

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Today we are celebrating the 155<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Juneteenth, commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, overcame the remaining resistance regiment, and enforced President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had become official two and a half years earlier. The historical significance of Juneteenth is being honored by Midwestern University by lowering our U.S. and Campus flags, placing signage in our libraries and cafeterias, and standing in complete solidarity with the African American community. Midwestern University will make Juneteenth an observed holiday in our Academic Calendars beginning in 2021, with the mission to further promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation of Black history and culture.

I am pleased to share that we have formally begun the implementation of our Five Step *Call to Action* Program. This will continue to be a process of listening, learning and sharing. Effective today, I will begin a weekly, Friday Evening Update, sharing the progress we are making in all of our endeavors to increase Midwestern University's commitment to sustainable programs supporting diversity, inclusion, respect, and growth.

#### Call to Action -Step One: Vigils and Listening

- Last Friday, June 12, 2020, both of our Campuses held Candlelight Vigils for Social and Racial Equity, Reform and Justice to honor Mr. George Floyd and countless other victims lost to racism, hatred, and police brutality. Speakers included students and faculty, all of whom provided heartfelt, moving words of healing and reflection.
- As of today, Friday, June 19, 2020, most of our Colleges and many of our departments have already conducted dialogue and listening sessions with the faculty, staff and students. These meetings have been very productive as our academic deans and managers have heard concerns, new ideas and opportunities for Midwestern University to be more inclusive as an academic community. My sincere thanks for everyone's feedback and participation.
- Dialogue and listening sessions will continue at the College and Departmental levels as plans get formulated; sincere, open communication is welcomed and encouraged.

#### Call to Action - Step Two: Colleges and Departmental Committees

- Each college and department is establishing its own task force to focus on ways to identify and dispel racism and bias, review curriculums, and assist in expanding admissions outreach and community service opportunities. Many of these committees have already been identified and will begin meeting next week. Members of these task forces include students, faculty and staff members within the departments. The college committees will be reaching out to their representatives on the University Diversity and Inclusion Committee to engage their participation in the College and Department-level work.
- As part of the educational component of Step Two, all faculty and staff will be participating in Bias Training next week. This educational program highlights how a person's bias can impact the workplace and personal interaction with colleagues and students.

### Call to Action -Step Three: Research Grants

- The new Research Grant program is under final review by our research faculty and members of the University Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Details about this program will be formally announced next week, once all approvals have been received. Students and faculty can apply for these grants that foster new and emerging creative research ideas centered around improving health delivery for underserved minorities. There are two additional grants for each campus.

### Call to Action -Step Four: Policy Review

- There are many policies embedded in the work of the colleges, clinics, human resources and student services. Each of these areas is going to begin a review of their policies to ensure unbiased, inclusive language and fairness in all statements, documents and communication.
- The coordination of the policy review is under the direction of Ms. Angela Marty, Vice President of Human Resources and Administration, who will lead the reviews at all levels.

### Call to Action - Step Five: Scholarship Fund

- Midwestern University leadership has collected \$77,000 thus far toward the Minority Student Scholarship Program. The first scholarships will be awarded beginning Winter Quarter 2020. Guidelines, a selection process, and an application process are being developed.

Our long-term journey has begun. The dialogue and listening continue as we come together to remain committed to our mission of health care education and caring for all people. Please be mindful of the fact that, unfortunately, we are still in the midst of a global pandemic, and the number of cases is on the rise in Arizona. We cannot lose sight of the importance of all of our previous steps, including wearing a mask/cloth face covering in public, adhering to proper social distance measures, and avoiding large gatherings.

We need to all come together to remain safe and healthy.

Be well  
Dr. G.