

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

This is the middle of April; normally taxes are due today, it usually begins to feel like spring in the Midwest, I am typically writing speeches for orientations, graduations and preparing for the Downers Grove Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner. Instead, we see headlines that the global coronavirus cases surpass 2 million and has caused 128,000 deaths, our taxes are not due until July, and it is snowing on the Downers Grove campus today. These are indeed unusual times.

I found myself reflecting on my favorite poem by Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*. I memorized this many years ago because it has significant meaning. I look back at the many times I quoted that poem to my mother when she would suggest I follow in her footsteps and become a librarian, or to my father when he insisted I take drafting classes to join him as an architect and builder. Both had great plans and ideas for my future, but I took "*The Road Not Taken*."

In the weeks to come we will be graduating many new health care providers. There are graduates who are also on *The Road Not Taken* previously by any member of their family and will be the first to be called doctor. I really understand how important graduation milestones are to everyone. Knowing that this health care crisis has truly impacted their plans, we have been diligently seeking meaningful ways to provide a virtual commencement for all graduates and their families. Today, April 15, 2020, the COVID-19 Response Team met to discuss and review plans for a memorable graduation program.

Highlights of the Spring Virtual Commencements:

- Program includes a Welcoming Address, Oath of the Profession, Awarding of the Degree, Honoring our Military Students, and Closing Comments.
- Each graduate will be pictured individually, highlighting their degree, accomplishments, and any honors being bestowed upon them.
- As a graduate's individual slide appears in the video, they will be asked to have a family member officially hood the candidate.
- Each college will have its own virtual commencement ceremony.
- Each graduate will receive a keepsake commencement program which includes the Oath of the Profession.
- Graduation regalia, diplomas, commencement programs, and military coins, for those eligible, will be sent to every home prior to the virtual ceremonies.

Other News:

- We have been notified of a student, currently out-of-state and not on campus, who has tested positive for COVID-19. One faculty member's spouse has tested positive, and the faculty member is being treated as positive but has not been officially tested. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

- Please continue to wear a face mask or face covering in any public area, and social distance yourself to be respectful of your colleagues and friends. This is important.

It is my hope that our wonderful graduates will look upon their years at Midwestern University and realize the significance of the challenging and fulfilling road they traveled. *“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”*

Be well.

Dr. G.