

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

I have taken my daily Evening Updates very seriously as I want to keep all of you informed and aware that Midwestern University is concerned about your welfare as we navigate through difficult issues. Today, we heard the national unemployment rate is in excess of 6.5 million individuals, almost double the number from last week's staggering figure of 3.5 million individuals. Each day we are confronted with more devastating news. I know more families are being adversely impacted and living in fear of tomorrow. Each evening I look for a 'ray of hope' and that we're making more progress toward flattening that curve.

One bright 'ray of hope' I received yesterday was from a student. I have asked his permission to share it with our campus community to reinforce how important your contributions as faculty and staff members are to our students. From caring for our campus facilities, keeping us secure, providing faculty with administrative support, teaching our students and caring for the patients in our clinics, everything you do supports our students.

May the following testimony provide all of you with a heart-felt message of thanks. This letter is just one of the many examples I have received from our students, who appreciate all that you do so they can become the best health care providers. It reminds us that we have 6800 students who count on us each day.

Dear Dr. G.,

These are undoubtedly trying times, a whirlwind of fear, uncertainty, and angst. As healthcare professional students, our endeavors are aimed at preparing for situations like these and supporting our communities in times of need and crisis. When we choose an institution to learn our trade, we choose based on who will teach us to care for our patients while also taking care of ourselves. Personally, when I chose Midwestern University, I committed to the One-Health Initiative, knowing I would play an integral role in comprehensive medical care.

As a fourth-year optometry student who is still seeing patients at my externship site, I wanted to share with you my experience as of late. My patients are afraid, nervous, looking for honesty, comfort, answers, and most importantly quality care. A patient presented about 12 days ago with itchy eyes she thought were from allergies. Upon examination, I noticed her skin was flushed, she had an irregular cough, and her ocular signs were not consistent with allergies but appeared viral in origin. I took her temperature, she was feverish, and referred to her primary care physician for evaluation and COVID testing. These are the patients we are seeing daily even in a small optometry office, and because of the rigorous standards set by my school, I feel confident in delivering first-rate care while protecting myself and support staff.

I believe it is critical that our communities, our neighbors, our patients, recognize that we are not backing down from this pandemic, but stepping up to take care of them even in times of crisis. While it is important to give the option to those who would like to withdraw from their externships, it is perhaps even more prudent to maintain the option to stay for those who want to continue delivering care and feel comfortable doing so.

I greatly appreciate your constant contact and advocacy throughout this. The Midwestern family is strong, astute, and earnest; I have no doubt we will make it through this together. -- Cody

The COVID-19 Response Team met on April 2, 2020. We are reviewing all issues that impact faculty, staff and students.

Student Financial Aid

- The Student Financial Aid Department is carefully assembling information to reassure all students that their Federal Student Aid packages are fully available.
- This includes Federal Direct Loans, Federal Graduate Plus Loans, and Federal Work Study.
- For Students with other institutional based loans, like the Midwestern University Loan, Primary Care Loan, Health Professionals Student Loans and CCOM and AZCOM Loans, these are being processed as normal with no interruption or delays.
- We continue to be committed to providing the Midwestern University Loan Program to our students; it offers no origination fees and an interest rate of 1% below the Federal Grad Plus Loan program. (The Federal Grad Plus Loan currently has a 4.236% origination fee and 7.08% interest rate.)
- Many more details will be distributed to all continuing and incoming students in the days to come, but I am aware of your concerns and wish to assure all of you that Student Financial Aid is a priority.

Please stay strong. Remember the message from our student and see the 'ray of hope' he has articulated as we go forward with our mission, motivated by the dynamic purpose of why we are here – together.

Be well.

Dr. G.