

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students,

Over the past months, I have been reflecting on the concept of caring. I have thought about the millions of women and men whose lives are devoted to caregiving, whether it is their profession, their family responsibility or simply because of who they are. Caring about others is one of the most important values and principles anyone can have, as it leads to healthy relationships in both your family and our community. I think to care about others takes both courage and passion.

As this is day two of Graduation Week, I felt I would share additional ways our colleges are caring for their graduates. The Arizona College of Optometry and the Physical Therapy Program have scheduled virtual banquets where students can visit with each other and talk about their next career plans while celebrating each other's accomplishments. Other colleges are actively posting wonderful messages to all their graduates on the colleges' Facebook pages. Some of these pages are very creative and have many wonderful and caring messages for the students from their faculty and staff.

I would like to remind all Midwestern University graduating students that the links to the Virtual Commencement Ceremonies will become available on Friday, May 22, 2020 by 8:00 A.M. Arizona time (PDT) and 10:00 A.M. Illinois time (CDT). In preparation for this week's Virtual Commencement, each graduating student should have received an email from your academic dean with information about your college's ceremony. We have also placed this letter on your student portal to make it easy to find. Please look for a message regarding the graduation ceremonies in the Message Center on your homepage at <https://online.midwestern.edu>. From the portal, you can also send the link to your loved ones and then they can join us in congratulating you for your well-deserved success and wish you luck as being part of tomorrow's health care team.

The COVID-19 Response Team met today, May 19, 2020 to discuss our planning activities. As we prepare for greater patient volume in the clinics and additional faculty and staff on campus, we are mindful of the needs and concerns that many will have as they venture out of their homes. Our planning focuses on several key factors, a few of which I am sharing below.

Planning Focus

- Official, written protocols for employees, staff, students and patients in every department and clinic of Midwestern University to assure fair and consistent standards throughout our institution.
- Campus sanitization and social distancing controls for all facilities including parking decks are being implemented. These standards will be used for all clinics, buildings and common areas.
- Personal Protective Equipment for each classification of work being performed at the University has been identified and supplies have been ordered.

I have had the privilege of viewing all of our Commencement Ceremony videos prior to them going live on May 22, 2020. I was so impressed with Commencement Addresses given by the class representatives from all of our colleges. They highlighted to me the care and compassion our new graduates have for both their profession and this university. They provided their classmates with a look back at their time together while providing significant insight into how they have impacted and cared for each other's lives.

I hope as you look back at these unprecedented times, you take a moment to remember to care for yourself and care for others; it makes all the difference.

Be well.

Dr. G.