

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Every generation has a memorable moment that remains significant in their lives. For years people were asked, "Where were you when President, John F. Kennedy was shot." Most could tell you the exact time and also the exact place. The same is true when the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001. Remember where you were? Many of us remember how Midwestern University weathered the downturn in the economy in 2008 and 2009, and the University was able to continue full employment of our faculty and staff while many universities had substantial permanent layoffs.

Today, we are all focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic. From young kindergarten students who could not complete their first year of school, to our graduates who are participating in a virtual commencement and are not able to walk across the stage to be hooded by their faculty. Everyone is impacted by this public health crisis, and all of us will remember these many weeks and months when our lives changed. The impact on our daily lives will be remembered for many years after the pandemic is a thing of the past. While each of these past national disasters look different, each brought about turbulent times and presented new challenges.

The challenges, however, present us, a health care university, with an opportunity to improve and grow. We have quickly shifted our meetings to daily video conferencing on Microsoft Teams and while they may never fully replace in-person meetings, I am finding this new technology to be highly effective to link together individuals from both the Downers Grove and Glendale campuses. All of us have learned a lot about our capacity to adjust curriculums, implement new innovations and realize we have colleagues and students who are successfully working through extraordinary circumstances. I have heard of departments and areas doing projects that they have put off for years. It is like cleaning out the garage: all of us know they tend to attract clutter, but our daily pace does not often allow us the luxury of taking on extra projects. We all have things that we wanted to get done and now is the best time to tackle those projects.

The COVID-19 Response Team met today, Wednesday, April 29, 2020, to continue its discussion regarding effective strategies to help students, faculty and staff as we plan a gradual return to campus. I am happy to report we have no new faculty, staff or student cases of coronavirus today.

Social Distancing Procedures and University PPE

- The largest gathering area today is the cafeteria. We have put directional indicators to enter and exit the cafeterias. We have also marked the six feet distancing in every station to assist our faculty, staff or student from becoming too close to another guest in the cafeteria. Campus security officers will also be present to remind us of the importance of social distancing.
- We have completed a comprehensive inventory of all of our Personal Protective Equipment and are actively seeking additional inventory to protect all the faculty, staff and student when they return to campus.
- The University Face Mask policy is in its final revisions and should be released to all faculty, staff and students in the days to come.

Watching the rapid spread of COVID-19 and the loss of lives brings tears to my eyes. It is tragic for so many families and their loved ones. But we have to remember that whenever we are confronted with

any national disaster, economic downturn or infectious disease, I believe Midwestern University can maintain sustainable success if we continue to trust our faculty and staff to provide for our students, and we respect each other and show kindness to all. We are woven together through our mission, vision and values. That is what is special about our Midwestern University academic family.

Be Well.

Dr. G.