

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Have you experienced the frustration of being placed on a telephone hold for what seems like an endless time, hearing the same recorded message played over and over again, waiting to have the phone call answered? As we enter the last week of April, I know it feels that we have been on stay-at-home quarantines for an endless time too; knowing we have additional weeks to go in Illinois and are waiting for answers in Arizona. But we are all doing our part to help our nation recover from this unprecedented public health crisis, and that is a very good and courageous thing for all of us to do.

I recently read of a physician who is prescribing “memory breaks” for hospitalized patients. Before leaving a room, he tells the patient, “I have one more prescription for you. At ten o’ clock and again at four o’ clock, take a memory break. Close your eyes and recall a happy time from the past and spend as much time as you can recalling and reliving your happy memories.”

This is a good prescription for all of us. As frustration and questions continue to surround us, we can become too engrossed in the news. I have read where individuals are so consumed by the ever-scrolling news that they have become anxious and depressed. I personally do not believe the coronavirus is merely a respiratory ailment, but impacts all of us through symptoms of loneliness, fear and loss. If any of you are feeling this way, please reach out to our Employee Assistant Program or our Student Assistance Program. Information is on the Midwestern University web site for both programs. But also remember the prescription of a memory break...a few minutes of counting our blessings and looking at all the good around to realize that what we are doing is helping everyone.

The COVID-19 Response Team met today, Monday April 27, 2020, to discuss the potential new standards necessary to gradually returning to work and attend classes on campus once the Executive Orders for Stay-At-Home are revised.

Personal Protective Equipment

- In anticipation of new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention directives, and various State Executive Orders, Midwestern University is developing a new policy to be in effect as long needed, to require cloth facial masks on the academic campus and disposable paper masks in our clinics and in some labs and simulation centers. Once the policy is completed and approved, it will be shared with all faculty, staff and students.
- Social distancing in classrooms, labs, cafeterias and libraries is being carefully planned. Once we return to campus these plans will be in place to assure everyone is in compliance with the federal and state standards.
- Plexiglass shields (sneeze guards) will be installed at the check-in desks of our clinics, and other areas around campus that have check-in desks, such as our libraries and other reception areas. We have these on order, and while in high demand, we are making this equipment a priority.

Summer Quarter Planning

- We are continuing to reach out to all accreditation agencies to assure the summer quarter can proceed with online learning during the early weeks of the quarter. At this time we have had very positive responses for online learning from most accreditation agencies, and are confident that the students registered for summer, including the incoming students, can be accommodated fully.
- With a new Illinois Executive Order being officially filed on April 30, 2020, it is assumed that the stay-at-home order will be extended through the month of May; therefore, all simulation centers on Downers Grove campus remain closed until so ordered. This applies to both faculty and students.
- Those faculty and staff working in the Downers Grove Multispecialty Clinic can remain treating dental patients on an emergency and critical care basis. Eye Institute patients can return under very strict regulations of social distancing. Students who wish to return to clinic may contact their college to arrange clinic hours if they so choose. All students and faculty returning to clinic will be provided the necessary personal protective equipment.

Today I took a memory break. I had to smile as I remembered breaking ground for the first new building, the library on the Downers Grove campus, and the day we put the first shovel into the soil on the Glendale campus. It is hard to believe the twenty-five years have flown by so quickly. The most vivid memories are not limited to planning and constructing new building or launching new colleges, but of the special individuals who helped create Midwestern University. Let us all take a memory break and reflect on the individuals who have meant the most to you along your own journey.

Be well.

Dr. G.