

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

I am often concerned that we take for granted the very things that deserve our most gratitude. I have been reminded of this over the past month as I witnessed our faculty continuing to teach our students online, our landscape, maintenance, engineering staffs, security officers, and many support staff directing their time and attention to keeping students engaged, safe, and our facilities clean. I have also witnessed some extraordinary acts of kindness that continually surround us.

I wish to share three wonderful examples of community outreach that have my deepest respect and gratitude.

Ms. Mary Jo Deprey is a Physician Assistant student on our Downers Grove Campus. She will graduate this spring and begin her new health care career. Over the past month, she was moved by stories of workers in essential positions not able to obtain any form of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Confronted with this concern, she established a sewing room on campus. She initially began making cloth facial masks for local store clerks and gas station attendants. As she increased her production, she became aware that her own campus community was also in need of the cloth facial masks. She is now working endlessly to provide our faculty and staff with face masks. She is making almost a hundred a day, while washing and ironing these so others can benefit from her efforts. Ms. Deprey deserves a special thank you. She acted upon a need to help others, while exemplifying a core value of Midwestern University.

Ms. Sheri Sarpati, Manager of the Glendale Campus Bookstore, received a phone call from Dr. Paul Lynch. He asked if Midwestern had a specific infectious disease book, as he explained that he was leaving his practice in Scottsdale, Arizona and volunteering his time to a New York Hospital that was very short of physicians. Ms. Sarpati realized that he would not be able to get the book in a timely manner, so she drove to his home to deliver the manual. She also donated PPE to Dr. Lynch to take with him for his own personal protection. I learned of this kind gesture when I was sent Dr. Lynch's daily posted video that chronicles his New York experiences. Dr. Lynch discussed the importance of the material from Midwestern University as he expressed his gratitude for making his journey safer and more productive.

A few weeks ago, Officer Christopher Greene, a representative of the Glendale Fire Department, met with a small group of us from the COVID-19 Response Team. We were joined by Associate Professor, Tamer Elbayoumi, B. Pharm., M.Sc., Ph.D., College of Pharmacy Glendale, Pharmaceutical Science Department. As we listened to the needs of our local Fire Department, we learned that they were in desperate need of a number of necessary Personal Protective Equipment including face shields. Dr. Elbayoumi committed to helping our local first responders. As of today, he has produced 56 light and heavy duty Protective Face Shields and 28 extra transferable shields. This became a team effort. Dr. Elbayoumi enlisted the help of faculty in the Companion Animal Clinic, his colleagues in Pharmaceutical Science, and his own family and friends. His commitment to helping first responders extended to his children as he helped them understand the importance of giving back. I am so grateful for Dr. Elbayoumi for the meaningful contribution to our first responders. Our local Fire Department protects us and we in turn are providing them with protection; that truly is the meaning of community.

Today, April 16, 2020, the COVID-19 Response Team met and discussed a number of emerging issues.

Today's Highlights:

- I am extending the temporary breakfast or lunch benefit for those essential faculty and staff that are physically on campus and in our clinics. This benefit will continue for the duration of the Stay-At-Home Executive Orders in the state in which you reside.
- An extensive discussion was held regarding all levels of PPE we are utilizing at Midwestern University. We have carefully maintained the key components to maintaining a healthy environment; social distancing, frequently washing our hands, exchanging full outside air in every building on campus, and making available facial protective masks and hand sanitizer.
- Midwestern University has no additional cases of COVID-19 to report as of today. This is a very good thing for all our faculty, staff and students.

All of us are grateful for many things. Let's remember your family, friends, and colleagues who do gracious things each day. Please take joy in the little things and remember to share your thanks and admiration with others. Just try to remember the phrase, "Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it away." May you freely give the gift of gratitude every day.

Be well.

Dr. G.