

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Were you ever on a long road trip and continued to hear the passengers ask, “are we there yet?” Following many weeks of planning and discussions with public health professionals, we are getting closer to becoming a Point-of-Dispensing (POD) vaccination site on both the Downers Grove and Glendale campuses. All of our formal applications have been approved by DuPage County in the State of Illinois and Maricopa County in the State of Arizona, and confirmations have been received by Northwestern University. We are currently waiting for further details from these agencies regarding supplies and logistics, all while working on internal plans and procedures, including volunteer recruitment, scheduling and training, facilities and technology preparation, and security protocols.

Response Team members working on this plan have already identified campus distribution sites, a process for maintaining social distancing, keeping everyone safe during the registration, vaccination administration, and the follow-up observation process. Our next steps include the identification of volunteers from our faculty, staff and students. Our Academic Deans, Department Directors and Supervisors will be provided an opportunity to discuss these important volunteer opportunities with everyone in our community in the weeks to come. Volunteers will be eligible for the first dose of the vaccine as part of the process, and a commitment of at least 8 volunteer hours will be required in order to be part of the University’s Vaccination Team. For faculty and staff, hours spent volunteering at our University’s Vaccination Program in Arizona and Illinois will be considered regular, paid work time; therefore, employees won’t be required to use vacation, personal or volunteer hours for the time committed to helping our Vaccination Program become successful. Faculty and staff must discuss their willingness to volunteer with their immediate supervisor prior to signing up for a specific time slot, to ensure that academic, departmental, and clinic patient needs are covered during that time.

Our health care students will be important members of the Vaccination Program team as well. Students in good academic standing will be eligible to participate during available volunteer time slots. However, clinical rotations, preparation for exams and didactic classwork cannot be modified to accommodate a student’s volunteer work. Rather, the Academic Deans will be observing schedules that continue to honor existing curriculum plans, while supporting students who wish to volunteer during times noted as “independent study” in quarterly block schedules. More information will be communicated by your Deans as it becomes available.

I am very happy to report that the number of positive COVID-19 cases have continued to decrease over the past week. On the Glendale Campus, we have 4 positive cases for faculty and staff; no new cases on the Downers Grove Campus. We had 13 positive cases for students on the Glendale Campus and 6 positive student cases on the Downers Grove Campus. This represents a significant drop in overall positive cases for three weeks in a row. We need to maintain this trend as more of our faculty, staff and students become vaccinated. As a reminder, even if you have received the first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, you must continue to wear a mask and remain socially distanced from others since you can still be a carrier of the virus. All of these measures help protect you, your family and colleagues.

5-Point Plan for Diversity and Inclusion

As we continue down the journey of bringing greater diversity and inclusion to our campus community, I wish to thank every college and department for their continued commitment. We embarked upon the 5-Point plan with long-lasting and strategic goals. Each week I am proud to showcase more opportunities

and diverse programs that highlight the excellent work and initiatives being implemented throughout Midwestern University.

The Downers Grove, College of Health Science, Behavioral Medicine Club, is hosting a Zoom evening addressing healthcare disparities on February 1, 2021 beginning at 6:00 P.M. Central for one hour. The featured speaker is George N. Miller, Jr., MHSA, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Loretto Hospital. Mr. Miller has spent his impressive career as a hospital administrator working to increase healthcare accessibility to underserved communities. The Loretto Hospital, located on the West Side of Chicago, is one of two Chicago hospitals that has received a Grade A in quality and patient care. Mr. Miller was appointed by President George W. Bush for the national MedPAC Committee and reappointed by President Barack Obama. To participate in his address, please join the Zoom Meeting at

<https://zoom.us/j/95988867713?pwd=d1ISRdDnaHRwRmN1ZDUySEJMTGRQQT09>.
Meeting ID: 959 8886 7713. Passcode: gWQgr5.

Faculty and Staff Benefit Announcement

- As a health care community, I am committed to the health and well-being of our entire community. Becoming vaccinated against COVID-19 is important to all of us. When an individual is eligible to get their first vaccination, the person receives a COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. Once the second dose of the vaccine has been obtained by a faculty or staff member, and if they choose to send a copy of the front and back of the completed COVID-19 Vaccination Card to the Human Resource Department, the eligible employee will be awarded one additional personal day. This additional benefit will be extended during the entire vaccination program.

As we prepare for the spring quarter, Midwestern University continues to be committed to supporting our faculty and staff impacted by COVID-19. We will work together with our faculty and staff, management, and Human Resources to find ways to reasonably accommodate these unique, provisional challenges. The Temporary Job Modification Process was created in order to assist you when you or a household member has a serious health condition, or when you face other challenges such as involuntary school closures or remote learning support for dependent children. Applications for the temporary job modification for Spring Quarter 2021 can be obtained through Human Resources for staff members, and faculty members will need to request modifications through Ms. Angela Marty, Vice President of Administration and Human Resources.

Are we there yet? I think we are getting closer. The road blocks are slowly being removed as we all do our part to lift the dark clouds of COVID-19 and see a brighter spring.

Be well.

Dr. G.

Kathleen H. Goepfinger, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer
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