

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

I believe the strongest foundation of any institution is made up of individuals who commit their talents, energy and drive toward achieving its goals. I have often been quoted many times and have shared that the strength of Midwestern University is all of you, who every day demonstrate your unwavering dedication to our educational mission of excellence.

Today, I invite you to join me in celebrating the achievement of a member of our academic community. I am happy to report that Kathleen P. O'Hagan, Ph.D. has been promoted to Associate Dean of the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. O'Hagan has been with Midwestern University since August 2, 1993. She is a full Professor in the Department of Physiology and has served as the Chair of the Department of Physiology for the 14 past years. We wish her much success in this new role as she accepts increased leadership responsibilities at Midwestern University.

It is with sadness that I announce the loss of a widely respected individual who epitomized the meaning of dedication and service. On January 28, 2021 Ms. Paula L. Giometti, M.B.A., Assistant Dean of the Midwestern University College of Pharmacy on the Downers Grove Campus passed away following a valiant 8-year battle against cancer. During these years, and up until January 21, 2021, she continued to serve the Dean's office with grace and care for the students, faculty and staff. Ms. Giometti began her career with Midwestern on August 17, 1993 in the Office of Admissions and thereafter transferred to the College of Pharmacy to work closely with then Dean Mary W.L Lee., Pharm.D. She quickly became an advocate for pharmacy careers and education and assisted many students over these past 25 years. Ms. Giometti was honored with the Littlejohn Award in 2016 for her service to our community and students. Ms. Giometti will be greatly missed. Please join me in sharing your condolences with her family and colleagues.

I am cautiously optimistic knowing that Midwestern University continues to see a reduction in positive COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the new year. Over the past week, a total of 16 Glendale Campus students and 7 faculty and staff tested positive, which is an improvement compared to the increase in cases we had seen earlier this month. On our Downers Grove Campus, we have 2 student cases and 2 faculty cases. The number of students, faculty and staff reporting their participation in the vaccination programs around the county is increasing also. We thank all of you who have already been vaccinated, and hope those unable to get the vaccination yet will continue to look for opportunities to do so.

The University's Response Committee continues to work closely with State and County agencies in order to finalize all necessary plans and protocols necessary to begin operating as a COVID-19 vaccination Point of Distribution (POD) site. However, over the past two days, we have been informed by both the DuPage County Public Health Department and the Maricopa County Public Health Department that when the vaccines are made available to the University, we will be initially restricted to allocating them to our patients over the age of 75. For instance, on the Glendale Campus we provide are the health care to over 8000 patients who fall within this demographic. We will try to prioritize vaccinating our students on rotation, faculty and staff in clinical settings and then, when supply is available, to the entire community. I encourage all of you who meet the eligibility requirements for the Phase 1A/1B in the distribution of the vaccine in Arizona and Illinois to register and make an appointment through the local department of public health websites. Please do not wait for the Midwestern University clinics to begin operating as a POD site, since we do not have any definite dates for COVID-19 vaccines to arrive to campus.

5 Point Plan for Greater Diversity and Inclusion

Three upcoming opportunities are designed for our campus community to enrich our lives as we continue to expand our knowledge and appreciation of our campus diversity outreach.

- On February 16, 2021, from 3:30 to 4:30 PM (MST) and 4:30 – 5:30 PM (CST)) a lecture series will be presented on “Rare Diseases: Not So Rare After All,” presented by Dr. Melinda J. Burnsworth, Pharm.D., BCPS, FAzPA. Dr. Burnsworth, a Professor in the Midwestern University College of Pharmacy, Glendale Campus, will highlight what characteristics distinguish rare, “orphan” diseases, especially those impacting minority members of the community. The lecture is a virtual presentation, available to our entire Midwestern University Community at www.midwestern.edu?CHLS-diseases. Please save the date to attend.
- On February 5, 2021, beginning at 6:00 PM (MST) and 7:00 PM (CST) the College of Health Science’s Discovery Task Force and Arts In Medicine Club will host an Open Mic Multi Cultural Expressions Night. The event will be held via Microsoft Teams as members of our community share their thoughts, poems, talents, art, advice and stories. For more information, please contact Dr. Sarah Zera at Szera@Midwestern.edu.
- As we look at expanding the diversity and inclusion initiatives on campus, we cannot over look issues that can impact our understanding of others. To broaden our understanding of individuals who stutter, we are inviting you to an exclusive private screening for Midwestern University students, faculty and staff of an extraordinary and inspiring documentary, “Beautiful Stutter,” starring Mariska Hargitay, Peter Hermann, Paul Rudd and George Springer. Midwestern University will be purchasing educational licensed virtual tickets to this award winning movie, made available from the producer to our campus community through the Speech-Language Pathology Program and the Speech-Language Institute. Beginning Monday, February 1, and until February 8, you can register for this event at www.midwestern.edu.beautifulstutter. Registered attendees will be given a link to watch the movie. Immediately following each screening, attendees will log back on to Zoom for a Q & A with SLP faculty and Ryan Gielen, one of the movie’s producers. If you are interested in seeing the movie trailer, you can find it at www.mybeautifulstutter.com/teaser. We have three dates for you to choose to watch this 90 minute movie:
 - Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 5:00 PM (MST) and 6:00 PM (CST)
 - Friday, February 12, 2021 at 7:00 PM (MST) and 8:00 PM (CST)
 - Saturday, February 13, 2021 at 11:00 AM (MST) and 12:00 PM (CST)

On this last weekend of January 2021, I cannot help but reflect on how far we have come as a campus community. Each day we are dealing with new issues, unique opportunities and increasingly difficult challenges. However, this community has shown the strength of our combined efforts to meet every challenge with strength flexibility and fortitude. As we place our efforts toward looking for greater immunity to COVID-19, let’s continue to keep each other focused on what is important, our families, students and each other.

Be well.

Dr. G.