

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

This Halloween is like no other....since all of 2020 has been scary, we can expect the upcoming holiday will still include little goblins and ghosts roaming our streets looking for treats. This was traditionally a children's special holiday. However, in recent years more adults have been celebrating it too. Unfortunately, rumors are circling on both our Downers Grove and Glendale campuses that students are planning Halloween celebrations, with groups potentially gathering without adhering to adequate safety protocols. Please allow me to advise everyone, including faculty and staff, that these parties are not recommended as COVID-19 cases continue to increase around the country. The Academic Deans and I have shared our concern with many students, reminding them that they have a responsibility to avoid these type of social events during the ongoing pandemic. Likewise, we ask our faculty and staff to refrain from hosting or attending such gatherings, and instead, look for alternate ways to safely celebrate this weekend.

The good news over the past week is that the COVID-19 positive cases are down substantially from the prior week. We have a total of 2 faculty and staff members who tested positive, both from the Downers Grove campus. We had 9 student cases this week, with 7 positive COVID-19 cases from the Downers Grove campus and 2 from the Glendale campus. Most of these students have been on external clinical rotations and not on campus. Because we are wearing masks, social distancing and frequently washing our hands, our efforts have helped us lower the number of cases. Please continue to be diligent about these safety practices.

Midwestern University has implemented a new *Visitors to Midwestern University* policy on campus, in light of the rising number of cases around the country. The new policy can be found in our online portal in the message center section. I encourage our students, faculty and staff to carefully review this important document.

5-Step Plan for Diversity and Inclusion

I am pleased to report that Midwestern University received over 12 research grant applications in response to our 5-Step Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. Based on all of the excellent grants submitted, following the review by cross campus a faculty committees, we have increased the total number of grants from two per campus to three per campus, with a total of \$60,000 being awarded.

The funded grants from the Glendale campus include:

- The Effects of a Language Intervention for Bilingual Children with Hearing Loss: Clinical and Educational Outcomes. Researchers:
 - Beatriz de Diego-Lázaro, PhD, CCC-SLP
 - Laura Wolford, PhD, CCC-SLP
 - Lúcia Smith, MS, CCC-SLP
 - George Wolford, PhD, MS, CCC-SLP
- Analysis of Factors Predicting Clinical Outcomes of COVID-19 Diagnosis among Rural Minority Populations. Researchers:
 - Pamela Potter, PhD
 - John Ashurst, DO, MSc
 - Anthony Santarelli, PhD

- Disparities in Disease Risk on the Frontlines: Do N95 Respirator Masks Protect Our Diverse Healthcare Workforce and their Home Communities? Researchers:
 - Gina Marie Agostini, PhD
 - Alexandra Pierre-Bez, DMD

From the Downers Grove Campus

- Abnormal Visual Markers and Barriers in Eye Care Among African American Children. Researchers:
 - Arijit Chakraborty, PhD, MPhil
 - Melissa Suckow, OD, FAAO
- Nurturing Oral Health Awareness among Black Children living in Food Deserts
Researcher:
 - Marcela Rocha de Oliveira Carrilho, DDS, PhD
- Assessing the Relationship Between Health Literacy and Hospital Readmission in High Risk Patients. Researchers:
 - Milena M. Murray, PharmD, MSc
 - Lourdes Vega, PharmD
 - Spencer E. Harpe, PharmD, PhD, MPH
 - Suraj Marwaha, OMS II
 - Pooja Shah, PharmD Candidate

I hope you enjoy Halloween with your family. Carve a pumpkin, have a candy treasure hunt in your backyard for your children, put on a fun costume to entertain your immediate family, watch a spooky movie, and handout candy at a distance for your littlest visitors. However, please keep in mind that this is one of many upcoming celebrations we have to get past while still facing a serious pandemic. Please continue to be mindful of the importance of your health and that of your loved ones. Let's not make Halloween scarier than usual.

Be well.

Dr. G.

Kathleen H. Goepfing, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer