

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

The COVID-19 pandemic presented this nation, and all of us, with a crisis that no one in the world expected. I hope you can join me this evening to look back at the whirlwind of activity involving our campus community since March 2020.

The first two weeks of March, while participating in our initial phase, Planning not Panicking, we witnessed how our priorities shifted rapidly in some unforeseeable directions, almost overnight. Our faculty were asked to move all our classes to an online format in one week, the most unconventional way we have ever taught our graduate health care curriculum. We extended our employee benefit programs as we asked our faculty and staff to begin temporarily working at home, while rapidly acquiring and deploying computers, printers, scanners and other essential office materials. Our university leadership remained on campus in order to keep the doors open to maintain all operations. We identified essential faculty and staff to manage all of our academic functions, while also maintaining staff to keep our campuses secure and the facilities and grounds well cared for.

We implemented a thirty-seven member COVID-19 Response Team, consisting of our academic deans and key service department leaders; who have met at least five days a week for the past 13 weeks, to coordinate and manage the many issues that the university needed to resolve. Our Information Technology Support team implemented Microsoft Teams and quickly introduced the entire Response Team to the benefits of having a daily video teleconference meeting; this resource quickly became a communication lifesaver. Our COVID-19 Response Team met today, Friday, May 29, 2020, and will continue to meet over the upcoming months to address additional steps needed as more faculty, staff and patients return to our campuses and clinics.

During this time of challenges and uncertainty, we witnessed first-hand the dedication of our faculty and staff to help each other, our students and the community. Dr. Tamer Elbayoumi and Mr. Matthew Kaiser began rapid production of Personal Protective Equipment for the Glendale Fire Department and our campus community. These two individuals with the assistance of the staff in the Companion Animal Clinic and College of Pharmacy- Glendale have produced over 2000 items which include face shields and ear savers, as well as mouth guards for Speech Language Pathology faculty, students and patients. Both our Downers Grove and Glendale Clinic personnel are wearing PPE produced by these caring and talented individuals.

Midwestern University is just beginning a new chapter in our next phase of transition. What I have learned to appreciate the most over the past 13 weeks is the resilience, kindness and exceptional faculty, staff and students of Midwestern University, and I have found it refreshing that our leadership team has worked together with a renewed empathy and connection with each other.

This evening, as I look back, I want to thank all of you for reading my Evening Updates. While filling your email every night with stories about my family, experiences, and vision for our university today and tomorrow, I have been graciously received by all of you. Beginning on June 1, 2020, we will expand our clinic operations and begin bringing small groups of students back on campus for laboratory simulation. Also next Monday, I will no longer send a daily message, but will send you

periodic updates to share our plans and ongoing opportunities to fulfill our mission and care for our community and each other.

I have been thankful for your feedback, motivated by your care, and inspired by the unwavering sense of community we all have shared during this time. Thank you.

Be well.

Dr. G.