

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

For many Americans, the tragedy of September 11, 2001 remains a vivid memory. It is a date that we all witnessed a terrorist group launching a series of four coordinated attacks against the United States using four hijacked passenger airplanes. Two of the planes crashed into the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center, while a third was flown into the Pentagon, the Department of Defense headquarters, near Washington D.C. Passengers on the fourth plane, likely bound for the White House, retook control of the aircraft and crashed it into a field in Pennsylvania. A 2011 survey by the Pew Research Institute found that 97% of Americans ages 8 or older on September 11, 2001 could remember exactly where they were when they heard the news of these tragic attacks that claimed over 3000 lives. Today represents a sad day in our history as we continue to honor those families who lost loved ones to these tragic events. May we all take a moment of silence and pray for the safety of our fellow countrymen and those around the world living in fear.

I am happy to report that our campuses continue to be a safe environment for our faculty, staff and students who have returned for the fall quarter. We do not have one new positive COVID-19 case among our faculty and staff; we had three Downers Grove students report positive cases, but none of these students have been on campus. I continue to thank everyone for following our protocols; washing your hands frequently, wearing a face mask on campus and staying socially distant from colleagues, fellow students and faculty. We all play an important role in protecting each other.

In a beautiful book entitled *Healing: A Journal of Tolerance and Understanding* by Muhammad Ali and Thomas Hauser, the concept of reflecting on the issues of tolerance, brotherhood and understanding must begin with one person at a time. At Northwestern University our *5-Step Plan for Diversity and Inclusion* is focused on a grassroots effort by each college and department to develop plans that promote individual conviction, tolerance and understanding that comes from changing our curriculum, recruitment, and everyday conduct.

I am pleased to report this week that the College of Health Sciences on the Downers Grove campus has made excellent strides to bring about change to their academic programs. The College has appointed six Task Force Teams to address Admissions, Education, Community Outreach, and Faculty Recruitment. In addition, each academic program has implemented numerous steps to review what is included in the curriculum, book clubs, special community events and lunch hours dedicated to understanding bias and racism.

- The Clinical Psychology Department has introduced a community online forum where thoughts and educational articles can be posted and shared.
- The Physical Therapy students have listened to the podcast "1619" and held lunch discussions around the precepts and history of slavery in the United States.
- Occupational Therapy students, faculty and staff have linked their efforts to a national association entitled Race Forward that develops workshop for instituting change.
- Physician Assistant Task Force has appointed five student ambassadors to address diversity in the profession and in their program.
- Speech Language Pathology has begun reviewing all their program manuals, policies and procedures, and curriculum to assure diversity and inclusion.

Applications Available for Minority Scholarship for Academic Year 2020-2021

The Midwestern University Response Team and Faculty and Staff have come together and contributed \$80,000.00 to a new scholarship fund. Today I am announcing that the new Midwestern University Diversity Scholarship Fund will be used to provide need-based scholarships for qualified students on both the Downers Grove and Glendale Campuses. Students in any of our colleges or programs will be eligible to apply. Two \$5,000 awards will be given at each campus beginning with the 2020/2021 academic year. Strengthening and promoting diversity in the healthcare workforce is a critical component of Midwestern University's mission to educate the twenty-first century healthcare team to meet the needs of all members of our society.

- Eligibility and Application Process can be located on the Financial Aid website as of September 18, 2020 and applications must be submitted by October 15, 2020.
 - Underrepresented Minorities in all colleges and in any year of study may apply.

- Criteria/Requirements: Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible student applicants based on the following criteria:
 - Past academic performance.
 - Demonstrated commitment to diversity through leadership roles, past academic projects/research, participation in working with underrepresented groups, employment, and/or community service activities.
 - Preference given to first-generation college students.
 - Original 250-word personal statement describing your commitment to reducing healthcare disparities and providing culturally competent healthcare to future patients.
 - Demonstrated financial need. You must have completed the Financial Aid Application process so that financial need can be evaluated.

- Selection: Scholarship recipients will be selected by the Midwestern University Financial Aid Committees.

We are on a long journey to bring greater diversity and inclusion to our entire community. The colleges are making a difference one initiative at a time. A consolidated progress report will be provided as we get further down this path. As a healthcare community we need to remember the famous quote of John F. Kennedy, "Let us not be blind to our differences. But let us direct attention to our common interest and help make the world safe for diversity."

In honor of September 11, 2001, please remember how one single moment in time can change lives forever, and be resolved to not take our lives and loved one for granted. Life is a precious gift to be celebrated and embraced.

Be well.

Dr. G.