

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

These unusual days are always filled with surprises. The one constant is change. Surprise was the only way I can describe my trip to campus yesterday morning. While we always have a handful of cars on weekends, yesterday there was not one! I drove around the entire campus marveling at how strange and eerie the campus looked. We are so accustomed to seeing activity on a university campus that the realization that everyone is indeed staying at home was working in our communities. Have you gone to a grocery store recently to see all the customers wearing facial scarves and medical face masks? Have you noted playgrounds without children? There surprises are everywhere and never ending.

I have witnessed many wonderful surprises. Neighbors waving to each other as they drive by, and people offering to help with shopping and basic supplies. Families gathering on their front porches in the evenings, and children leaving chalk drawings and messages on the driveway for their friends to see on their nightly stroll. These moments fill me with gratitude.

Faculty, staff and students in the Midwestern University community have continued to made me very proud. I know how difficult it is to take classes and overnight turn them into online courses. Our dedicated faculty accomplished this task in a surprisingly short time. We have staff members who have volunteered to help other departments who are shorthanded for essential jobs, and we have students beginning to sew washable cloth face covers for our campus community and other not-for-profit groups.

Faculty and staff are using their talents in amazing ways. Dr. Tamer Elbayoumi, a professor in our College of Pharmacy-Glendale, began making face masks with a filter compartment and face shields using 3-D printing technology, and he is donating them to first responders. Mr. Matthew Kaiser, from the Information Technology Department on the Downers Grove campus, has joined him in this production effort. PPE is in very short supply, especially in Fire Departments. Through the efforts of Dr. Elbayoumi and Matt Kaiser, we are engaging all of our departments with 3-D printers to join together to help the men and women who protect us each day with additional PPE. As a health care community, we have many resources to help others, as seen in this positive endeavor.

The COVID-19 Response Team met today, April 6, 2020. The following items were discussed:

#### Responding to Campus Needs

- The Human Resources Department is developing training materials and guidelines for all managers to correctly record faculty and staff time under the COVID-19 Emergency Fund and the Midwestern University Public Health Emergency Salary Continuation Plan. These will be made available later in the week.
- The Information Technology Departments have turned their focus on helping faculty and staff use the tools previously implemented. They are developing consulting materials to assist everyone with the best and most efficient use of programs like WebEx, Teams, WebEx with Canvas and other new and evolving technology. They are taking their service mission to a new level in the weeks to come.

#### Responding to Student Needs

- The COVID-19 Response Team is studying all the spring graduation options including the best way to provide a meaningful virtual graduation. While I know our students are very concerned about this, we are working to find the best answer. This is a priority and we want to consider the best option for a very unfortunate situation.
- Graduation regalia is being delivered to all the graduation candidates' homes at this time and should be received by all candidates by May 2020.
- Diplomas will be printed and mailed to a student's home once final graduation dates are established by the Colleges.

I have found that moments of fun and laughter are often by surprise. May all of you look at the surprises around us and find joy in them. Let it be no surprise to anyone that I care deeply about Midwestern University and all of you as we carry out our mission of teaching and caring for the next generation of health care professionals.

Be well.

Dr. G.