



From the Director's Desk

April Cornejo

Director, Body Donation Program

It has been a productive year at Midwestern University (MWU). My name is April Cornejo, and I am the new Director of the Body Donation Program. Although I am the new Director, I have been with MWU since 2007 and with this program since its inaugural year in 2016. Working within this wonderful program has allowed me to reach out to our community about how they can give back to education. Whether it is on the phone or meeting with a potential donor, I enjoy hearing each story of why they want to donate. By donating one's body to education, donors are able to share their life stories... a scar on their right leg from a bicycle injury, for example, or a knee replacement that allowed them to play longer with their grandchildren. These life experiences may be only moments in time for the donor, but they go on to be a lifetime of experiences that our students will learn as they study human anatomy before becoming healthcare professionals. As our students study our donors, they learn

these stories and use this knowledge to benefit their own future patients. This wonderful opportunity our students have provides me with relief that perhaps one day I may be a patient who needs a scar tended to, and I will know that my physician has been educated by our donors. I enjoy being a part of life's journey with our donors. The wonderful stories that are shared just by the presence of their bodies are generous gifts of a lifetime of knowledge for our medical students.



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**Midwestern
University**

Body Donation Program

Tomorrow's Healthcare Team

Perspectives on Anatomy: Midwestern University

Faculty and Student Profiles



Faculty Profile:
Chris Heesy, Ph.D.
Professor, Anatomy

Christopher Heesy, Ph.D., joined Midwestern University in 2006. He is a Professor who currently teaches anatomy and neuroscience in the University's Dental, Optometry, Occupational Therapy, and Veterinary Medicine programs.

Every time I step into our gross anatomy lab, I am again amazed by the incredible generosity of our donors, without whom our foundational training of modern healthcare professionals would be impossible. Anatomy is every healthcare professional's first class, and with good reason: the vital structure-function relationships learned in the donor lab prepare students for all the other basic sciences that form the basis of their medical education. There is no way to replace the core knowledge of variation that can only be gained through working in a donor-based lab, and no computer program can compare. As I guide students through their anatomical workshops and labs, I experience anew the wonderful nature of human anatomical variation and the beauty of the human body. I have many times talked to medical professionals in the community who we educated here at Midwestern University, and often they tell me how much their "first patient" in the anatomy lab has affected their careers and how they approach the patients in their practices. Body donation is the only way that this fundamental education can continue. We are the only species on earth that takes care of each other on this level, and the anatomical gift of a person's own body is priceless beyond description as a gesture of love and responsibility for the future of humankind.



Student Profile:
Sydney Levan,
Arizona College of
Osteopathic Medicine
Class of 2027

Prior to attending Midwestern University, Sydney Levan (AZCOM 2027) graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, in 2015 with a degree in Chemistry. After spending several years working and traveling the world, Sydney returned to pursue her dream of becoming a physician. She first entered Midwestern as a master's student, then continued on to medical school — where she always hoped to be. Sydney aspires to become an emergency medicine physician, helping people on their worst days with compassion and skill.

The first time I entered the anatomy lab as a medical student, I remember feeling the weight of the moment. Before we even began, we paused for a moment of silence to reflect on the gift that had been given to us. I remember being so grateful that we took that time — to honor the people who chose to give themselves to our education, knowing they would never see the impact of their generosity.

It was both humbling and awe-inspiring to realize I was about to learn from something real — from people who had chosen to help us learn in the most profound way possible. I remember thinking how incredible the human body is, and how privileged I was to be able to learn from it directly.

My journey in the anatomy lab has been meaningful. As a master's student before medical school, I was part of the prosection course for the anatomy donors. (cont)

Perspectives on Anatomy-Student Profile (continued)

Then, during my first year of medical school, I spent a full year in the dissection lab, learning from those who had entrusted themselves to us. In my second year, I returned to the lab as a teaching assistant in the same master's program I graduated from, hoping to give back some of what had been given to me.

Throughout these experiences, I have been constantly reminded of the generosity of others, not only from those who gave their bodies to teach us, but also from moments in my personal life. When my younger brother was just 15, he received a life-saving kidney transplant — a gift from someone we will never know, but whose decision changed our lives forever.

These experiences have shaped how I see my role as a future physician. I hope to carry forward the lessons of generosity, compassion, and humility that I have learned from that stranger as well as those in the body donation program.

Their gifts will never be forgotten. I hope to one day give back to my future patients in the same way, caring for them with the same selflessness that has shaped my path in medicine.



Midwestern Students Mentor Local Undergraduates through Mentors in Medicine and Science Program

Sponsored by the Offices of Multicultural Affairs and Community Outreach, Student Services, Admissions, and Communications, the Mentors in Medicine & Science (MIMS) mentorship program pairs Arizona undergraduate students with Midwestern University students from all eight University colleges, representing over 20 different healthcare career tracks. The MIMS program provides monthly communication between MWU mentors and their undergraduate partners about potential careers, good study habits, entrance exam test-taking, positive mental health, goal setting, and navigating the process of applying to graduate and professional schools.

This year's Glendale Campus MIMS program began with a kick-off reception and faculty panel at Midwestern University's Glendale Campus, during which 94 college students were matched with 131 Midwestern students.

As mentors, Midwestern students commit to meeting up with their mentee(s) at least once per month. Meetings can be virtual, in-person, and/or include the mentee shadowing their mentor on-campus for a day. Connections are documented via Canvas, where mentors share advice and experiences amongst themselves, and receive ongoing support from faculty. In-person check-in meetings during the winter and a spring hands-on event at the Clinical Skills and Simulation Center provide even more opportunities for mentors and mentees to learn from each other and the faculty advisors.

Upon culmination of the MIMS program, mentors will receive a certificate of completion and, hopefully, a sense of pride in knowing that they've had a positive impact on someone else's future.

"Walk with a Doc" Educates Students, Community on Fall Prevention



Midwestern University's faculty healthcare professionals partnered this spring with the Arizona Falls Prevention Coalition to host several free Walk with a Doc events on the University's Glendale Campus. Walk with a Doc events allowed community members to learn about healthcare topics and fall prevention while getting a bit of exercise. Each Walk with a Doc event lasted about an hour, including five to 10 minutes of instruction and presentation from Midwestern faculty and students on a healthcare topic, and then a "Walk with a Future Doc" around the University's campus that allowed community members to walk and talk with Midwestern's healthcare professions students under faculty supervision to take advantage of their expertise. Walk with a Doc is a nonprofit that was started in 2005 by Dr. David Sabgir, a cardiologist in Columbus, Ohio. Initially aimed at helping patients get more physical activity, the program offers the opportunity to build friendships within the community, spend time in nature, and receive free health education in a relaxed setting.



We hope you have enjoyed seeing just a few of the ways that Midwestern University enriches the communities we serve. Thank you for expressing an interest in our Body Donation Program, which supports our students in the detailed study of human structure (anatomy) through the ability to study the whole human body. The integral knowledge provided by this opportunity is foundational for the education of our nation's future healthcare professionals. We recognize the thoughtful consideration that goes into the decision to donate to our program and wish to acknowledge and express our gratitude to those individuals who generously choose to invest in the future of healthcare by making this donation. To learn more, visit www.midwestern.edu/bodydonation.



Midwestern University

Body Donation Program

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