

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

During a recent Microsoft Teams meeting with the Response Team members, I looked at the smiling faces on my computer screen and realized how much our organization has changed in a short period. It is clear to me that many of the adjustments we have taken during this public health crisis will continue for years to come. We have added innovation, technology and new operating procedures to our new “normal” day as we have managed throughout the past seven months. One innovation that will remain is the use of virtual tours of our campuses and programs in the admissions process. The feedback from applicants to our many academic programs has been very positive as prospective students learn about our campuses, listen to messages from the Deans and Program Directors and learn about the academic experiences of current students. All of us need to look at what innovation and positive changes we have made to our own day-to-day tasks and resolve to maintain these new healthy habits as we plan our future.

Midwestern University continues to see a steady reduction in cases of COVID-19. This past week we had three students from the Downers Grove campus who tested positive, but none of these students have been on campus. On our Glendale campus we had one adjunct faculty member test positive, but this individual has not been on campus for the past week. Contact tracing has been done on all four of these cases and two additional students are in quarantine due to the detailed and valuable work of our own Dr. Deborah Sullivan, Risk Management Clinical Specialist. Contact tracing has been the cornerstone of public health for the past century, as detailed in a 1937 book *Shadow on the Land*, by the then U.S. Surgeon General Thomas Parran. Little did the author know how valuable this practice would be during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic.

New Procedure:

- During this past May, as part of our safe return to campus plans, we instituted a weekly online, electronic health screening process to help ensure that each member of our campus community was taking time to think about their own health and whether they were well enough to come to campus that day.
- In July, we improved the electronic health screening process by making it mobile friendly, and allowing each person to complete the process by clicking a link in their daily reminder email, or adding an icon to the home screen of their phone. Since that time, over 250,000 health screenings have been completed.
- Starting Monday, September 28 we will be introducing additional enhancements which we believe will make the daily health screen requirement even simpler and more user friendly. Each faculty, staff and student will now be able to opt in to receiving their daily health screen reminders by text message. To make this as convenient as possible, you will be able to select the time of day at which you would like the text message to arrive. This is not a required new process; notification will still be sent via email if you do not wish to opt in to receiving a text.
- We believe that this daily health screening process is helping contribute to the low numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases that we are seeing within our campus communities. We hope that this new text reminder option will make it even easier to complete your daily health screening prior to coming to campus. My thanks to all of you for participating in this important process.

Five Step Plan for Greater Diversity and Inclusion:

Change is happening on a grassroots level throughout Midwestern University. I am excited by the work of our committees and students as they are striving to influence and empower others to create greater diversity and inclusion. The policy committee has submitted, and I have approved the following Midwestern University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Statement.

- Midwestern University is dedicated to effect change, overcome inequities, promote greater diversity, and establish a culture of inclusivity that celebrates diversity. We pledge our commitment to undo inequities that exist in policies and practices, advance values of diversity and inclusion, and to create a truly equitable environment for faculty, staff, and students. Therefore, we pledge the following actions:
 - We will listen to the concerns and suggestions of students related to improved curriculum and community outreach opportunities.
 - We will conduct a systemic review of all policies and procedures to assure continued equal treatment of all faculty, staff, and students.
 - We will work diligently to recruit more underrepresented minority students to all the health professions.
 - We will recognize the value of a diverse faculty, staff, and administration and continue efforts to recruit and retain employees from different racial, ethnic, economic and cultural backgrounds regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation or disability status.
 - We will increase training and development offerings on topics of Diversity & Inclusion, Bias, and Microaggressions.
 - We will create processes for faculty, staff, and students to communicate concerns or incidents of discrimination, bias, or harassment.
 - We will create grant opportunities for research teams to examine ways to improve the delivery of health care and eliminate the health care disparities in underserved, minority communities.
 - We will increase programming and proactively speak out against acts of racial and social injustice.
- Midwestern University is an academic institution that has historically stood on principles, mission, and values. We recognize that supporting diversity and engagement is an important aspect of those principles. Midwestern University is committed to building a more diverse, more inclusive academic community and promoting equity for all.

New Underrepresented Minority Scholarship Program

- Midwestern University was founded in 1900 as a medical school teaching Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine. It was not until 1991, with the establishment of the Chicago College of Pharmacy, that Midwestern University began new programs to educate other health care professionals.
- Over the years, outside donations have been earmarked for specific programs. Two such donations provide osteopathic medical program scholarships, from the estates of Mary E. Cranker

and Edna Dunning. In accordance with the donors' wishes and the terms of the actual donation agreements, monies from these two estates can only be used by new incoming Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine students. We are now using these funds to establish an Underrepresented Minority Scholarship Fund for the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine and the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine. These funds will be provided to two qualifying incoming students from each of our Osteopathic Colleges, and will cover half of the cost of tuition, as long as students maintain high academic standards. This will be available all four years. These scholarships fulfill our mission of quality education enriched by the diversity of our students.

- It is our hope that we can continue to raise funds from alumni and community partners to enhance our scholarship opportunities in all of our colleges. It is with sincere thanks to the generous donors that scholarships can be funded to help students of today become wonderful alumni in the future.

Change is constant, and we continue to make strides in how we work, how we protect the health of each other, and how we celebrate the contributions of our faculty, staff and students. Let's be known as an institution that fully embraces the Midwestern University's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy. Together we can make this happen.

Be well.

Dr. G.