses has not been adjusted to reflect the increase in event demands. In past years, RAs have been required to plan and complete two (2) events per month, increasing to three (3) events per month this year.
 - vi. Some RAs are stretched too thin among too many residents. There is 1 RA for the houses and over 45 residents currently living in an on-campus house.

7. Environmental

- a. North Park website claims to provide a curriculum that “utilizes community engagement in areas of intercultural dialogue, social justice, human wellness, and *environmental stewardship*.”
 - i. There is nowhere in the current curriculum where environmental stewardship is legitimately reflected.
- b. Failure to honor the disproportionate impact of harmful pollutants and environmental disasters of the climate crisis on people of color and our responsibility to addressing this matter.

- i. Our location in one of the most diverse zip codes in the country, designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution, and intentional recruitment of students from minority backgrounds.
- c. NPU discontinues Environmental Science program during a global climate crisis.
 - i. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education states that the number one thing a university can do to be more sustainable is offer education in environmental studies in sustainability.

8. Lack of Support for Commuter Students

- a. Failure to provide designated commuter student space on campus
 - i. For years, commuter students have requested a space on campus designated just for them. These requests have been brought directly to the Senior Leadership Team through multiple outlets and have been met with excuses and indifference every time.
- b. Overall marginalization of commuter students on campus, despite an overwhelming presence on campus.
 - i. 66% of student body commute
- c. Inequitable access to on-campus jobs.
 - i. The flow of information from departments to students prioritizes residential students. Often, our commuter student body isn't given equal access to information regarding on-campus jobs.
 - ii. "Commuter students who are student leaders are here most of the day because they have classes and meetings, which is why they would also like having jobs available to them since that would be the most convenient as they are already on campus. They would like to feel entitled to be able to work here and get opportunities to grow as a student through these jobs, like working in ODIL, the business and nonprofit office, the admissions office, the international affairs office, etc." - Student Leader
- d. Failure to provide financially accessible parking options for commuter students
 - i. Parking permits should be flexible and accessible for all students. Currently, permits are \$100/semester. As we adapt to a hybrid model of education, many commuter students find themselves on-campus significantly less than before the pandemic. To meet this changing need, North Park must offer a more flexible option for these students such as daily, weekly, or monthly parking pass options.

9. NPU Security Cultivate Toxic and Unsafe Culture

- a. Security officers fail to demonstrate empathy towards women and students of color.
 - i. "I'm grateful I fought him off and was able to get away but for someone else it could have easily been a different story. I was terrified for weeks

crossing the bridge alone. When I went to security, they blew off the incident almost like this had happened before and basically said there was nothing to be done as I was physically fine. They said they were going to station security every night on the bridge after that to hopefully ensure something like this would never happen again. I never once saw security on the bridge ever again.” -Former North Parker

- ii. “Last semester, I was attacked by an unknown man in the park by the Holmgren's field. When I got to the Security's office to file a police report, the Security man asked me what I was wearing at the time of the assault. I told him I was wearing the same clothes because it had only been about 30 minutes after the assault. He replied, "That's weird. Usually when girls get attacked, they go home and change clothes or shower because they feel so disgusted." From the second he asked me what I was wearing, I knew he was not on my side in this.” -Student
- iii. “After I had been assaulted in the fall of 2020, I approached security in the spring in an attempt to find some protection from my abuser, who was still attending North Park. I was terrified to walk around campus, and I wanted to see if security could do anything to help me feel safer, despite the fact that security was the last place I felt safe seeking aid from. When I told my story to the officer, and asked what could be done to try to feel safe walking around campus after not leaving my dorm for days at a time out of fear, his response to me was, ‘Well, he probably still has the hots for you.’ This invalidating response was incredibly harmful, and I did not feel as if security was ever on my side, and I stopped seeking any protection from them.” -Student
- iv. “On my way to a 4 AM desk shift I was followed and verbally harassed by a man in his 30’s. I was alone and scared for my life. I emailed security about it as soon as I got to the desk and received no response” -Student

10. North Park University’s Title IX is Undermined and Under Resourced.

- a. Title IX isn’t supported in creating quick and effective change in incidents of crisis
- b. Failure to cultivate environment that honors, respects, and protects the survivors of sexual violence.
 - i. “I filed a Title IX case due to being sexually assaulted on campus my freshman year. The case lasted from April of my freshman year to November my sophomore year. I had won my Title IX case and sanctions were put into place to make me feel safe. One of those classes was that the perpetrator & I, the survivor, were not to have classes together. My junior year, 2nd semester we had classes together. I had to take this to the Cook

County court to receive an order stating we were not to be in classes together. Following that case, the individual was removed from my classes. My senior year, even after that court hearing I was placed into classes again with this individual. I was tired & didn't have it in me to fight anymore, I went to class & passed with a C because I had missed so many classes due to anxiety & panic attacks from seeing that person. North Park did nothing to keep me safe or to ensure I was okay.”

