

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

It has now been one full year since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health crisis. During these long months, our faculty and staff continued to teach, mentor and care for our entire community. We have withstood and thrived during this year-long crisis by working together to keep our students progressing with their studies and completing their graduation requirements. Now that we are distributing the Moderna vaccine, we are once again taking additional steps forward as we experience the benefits of our latest endeavor, "Operation Hope".

Operation Hope is making a difference in the lives of many of you, your families, and our patients on both the Glendale and Downers Grove Campuses. We have successfully vaccinated over 3500 individuals and have more than 7,000 future appointments scheduled. These successful Vaccination Centers represent our commitment to helping our own community and the thousands of patients we serve each year to be healthier and protected from COVID-19. Those who come to our Vaccination Centers have shared their stories of how incredibly difficult the past year has been for them; many have not been able to spend time with family, friends or even venture outside of their own homes. We have been blessed to experience their tears of joy for this opportunity to receive the vaccine.

Our faculty, staff and students are making a difference as they volunteer in the Vaccination Centers and assist in the many functions needed to provide a great experience for everyone who enters. I have been so impressed by the organization and attention to the many important details by our two Vaccination Center Medical Directors, Dr. Jennifer Wild on the Glendale Campus and Dr. Lisa Palmisano on the Downers Grove Campus. I am grateful for their leadership as well as the strong team of students and volunteers working with them each day. It is uplifting to see and energizing to participate in these wonderful operations.

This week, we have a total of 4 positive cases of COVID-19 to report from the Downers Grove Campus: 3 student cases and 1 faculty/staff case. We have no cases to report from the Glendale Campus.

### Spring, 2021 Graduation Planning

On March 4, 2021 the Midwestern University College of Pharmacy in Downers Grove held a virtual Graduation Ceremony, allowing family and friends to view the video and have family members hood the graduate while celebrating their many accomplishments. Yesterday, Thursday, March 11, 2021, the graduates were invited to campus. They put on their graduation regalia and attend an actual "closing ceremony" that allowed them to be welcomed by their Academic Dean, walk across the stage to be congratulated by the President and Chief Executive Officer and be cheered by their faculty as their name was announced. We will be holding similar ceremonies for each college this coming spring, both a virtual graduation and a closing ceremony. While the closing ceremony is limited to the graduates only, we will also record this event and provide a link for viewing with family and friends. Attendance at the closing ceremony is not mandatory and the dates have not been finalized at this time.

### 5 Point Plan for Diversity and Inclusion:

- The University Research Committee, with support from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, will offer another special presentation from their Health Equity Research Series on Friday, April 2, entitled "*Racial/ethnic disparities in the COVID-19 pandemic,*" by guest speaker,

Dr. Monica Peek, Associate Professor Medicine, University of Chicago, Associate Director, Chicago Center for Diabetes Translational Research.

- The University AZ Wellness Committee has invited all faculty and staff to participate and contribute to the painted rock garden located on the north side of Barrell I and south side of Barrell II as part of its spring wellness activity for the Glendale Campus. We encourage everyone to participate during the month of March; it also may function as a nice department activity.
- Congratulations to the winners of the Diversity Art Competition, sponsored by the CVM Diversity Task Force and CVM VOICE, for their submissions: Kathleen Wong, AZCOM '23 for "*Celebrate Diversity*" and Dr. Mary White, Assistant Professor, College of Veterinary Medicine for "*A New Branch on an Old Tree*". Their art will soon be available in the portal for purchase as stickers.
- Week Around the World – All faculty, staff and students are invited to participate in activities throughout the week of April 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> in this wonderful event that celebrates culture and diversity. There are many ways to get involved [i.e., cultural recipe exchange, virtual cooking demonstrations, virtual art gallery (organized in conjunction with CVM VOICE) and ethnic crafts]. Please visit this link to register by Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> <https://midwesternu.campuslabs.com/engage/submitter/form/start/90789>
- Congratulations to Dr. Carla Gartrell and Dr. Abolfazi Ghasemi from the College of Veterinary Medicine for receiving one of only two grants awarded in 2020 by the International Council for Veterinary Assessment regarding their work, "Longitudinal Tracking of Outcomes Assessment: Growth Trajectories of Student Academic Success."

There is a saying that many hands make light work. We undoubtedly benefited from the many hands that contributed to making our Vaccination Centers possible. It is the many hard-working faculty and staff volunteering their time that has made Operation Hope a reality. I have heard how many of you are enjoying your time as volunteers and wanting to stay involved while others are looking forward to their chance to participate in Operation Hope. It is heartwarming to see our Midwestern University family making a difference in the lives of others.

Be well,

Dr. G.