

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Have you ever been caught in a long traffic jam? One that you realize will not end anytime soon? As your car moves a few more yards forward, you start to think that it's clearing up, and then you're slowing down again. I think this is what it is like for all of us living with this public health crisis. Just when you think the COVID-19 cases are decreasing as many of us doing our part to minimize risk of exposure and spread, the positive cases are starting to rapidly increase again.

I learned long ago that getting mad, frustrated and angry while sitting in a stopped vehicle for any amount of time does not help the situation. So rather, like most of you, I look for a way to focus on something more enjoyable, such as talking with family members and listening to favorite songs on the radio. I encourage all of you to try to make the best of the situation we are living with now. As a campus community, we are making the best efforts to keep everyone on track to complete their courses of study. Our faculty are making accommodations for students who have become ill or had to be quarantined due to a possible exposure. New academic policies have been introduced to assist every student to be successful. However, we need the cooperation of our students to act like health care professionals and be responsible for their actions on and off campus.

This past week we had 5 positive COVID-19 cases within our faculty and staff: 3 cases from the Glendale Campus and 2 cases from the Downers Grove Campus. Unfortunately, we had 21 cases within our student community, with 15 from the Downers Grove Campus and 6 from the Glendale Campus. Please know we are very diligently working together to keep everyone safe. As always, it is important for everyone to do their part to help the entire community stay well by wearing your mask, practicing social distancing when around others, washing your hands often, and truthfully completing the daily health screening.

#### Importance of the Daily Health Screening

- There are consequences for not taking the daily health screenings seriously. Please do not be dismissive of any new or unusual symptoms identified in the questionnaire that may impact your health and answers.
- Do not come to campus if you are ill for any reason. Even if you think your new cough or sore throat is related to allergies, please take this seriously and consider contacting your health care provider.
- Complete the Daily Health Screening honestly! Any student found dishonestly answering the daily health screening will be placed on **Disciplinary Probation** for the balance of the academic year. This has already occurred a number of times over the past weeks, and it will happen to any student who is found to have intentionally given dishonest answers. When you don't answer each question truthfully, this is not only unethical, but you are being inconsiderate of the health and safety of others.
- Students failing to identify all fellow students, faculty and others from Northwestern University for accurate contact tracing are also subject to **Disciplinary Probation**.
- Your compliance with following all of the protocols on campus, in clinic and on rotations is mandatory. You are working in the capacity of a health care professional.
- Everyone is required to keep your face mask on during any time in a public location including the library, testing center, study rooms or cafeteria (except when actually eating). We continue to receive frequent reports from many sources on campus when our protocols are not being followed.

### 5-Step Plan for Diversity and Inclusion

- Our Safety and Security Departments are adopting *Toys for Tots* over the holiday season and will be collecting much needed toys for children living in less fortunate homes and those who are homeless. Please look for the toy drop boxes and please help our security teams help others over the upcoming season.
- The College of Graduate Studies, Masters for Public Health faculty are producing lectures on three key topics: health care disparities, the social determinants of health, and recognition of early life experiences and health. All of these sessions will be focused on how each factor impacts the delivery of health care for the Graduate Medical Education (GME) residents. This is another way to expand our diversity and inclusion and outreach to our entire community.
- The College of Health Sciences Clinical Psychology faculty on the Downers Grove campus expanded their diversity outreach with a three-hour seminar on *Managing Difficult Conversations in the Classroom*. This informative seminar is available to other colleges and programs interested in additional diversity programs.

I don't expect the traffic jam we are idling in will begin moving quickly in the upcoming month. I realize everyone is tired of the separation from family, friends and social events; however, we need to make the best of this fall season and look for meaningful moments and new ways to celebrate what we do have today. Please be well and stay safe. You are all important members of the Midwestern University community.

Be well.

Dr. G.

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