



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



March 2021

Cutting-Edge Research and Scholarship

The University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine has always been a national and international leader in the research we conduct. Whether studying infectious disease outbreaks such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, pursuing treatment strategies that benefit both animal and human health, or advancing clinical studies that help patients in our hospital and others affected by debilitating diseases, the school remains focused on advancing cutting-edge research and scholarship.



This is the third in a series of updates from me regarding the school's new strategic plan. As you might have guessed, our second strategic priority is cutting-edge research and scholarship. We have identified four goal areas under this critical priority. They include:

- Grow the SVM's enterprise in basic, clinical and translational research and expand its local and global impact to include enhancing research support infrastructure -- people, services and space.
- Recruit and retain highly productive and qualified faculty.
- Support, train, mentor and inspire the next generation of researchers.
- Support partnerships and strategic relationships with industry and other stakeholders.

The school's associate dean for research and graduate training will lead this strategic priority and the initiatives supporting each of the goals described above. For greater detail around these initiatives, [visit the strategic plan web page](#).

Spring is just around the corner. The school is talking to campus leaders about guidance regarding in-person versus virtual events this spring, including our Celebration of Excellence awards ceremony, Blue Coat Ceremony and Class of 2021 graduation activities. I hope to know more in the next few weeks about what we can or cannot do.

I'd like to highlight an update from Richard Barajas, below, on a new diversity, equity and inclusion strategic plan, which will guide our efforts in creating a diverse, inclusive and welcoming climate at the School of Veterinary Medicine and beyond.

I know that many of you are disappointed that we will not have a spring break this year (a university decision implemented to reduce the potential of COVID-19 spread related to travel). As much as possible, please carve out time in your lives this spring to support your mental health and well-being, and reach out to school contacts if there are ways we can help.

P.S. We're debuting a new look and some new features in this month's Message from the Dean. Perhaps most importantly, the message can now be easily read on mobile devices. We hope you enjoy.

UW Veterinary Care Updates from the Director



Welcome to **Casey Harden**, a certified veterinary technician with the Oncology services; **Laura Mikkelsen**, the new kennel/small animal hospital facilities manager; **Cassie Morris**, a certified veterinary technician who has joined the ER/CCU; and **Ricardo Rangel**, a veterinary assistant with the ER/CCU.

To everyone in the hospital who continues to persevere through all of the challenges the pandemic has presented, thank you. Your efforts mean so much to hospital colleagues, clients and patients. This recent client comment is an example of that:

"Given the limitations imposed by pandemic restrictions, I had a very positive experience. I appreciate the efforts made by the facility to continue to provide treatment while limiting person-to-person contacts." -Tricia, Madison, Wisconsin

Ruthanne Chun DVM'91
Director, [UW Veterinary Care](#)
Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs

From the Archives



An exterior view of the Veterinary Medicine building in the distance behind a School of Veterinary Medicine sign. Credit: University of Wisconsin—Madison Archives.

School News

Driving Wisconsin's economy: Powered by its highly ranked research program, UW—

Madison, its affiliate organizations and the startup companies coming out of the university have a total \$30.8 billion annual [statewide economic impact](#), according to a new report. For every \$1 taxpayers invest in the university, more than \$26 is put back into the state's economy.

Honored: The School of Veterinary Medicine earned two awards as part of the 2020 [Partners in Giving](#) campaign (the state, UW and UW Health employees combined campaign of Dane County). The school received second place in increase in percent participation and third place in percent increase in contributions. Thank you to all who participated.

Alumni awards: Nominations are now open through March 14 for the 2021 School of Veterinary Medicine [alumni awards](#), recognizing graduates who have made significant contributions to society, and whose accomplishments, affiliations and careers have honored the legacy of excellence at the school. Awards are available in three categories, with opportunities for both Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and graduate degree program alumni.

Graduate debt: Among the key findings in the AVMA's latest annual [Economic State of the Veterinary Profession report](#), student debt remains a concern, but in 2019 the average debt level for new graduates fell by \$2,481 nationally as a record-high 18.2 percent of graduates graduated without debt. UW School of Veterinary Medicine graduates had the fifth-lowest median debt and fifth-lowest debt-to-income ratio (measuring what percentage of debt is covered by annual income). **Related:** SVM staff members **Richard Barajas** and **Jenna Henshue** spoke with *JAVMA News* about [admissions challenges facing potential veterinary students](#).

Art submissions: *Corpus Callosum*, Ebling Library's online art journal, is now [accepting submissions](#) of original visual, written and multimedia art from students, faculty and staff in UW-Madison's health sciences schools for their Spring 2021 issue. The deadline is March 12.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion News

An update from Richard Barajas, director of diversity, equity and inclusion

- We are now in the final stages of completing the school's diversity, equity and inclusion strategic plan, to be distributed later this month, with strategic priorities and related initiatives in the areas of climate, faculty/staff development, recruitment and retention, and curriculum. We know that other strategic priorities may arise as the school moves forward, and these will be incorporated at that time.
- Monthly meetings will begin on March 9, from noon-1 p.m., for those who have signed up to complete the Purdue Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion in Veterinary Medicine.
- The kickoff meeting for the UW–Madison Health Sciences Learning Communities will be held on March 17, from 4-5 p.m. If you are interested in these communities, please [fill out this survey](#).