- ii. “I was sexually assaulted in my campus apartment. I reported it to Title IX and had a meeting with the Title IX person. They gave me time to choose what I wanted to do with the multiple options they gave me. They also said they'd send me information regarding therapy and other resources; they were also supposed to email my manager so I wouldn't have to bump into my attacker while sitting desk on campus. They never sent the resources and they never contacted my manager. Instead, in my second semester, 2 of my shifts were right after my attacker and I was forced to see him 2 times a week, which was emotionally and physically draining. I didn't feel safe enough to ask for help again because no one had listened or helped me the first time. Then, a petition along with other social media posts about my attacker spread around campus (none of which I had posted). My attacker felt “unsafe” and contacted Title IX for help. A few hours later I got an email asking to have a meeting regarding the posts. Scheduling the meeting was difficult as they weren't giving me many options. At the meeting, I was threatened with being possibly suspended or expelled for the social media posts- posts that didn't have my social media handles/usernames or name on them. It wasn't after this meeting that I spoke up for myself and told them how I felt about their lack of help since they weren't doing their job right. I told them they had to check in more often with students who were SA. Finally, this person made the necessary changes to ensure I didn't see my attacker in class or at the desk job. Answer me this— why did the Title IX person reach out to me a few hours after only because my attacker felt unsafe on campus based on the social media posts that went around? I had told them how I felt and they forgot to check up on me or make changes so I didn't have to see my attacker again. Why is the attacker always more protected than the victim? Why did I have to stand my ground to finally get attention and help?”
-Student

- c. Failure to provide adequate information about the nature of the Title IX office and its role on campus, for students, staff, faculty, and security.
 - i. “I was handling a Title IX situation, and I needed to be escorted by security after talking to Title IX because my abuser was on campus. While

being escorted, they proceeded to berate me about my case and ask why I hadn't acted sooner. After they dropped me off, they came back on their own volition to question the friend that I was with about my situation, why I hadn't filed sooner, what the nature of the assault was, and other invasive questions. When my friend said that we had talked to Title IX and filed the case through that office, the officers were unaware of the fact that we had a Title IX office. How can we trust that the officers who are supposed to handle these situations will handle them appropriately if they are unaware of the policies and procedures in place to protect survivors of sexual violence? How can we not feel invalidated in sharing our stories and seeking aid?" -Student

- ii. "In the classroom, conversations of sexual violence seem to happen frequently, and there is very limited respect or acknowledgement of the way that those conversations can trigger survivors of violence. I have had to have my assignments modified because the content was triggering, and that meant I had to make my professors aware of the situation I was in, which can be very uncomfortable. While Title IX helped me with modifications, it is very hard to sit through classes that consistently discuss sexual assault, with no respect to the pain of victims." -Student

11. North Park's Campus Faith Culture Toxic and Unwelcoming

- a. North Park University controversially terminates Campus Pastor, leaving students with little to no spiritual support for years and crippling the impact of University Ministries even today.
 - i. "I graduated in 2020 so I was also there during the height of them firing our campus pastor without telling us, providing no support for students when she was gone and then not hiring a new pastor until after we graduated." - Former North Park Student
 - ii. "Ever since they fired our campus pastor, it's clear that UMin has struggled. Chapel feels unsafe for anyone who doesn't identify as white and Evangelical Covenant so attendance is really low." - Current Student
- b. Students exposed to harmful theology with little accountability for those perpetuating religious harm.
 - i. "I went to a discipleship retreat that was labeled as a retreat of silence. However during night worship there was a breakout of speaking in tongues and spiritual healing which I was not prepared for and had a panic attack during it. In the morning the guest speaker bragged about all the people he saved, live streamed the whole conversation and forced students to repeat their traumas on facebook live without their knowledge. I talked to my leader about this afterward and she said the reason I didn't get it was because "my faith wasn't strong enough." - Former North Parker

- ii. “In response to the story about the spiritual retreat, I was on that retreat & personally found that retreat to be helpful in other areas, but was very hesitant about what the guest speakers were preaching. They stated that healing can happen as long as you pray in the name of Jesus, so they took us to Walmart & had us start praying for those who looked “disabled”. I didn’t cure anyone’s disability, & couldn’t. They stated that it will take time to be healers, I just kept thinking, isn’t Jesus the healer!? How could I possibly be able to heal someone with no medical experience & if I’m not Jesus? There were other aspects of the retreat I found helpful, but being able to heal someone physically was odd. At one point they tried to pray for healing for me, healing from wearing my glasses. They had me take my glasses off & try to read stuff from afar but I couldn’t read or see it. They said maybe Jesus will heal me at a later time, maybe it’s too soon. I’ll never forget this experience.” - Former North Parker
- c. North Park tolerates but fails to legitimately support students with faith backgrounds other than Christian.

12. North Park University’s Board Attempted Campus-Wide Intimidation to Yield to their Ongoing Support of President Surridge.

- i. The Board of Trustees failed to produce a meaningful response to the Faculty Senate’s Vote of No Confidence until the information became public via The Washington Post.
- ii. The Board of Trustees instinctually and immediately dismissed, disregarded, and disagreed with the perspectives of the Faculty bold enough to speak out against the President’s leadership.
 - 1. “We are unequivocally pleased with the leadership of President Surridge. She is setting the strong strategic course that North Park needs at this time in its history to assure its long-term viability and she is accelerating our forward momentum. We are proud to say that the first female president in the 130-year history of North Park is doing an excellent job, entirely in keeping with Board expectations and the best interests of the North Park campus community. We fully support her and applaud her leadership.”
-Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees’ original response to Vote of No Confidence
- iii. The Board of Trustees fails to recognize President Surridge’s weakness within Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and a grave threat to the success and well being of North Park University.