

Dear Faculty and Staff,

This Saturday, July 4th, our nation will celebrate its 244th birthday. In honor of this national holiday, both campuses of Midwestern University will be closed tomorrow, Friday, July 3rd. I hope that you will take a moment to reflect upon the importance of this day and our nation's remarkable history. It is also a great opportunity to thank everyone who has served and continues to serve our country so that we may enjoy the many freedoms that have been preserved and are available for all of us.

In years past, Independence Day would have been spent with family and friends at large family picnics or neighborhood barbecues, but this year will be different. Like other celebrations since the onset of COVID-19, most of you will be celebrating with immediate family and household members only. While we will miss the large parades, community get-togethers and large firework gatherings, I hope all of you will discover other ways to enjoy the long holiday weekend.

The month of July marks the beginning of the University's new fiscal year as the Business Office works hard to close-out our 2019-2020 budgets, while the Human Resources staff completes our work on the faculty and staff compensation plans and performance review process. An important decision was made to maintain faculty and staff merit increases after the University leadership evaluated a number of important factors, including Midwestern University's decision to freeze all student tuition increases for the 2020-2021 academic year, as well as provide the full \$2.5 million in federal relief dollars to our students, instead of the University retaining 50% of that portion to cover unanticipated expenses related to maintaining essential campus and clinic operations, increasing campus sanitization services, and purchasing the necessary PPE, technology and software in order to deliver critical online curricula to our students during this pandemic. The Office of Human Resources has mailed a personal letter to each faculty and staff member who is eligible to receive a merit-based salary increase for the upcoming academic year 2020-2021.

I am both proud and pleased that Midwestern University has actively implemented many steps in our Five Step *Call to Action* Plan to bring greater diversity and inclusion within and throughout our campus community. Progress is being made at many levels, thanks to the dedicated work of our faculty, staff and students who are bringing forth ideas, suggestions and programs. More details will follow in the weeks to come.

As you begin your holiday preparations, please take extra caution this weekend as well as within the next few weeks. We have seen a rise in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Arizona as well as around the country. On our Glendale campus, we have four positive cases within our faculty and staff and 10 positive cases within our student population. If you have been exposed to a member of the campus community that has tested positive, you have already been notified to self-quarantine. At this time on the Downers Grove campus, we do not have any new faculty and staff cases, but two new student cases. Please remember to wear your cloth face mask in any public setting, wash your hands frequently, maintain recommended social distancing from others, and certainly stay home if you feel ill. We need all of you to take care of yourselves and your family.

Have a safe and happy Independence Day holiday, and thank you for your ongoing dedication to Midwestern University.

Dr. G.