

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Last year I was given a book entitled, "Healing After Loss". I recently picked it up to reread a few of the chapters. I reflected on how many countries around the world, our nation and our communities will need to heal after the coronavirus pandemic. There are so many individuals who will need to heal; families have lost loved ones, individuals have lost jobs, family gatherings and celebrations have been cancelled, high school students forfeited proms and graduations and our own graduates have suffered a great loss. This has been a tough time for all of us.

I think it is time to refocus, reimagine, and reboot our thinking and outlook. Here we are in spring, midway between the winter and summer solstices and we are beginning to see new energy and optimism around us. Some organizations, parks and recreation areas are reopening gradually in both Illinois and Arizona, and on campus we are planning orientation for incoming students. All of these events are helping us as a community to heal. It may be a slow process, but there is hope that with new face mask protocols, social distancing, and reminders of continuing basic hygiene practices, we will be more prepared to slowly return to our regular activities.

Today the COVID-19 Response Team met with a focus on operational plans to be put in place once we can begin seeing patients in our clinics, and increasing the number of employees and students who will be returning to campus, while working with everyone to provide a safe and secure environment. We are in this together.

#### Face Mask Policy

- To help protect all members of the Midwestern University community, we are planning on implementing a face mask policy requiring that your mouth and nose are covered at all times when you are six feet or less from any other colleague or student. I know some individuals find this inconvenient or even objectionable, but this is an important step that adds to the safety of our entire community.
- The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend the use of a face covering in any public setting where social distancing is difficult to maintain. This would include places on campus such as the cafeteria lines, building entrances, elevators and common areas like lobbies, hallways and small conference rooms.
- In the days to come, we will specify the type of cloth mask that is being provided to those on the academic campus. We will be purchasing one cloth face mask for every employee to be worn and washed daily. Many of you have already purchased or made your own face coverings, and these can be also worn as long as they are professional in appearance.
- Individuals working in the Midwestern University clinics will get appropriate disposable paper masks depending on the tasks being performed.
- All clinic reception desks will have a clear, protective Plexiglas divider between the patients and staff. These are already on order.

Each day we will provide new ideas, concepts and protocols designed to support the health and well-being of our community. All of us wearing a face covering is one component of many initiatives

designed to keep our academic family protected. We will, as a community and nation begin the process of healing, knowing that, in time, a new day will come.

Be well.

Dr. G.