Faculty and Staff News

Welcome to **Sandy Gordon**, who joins the school today (March 1) as a furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) coordination specialist to assist with the school's building expansion project. Sandy will manage the procurement and receipt of furniture and equipment and help coordinate the moves associated with the project. She is an interior designer and brings significant project management experience as owner of Sandy Gordon Interiors.

Also welcome to **Kristine Connolly**, who begins her role today as SVM onboarding and benefits coordinator. Kristine comes to the school with more than 19 years of benefits and payroll experience, eight of these at UW–Madison. She has been with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for the past 10 years.

Thanks and best wishes to **Tami Flock**, who departed the school in January for a role with the College of Letters & Science. Tami joined the SVM in September 2018 as HR assistant advanced and was a valuable member of the team.

Research News

A new study published in *Nature Communications* by researchers from the SVM, Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary and an international team of colleagues reveals that an overlooked bacterial group known as *Sarcina* is [linked to a mysterious illness](#) dubbed epizootic neurologic and gastroenteric syndrome, or ENGS, in chimpanzees. Professor **Tony Goldberg** led the research and doctoral student **Leah Owens** was also involved.



As the tallies of COVID-19's effects have mounted to a dizzying scale, a team of UW–Madison scientists, including School of Veterinary Medicine Professor **Thomas Friedrich**, has kept its focus on the tiniest shifts in the virus's genetic material. Beginning with the first known case of the virus in Wisconsin, researchers have been [sequencing the genomes](#) of as many virus samples as they can process. Their most pressing concern is surveillance, keeping watch for the arrival of virus variants believed to be more adept at infecting people or possibly carrying mutations that make vaccines and common treatments less effective.

Professor **Peter Muir** has been [awarded funding](#) from the Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation to establish racehorse screening using fetlock CT for diagnosis of horses with a high risk of imminent serious injury. **Related:** *Paulick Report*, a horse industry publication, recently spotlighted the [Equina standing CT](#) developed at UW–Madison and available for patients of UW Veterinary Care's Morrie Waud Large Animal Hospital.

Research by Professors **Tony Goldberg** and **Ted Golos** is featured in the National Institutes of Health Office of Research Infrastructure Programs' [2021-2025 strategic plan](#).

The UW–Madison Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education has [launched a new funding effort](#) to facilitate university research partnerships and graduate student internships in collaboration with the private sector. A cover sheet with a 300-word abstract is due March 5. The complete proposal is due April 9.

The School of Veterinary Medicine has announced a call for proposals for research advancing feline health and welfare, supported by generous donations to the school's growing **Feline Health Fund**. All SVM tenure- and clinical-track faculty and instructors are eligible to apply if conducting research to advance diagnostics, treatment or prevention of common feline diseases. More information can be found in a Feb. 25 email from Dale Bjorling.

A Day in the Life



Certified veterinary technicians **Abigail Jones** (left) and **Ashley Onsager** pet **Davis**, a 14-year-old domestic short-haired cat who in January received radiation therapy treatment for nasal carcinoma with UW Veterinary Care's new Radixact machine.

Upcoming Events

Whenever possible, UW-Madison recommends that events and meetings continue to be held virtually; it is highly recommended that in-person events allow for virtual participation by those who choose not to or are unable to attend in person. Any in-person events must follow campus policy for [schools/colleges/divisions](#) and [student organizations](#).

March 24

SVM Virtual Town Hall

Noon

Zoom invitation will follow.

April 7

SVM Phi Zeta Research Day

Noon-5:30 p.m.

Submit abstracts by March 12.

April 14

Virtual CASI Forum

Noon

Details to follow.

April 21

SVM Virtual Town Hall

Noon

Zoom invitation will follow.

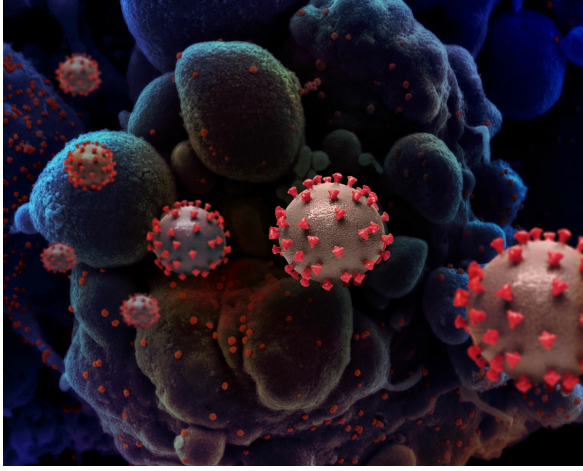
SVM in the News

[Government Rushes Virus Gene-Mapping as Mutations Spread](#)

Associated Press

[A Mysterious, Lethal Chimp Disease Is Linked to a Human Illness](#)

The New York Times



Veterinarians Face Increased Caseload,
Struggling Workforce
News 3

Terrence Clark on Veterinary Research and
His Homing Pigeon Hobby
Wisconsin State Journal

"Polar bears are one of those species that you can't help but love. With climate change, it's easy to envision melting ice and losing polar bears, which would be so devastating. Having the ability to care for the species under managed care is such a gift."

-Mary Thurber DVM'14, clinical instructor of zoological medicine, in a story about the School of Veterinary Medicine's care for polar bears Berit and Bo and other animals at Dane County's Henry Vilas Zoo.

