

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

A few weeks ago, I shared my hope that we were finally seeing a light at the end of this long health care crisis that has impacted all of us for the past 12 months. Today, I believe the light is even brighter as I write this message filled with good news.

I wish to begin by announcing that this past week, we have had the fewest number of new cases of COVID-19 since March, 2020. Our Downers Grove Campus community had no new cases of COVID-19, and our Glendale Campus has 2 student cases and 1 faculty and staff case. It is important we remain diligent in wearing our masks and social distancing to continue this wonderful trend.

Over the past two weeks, we have vaccinated over 1400 faculty, staff, students and patients in our Glendale Vaccination Center. It has been so gratifying to see our many volunteers welcome everyone to the Center, register them and assist them to the vaccination rooms and then to the observation center. We have encountered grateful patients who have generously shared their appreciation of everyone who has helped them become vaccinated. I wish to thank all our volunteers for their participation. We could not do this without you.

Midwestern University has been notified by DuPage County that our Downers Grove Multispecialty Clinic will receive its first 500 doses of the Moderna vaccine later next week. At this time, we plan on inviting our faculty, staff and students to become the first individuals to be vaccinated at our new Vaccination Center, which will be operating on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Multispecialty Clinic from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Starting sometime late next week, we anticipate sending these email requests, in random order, for individuals to schedule their first appointment. We are planning to open the Vaccination Center on March 9, 2021. More updates will be forthcoming.

#### Availability of New Student Grants

- Midwestern University was granted a second round of Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF-II). The University received a total of \$2.8 million; the institutional portion provided to Midwestern University is \$1.6 million.
- We are pleased to once again provide the entire amount of \$2.8 million to our students as grant funds.
- The main criteria for the grant is to prioritize grant applications to students with exceptional financial need. All student grant applications will be evaluated with this criteria in mind and the fund awarded according to a student's need. At this time only US citizens are eligible under the federal regulations.
- The money allocated from these grants may be used by the student toward any component of the cost of attendance or emergency costs that have been incurred due to COVID-19.
- The HEERF-II grant process will be available to students through MWUnet portal.

## Graduation and Convocation

Over the past week many of the Academic Deans and I have had the opportunity to talk with several of our graduating students regarding their experience at Midwestern University and their future plans. What I heard in many of their voices is a deep sadness that their upcoming graduation does not afford them a chance to wear their regalia and celebrate with their classmates on campus. Many of them are looking for a special send-off as they begin the next path of their professional career. In light of these heartfelt concerns, the University has begun exploring ways we can provide everyone with a virtual graduation to share at home with family and friends, while also allowing students to gather in small groups on each campus for a convocation.

Please note:

- We are in the planning stages and will have to limit attendance to only the graduates.
- As more plans become finalized, you will be notified.

## 5-Point Plan for Diversity and Inclusion

- The Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine has successfully launched a new course, Humanity in Medicine. What used to be an elective for 10 to 15 students is now a required course for 250 students. Small groups of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students have been participating in discussions covering cultural differences, fostering positive communications and respectful dialogues. Our thanks to Dean Kemper and Dr. Kathy Muldoon for making this course a success.
- The College of Veterinary Medicine has a new course entitled Medical Spanish to help students broaden their ability to provide our Spanish-speaking pet owners with a greater understanding of their animal's health and recommended treatment plans. As we strengthen our communication and understanding with patients and caregivers, we contribute to everyone living better and happier lives.

The importance of our ability to serve as Vaccination Center for our many patients was highlighted to me as I assisted an elderly patient. As I helped her enter with her walker she began to cry. When I asked if she was ok, she said, "Yes, these are tears of joy. I have not been able to be out of my home for a very long time. You have given me hope."

May we soon bring this hope to our colleagues in Downers Grove and the many patients we serve. Thank you all.

Be well.

Dr. G.