

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

January is finally here, and as we look forward to 2021, we need to be hopeful and trusting that healthier and happier days are before us. During 2020 we all learned that we cannot foresee the future, but we can better navigate our daily responsibilities by being flexible, planning for different pathways to accomplish goals, and maintaining our vision and mission as the driving force in all that we do. I am hopeful that the insights we gained from our experiences last year will bring all of us a better and more productive 2021. We are a caring and strong academic community that continues to be resilient during the pandemic, and works together to implement our greater diversity and inclusion plans.

Unfortunately, as anticipated, we have had a slight surge of new cases following the holidays. In the State of Arizona, the new cases of COVID-19 have been on the rise as we have many more out-of-town visitors this time of year and had many individuals travel for the holidays. This week, we have recorded 31 positive COVID-19 student cases on the Glendale Campus and 7 on the Downers Grove Campus. We also had 3 faculty and staff positive cases in Downers Grove, and 15 positive faculty and staff cases on the Glendale Campus.

More than ever, I am asking you remain diligent in maintaining our health standards. As we enter a new year, I am hopeful that you participate in the vaccine program and help protect yourself, family and colleagues. Please continue to wear a mask at all times when on campus and around others; wash your hands frequently, and stay home and refrain from coming to campus if you are ill. Our Daily Health Screening is an effective tool in helping you determine your own health status each day prior to arriving on campus. Answer this honestly and carefully each day.

5 Point Plan for Diversity and Inclusion

It is exciting to see our colleges and departments begin a new year with new initiatives to continue our commitment toward greater diversity and inclusion.

- The College of Pharmacy Call For Action Task Force on Community Outreach and Service to Minority and Underserved Communities is implementing a new program within the College to support and promote innovative ideas that provide community outreach to underserved populations and communities. The program will award up to 5 individual grants up to \$1,000 each to fund these projects. While a College of Pharmacy faculty, staff, or student must be on the grant proposal, collaboration across all academic programs of the University is encouraged.
- The Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine Curriculum Task Force on Diversity is inviting everyone to a seminar entitled “Living in a Diverse World, Let’s Dance” by 2011 Alumna Merima Bucaj, DO, FAAFP, Program Director for Family Medical Residency Program at Abrazo Health. It will be held on January 22, 2021 at 3:10 P.M. You can participate via WebEx: <https://midwestern.webex.com/midwestern/k2/j.php?MTID=t174478656e424c0ef3fcd10307ca388a>
- The Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine is holding a virtual Mini Medical School on five contiguous Saturday mornings beginning Saturday, January 30th and continuing through Saturday February 27, 2021 to introduce under-represented minority students to careers in medicine. Two CCOM students, Emily Mosher and Amelia Lerch are leading this new initiative.

- On Friday, January 15, 2021 you are invited to attend a WebEx sponsored by the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force and Human Resource Department training event, entitled, “Fostering Cultural Awareness: A Student Panel Discussion.” Participating students include: Ashlee BeGell (pEDs and Arizona Rare Action Network), Sara Salama (Middle Eastern Pharmacist Association), Marvin Agyeben (Underserved Medicine Club), John Planisek (PRIDE), and Janna Shim (Students with Disabilities). This WebEx can be located on the Human Resources web site.

I am so hopeful that 2021 is a healthy and happy year for all of you. While we know that it will take time to distribute the COVID-19 vaccines, reopen businesses and slowly begin to come together in person, the future seems to be getting brighter. We as an academic, health care community must do our part to shine a light on all that is good as we work together to make our new year a great one for everyone.

Be well.

Dr. G.