Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

The dedication of our faculty and staff has been instrumental in Midwestern University’s ability to weather the public health pandemic stronger and better than many other organizations. Since March 2020, our students have proceeded with clinical experiences, attended laboratory sessions and attended classes that were offered both on campus and livestreamed, leading up to our Spring 2021 graduations and Closing Ceremonies.

While we carefully managed operations throughout the pandemic, we are now focusing our attention on how best to prepare for our Summer and Fall 2021 quarters. In light of the continuing decrease of positive COVID-19 cases, and in anticipation of our faculty, staff and students returning to on-campus learning this summer, our efforts remain on keeping the campus facilities and environments safe and healthy. As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we will maintain social distancing requirements at 3 feet of separation while still requiring the use of face masks when on campus, completing a daily health questionnaire and encouraging everyone to frequently wash your hands.

The Summer Quarter is an ideal time for us to return to campus. There will be fewer students in summer classes, faculty, staff and students can dine outside, our new incoming students will have the benefit of getting to know each other, and their faculty and staff will be there to encourage and motivate them at the beginning of their academic journey. We frequently hear that our students want to foster relationships and engage in their clubs, service programs and on-campus activities; therefore, the timing is right to begin this process. Our pandemic-related Temporary Job Modification program and associated benefits will be discontinued at the end of the Spring Quarter 2021. Faculty and staff who requested computers, scanners, and headphones will be surveyed at a later date regarding their need and use of this equipment. While we are still approving only essential travel, the current travel policy will remain in effect until the Fall Quarter.

I am very pleased to report that 65% of our faculty, staff and students are now two weeks past their last COVID-19 vaccination. As this number continues to increase, please encourage your family, friends and colleagues to become vaccinated. As of April 23, 2021, the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (a federal vaccination advisory committee) recommended the use of the Johnson & Johnson’s single dose COVID-19 vaccine be resumed in the United States and also added language on the product label warning of the potential for a rare blood-clot condition. We will open appointments in both of our Operation Hope Vaccination Centers to schedule appointments for this vaccine in the near future.

Midwestern University has purchased a CDC vaccination card holder for every member of our community, as well as the many patients we serve in our Vaccination Centers. These will be made available to all faculty, staff and students through their departments next week. Please use this new card holder as a way to protect this important health record.

Approximately 14,000 doses of Moderna Vaccine have been administered by the faculty, staff and students within Operation Hope. The support of our Vaccination Centers has been outstanding and this has only been possible because of the support and dedication of all of you. Since the demand for new first doses has decreased, we will be modifying the days of our operation in the month of May. Volunteers will be notified of any schedule changes. If you receive an email indicating that your shift has been cancelled, know that it is due to the these schedule modifications.
Diversity and Inclusion

Our four Diversity and Inclusion Coordinators, who are located in the Office of Student Services and Human Resources Department on both the Downers Grove and Glendale Campuses have introduced a number of new programs and opportunities to celebrate the wonderful diversity of our campus community. April is Diversity Month has brought about a number of key programs to engage everyone in having a greater understanding and awareness about these important endeavors.

- The Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine just concluded their Humanity in Medicine Program, which was well received by students and faculty.
- The Arizona College of Optometry’s Subcommittee on Inclusion, Diversity and Equity invited Dr. Alyx Porter to speak on effective tools and existing efforts to promote inclusivity and equity among healthcare physicians. Dr. Porter is a neuro oncologist and Associate Professor at the Mayo Clinic, and the founder of Elevate MeD, a nonprofit whose mission is to increase physician workforce diversity and improve cultural competency among physicians to reduce health disparities.
- The Downers Grove Clinics have partnered with Hopes Front Door, a nonprofit organization that helps the homeless and those with special needs. The organization acts as a “first responder” for those facing financial and medical crises. This partnership allows Midwestern University to provide virtual workshops on the COVID-19 vaccine, emotional health, dental health and physical health.
- A new Student Chapter of “It’s On Us” is forming to educate and promote an environment where students from various disciplines can come together to discuss sexual assault and the culture surrounding it.
- The Health Outreach Through Medicine and Education (H.O.M.E.) team is holding a virtual scavenger hunt to raise awareness and financial support for families of single women and youth experiencing homelessness. The virtual hunt will be hosted by UMOM New Day Centers. Please see Student Services website for more details.

Both the College of Dental Medicine – Illinois and the College of Dental Medicine – Arizona have announced that applications for their new Scholarship Programs are available to our underrepresented minority dental students as defined by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). These two new scholarship programs are designed to help us increase the diversity of the profession. Eligible students will be receiving a letter from their Academic Dean with instructions on how to apply. These fund have been received from a grant from Delta Dental of Illinois for the Downers Grove Campus and donations from faculty and staff on the Glendale Campus.

We can all look forward to a safe and vibrant community this summer as we welcome more students back to campus.

Be well.

Dr. G.