

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Like many of you, I love to walk. An evening stroll is one way I unwind after a long and action-packed day. Last evening, I tried a new route around the neighborhood. It opened my eyes to seeing a different setting. I encountered a very elderly couple sitting in their driveway on two folding chairs. As I approached their home they called out, to me a stranger, and asked “how are you doing?” They were all smiles as they were social distancing themselves, but still being part of the community. The longer I walked the more I thought about what we are all encountering every day. I also thought about the couple who were doing their best to stay engaged.

We are definitely taking a different route than we have become accustomed to. Our daily routines have changed, the familiar paths that we have taken each day have been altered and yet we have found surprisingly good intentioned individuals along the way. Many of you are working from home, balancing being a teacher to your children, a working parent and still participating in online committees, assignments and taking care of others. It is certainly not a route you envisioned just three short months ago. Our plans for beautiful graduation celebrations have taken a new direction as we have begun recording for virtual graduations. Never in my 25 years as President and Chief Executive Officer did I imagine I would not be shaking the hands of our graduates and thanking them as they walk across the stage. These are unplanned paths that we are adapting to as we go forward in new directions.

I know we are going to be moving forward on this uncharted path for weeks to come. I do not believe we can look back, but rather continue to plan our future. With this in mind, the COVID-19 Response Team met today, Tuesday, April 21, 2020 and began planning for the days we can gradually have many of you return to campus.

Planning Committees

- As of today, the Executive Orders in both the State of Arizona and the State of Illinois require the Stay-At-Home policies remain in effect until April 30, 2020. These could be changed in the weeks to come, but in preparation for a change in the Executive Orders, we are planning ahead.
- In anticipation of new public health regulations when the Executive Orders are lifted, we have a small group of individuals assessing the quantity of Personal Protection Equipment we will need in all of our clinics and on the academic campuses. As there are long lead times to acquire the needed masks, gloves and gowns, we are planning ahead to provide our faculty, staff and students with the protective items they will need when in public or seeing patients. In addition, Mr. Kevin McCormick, Director of Facilities Downers Grove and Mr. James Ciway, Director of Facilities Glendale are currently obtaining hand sanitizers for all departments and public areas for both campuses.
- The local Public Health Departments have suggested a daily health assessment screening process prior to a faculty, staff or student arriving on campus once the Executive Stay-At-Home Orders are lifted. In order to have an efficient and effective method to have these steps operational, there is a second group of college and department leaders that are exploring the policy and tools needed to comply with the potential regulations.

Higher Education Emergency Relief Act

- Midwestern University was notified that the recently passed federal legislation, CARES Act could result in approximately \$2.25 million to our institution. This is not an official number, but an estimation.
- Under the Act, 50% of the funds are required to be distributed to our students in the form of cash grants for expenses related to disruptions to their education due to COVID-19, including course material, technology, food, housing, health care and childcare.
- The remaining 50% of funds are intended to be used by the institution to offset our additional costs related to COVID-19.
- I am pleased to announce that the entire \$2.25 million will be distributed 100% to our students, in the form of need based grants.
- When the funds are made available to Midwestern University and additional federal guidelines are available, students will be advised.

My stroll last night opened my eyes to see every walk as a new adventure. I was touched by the site of the couple on their folding chairs, making the best of the stay-at-home policy, while greeting strangers and being good neighbors. Let's not grieve the path we used to walk, but instead look for the inspiration of others. When we get through this public health crisis together, we will appreciate the new path we are on as we fulfill our mission as a health care academic community. Let's open our eyes and ears to the beauty around us...if able, please take a walk, spring is finally here.

Be well.

Dr. G.