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**School of  
Veterinary Medicine**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Message from the Dean | December 2020

## The Holidays Are Upon Us

To say the least, it has been an interesting semester. Since Thanksgiving, our first three years of classes have gone entirely virtual in their instruction for the remainder of the fall semester. Our fourth-year students are still actively learning in-person in the hospital. An apparent light is appearing at the end of the tunnel, with it seeming likely that several COVID-19 vaccines will soon be approved by the FDA and available for distribution in 2021. As these vaccines roll out, we will communicate our plans with regard to COVID-19 testing and vaccination for this coming semester (details are not yet determined). It is certainly my hope that we will be able to return to what we would all perceive as typical instruction next fall.



This coming semester, the university has expressed that students should expect to be tested twice a week, with regular testing also required of our employees. This testing aims to identify asymptomatic carriers to limit the spread of COVID-19 across the UW-Madison campus.

On a quasi-good news front, the school has finalized its one-time budget cuts for this fiscal year, which ultimately were about \$2 million, and we have not had to lay off anyone in the SVM as a result of these cuts. With help from the hospital, our administrative units and our four departments, we were able to put together a plan through joint cooperation to accommodate what was asked from campus. Thank you everyone for your support of this effort. The SVM has also been given the required base reduction for FY22 -- that amount is \$1.126 million. I will be working with school leadership to identify how we will manage this reduction.

This month, the UW Board of Regents and the State Building Commission will meet to discuss the school's building expansion project and hopefully vote to approve our authority to construct. With that approval, we will bid the project in February with the goal to begin construction in late spring or early summer. In other good news, the new parking ramp across from the school -- now called Lot 67 -- will hopefully open Jan. 1. As information becomes available from Transportation Services regarding how to sign up for Lot 67 or remain in Lot 62 until building construction begins, we will keep you informed.

I know the upcoming holidays will be stressful given the high COVID-19 infection rates across the state and country. I would encourage all of us to be as safe as is possible during these challenging times. As you're well aware, 2020 has been a particularly difficult year and it is certainly my hope that 2021 will have fewer challenges for each of us to overcome. I hope each of you has an outstanding holiday. To our students, I wish you all the best during your upcoming finals.

P.S. I have just learned that our Class of 2021 had a 100 percent pass rate for the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE). Congratulations to all! An admirable achievement under any circumstances, made all the more impressive amidst the stressors of the pandemic.

## UW Veterinary Care Updates from the Director



Welcome to **Benjamin Bates** with the hospital greeter/reception team; **Kayla Givens**, a certified veterinary technician joining the ER/CCU as a limited-term employee to help cover gaps in shifts; **Angela Jacobs** with the hospital lab; **Noah Johnson**, vet tech assistant in the Large Animal Hospital; **Gabrielle Kuhlmann**, an assistant with the Small Animal Internal Medicine Service; **Shannon Mousseau**, administrative assistant in the hospital administration office; **Jessica Rivera**, vet tech assistant in the ER/CCU; and **Darrel Yap**, a veterinarian with the Diagnostic Imaging Service and American College of Veterinary Radiology (ACVR) Diplomate.

Amid staff shortages, changing protocols and other continuing adaptations due to COVID-19, I know that all in the hospital are working as hard as they can. Thank you for your incredible dedication to our patients and students. This recent feedback from a client shows that your efforts are seen and appreciated.

"There could not have been a more caring staff. They addressed all my questions and concerns and took incredible care of my dog. They were also very patient and understanding of his high energy levels and aggressiveness. If there are any future procedures my primary vet cannot take care of, I will definitely be bringing my dog back here. ... I appreciate how gentle and kind all the staff were who worked on this procedure to make the experience as pleasant as possible for my dog. Thank you all very much."

*-Jason, Milton, Wisconsin*

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

## School News

### COVID-19 Updates

- While campus encourages students and employees to continue [scheduling appointments](#) as needed through University Health Services (UHS) for COVID-19 PCR testing, a new rapid antigen test is [also available](#) at the Kohl Center through Dec. 23. The test offers results in 15 minutes. An appointment is required.
- To accommodate more regular and frequent COVID-19 testing of all students and employees in the spring semester, UW-Madison will partner with Shield T3, a subsidiary of the University of Illinois System. [Shield T3 can add up to 10,000 tests per day.](#)



- With the surge in COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin, more individuals are faced with the prospect of quarantining due to a COVID-19 exposure. Quarantining is an important tool in containing spread of the disease, and UW Health officials want to share recommendations on [how to effectively quarantine](#).

**Budget update:** As shared in previous communications and above, the SVM has been given a one-time reduction of \$1.825 million that needs to be met this fiscal year. We also have been given a base budget cut of 4.25 percent of our 101 budget beginning in FY22. School leaders (associate deans, department chairs and hospital leaders) are meeting to discuss actions we can take to meet both our one-time budget cut and our base budget cut, and will share more information when available.

**Building expansion:** Design for the school's building expansion project has been finalized. The project is expected to go before the Board of Regents and State Building Commission later this month for authority to construct. The project will be bid in February and it is anticipated that shovels will be in the ground in late spring or early summer of 2021. (Note: As it relates to conversations and decisions around budget cuts and the school's budget, it is important to note that money raised and allocated toward the SVM building project must be used for the building project. The funds cannot be put toward other uses.)

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** This year's UW-Madison Diversity Forum explored a convergence of issues from racial equity and social justice to health care disparities and COVID-19's impact on marginalized communities. Watch (or re-watch) sessions from the two-day conference [here](#) and visit the [Diversity Forum Resources page](#).

**Holiday Cards:** The school's annual holiday cards are the perfect gift for animal lovers on your list. Recipients will enjoy beautiful, original artwork and you will be supporting our school, hospital and students in their honor. Our 2020 holiday cards, "Short and Sweet" and "Golden Moments" (right), feature the original artwork of Wisconsin artist Robin Raab. You can [purchase cards online](#) or [download an order form](#).



## Teaching and Learning News

*An update from Associate Dean Peggy Schmidt*

The PREPARE Graduates Task Force continues to identify best practices in pedagogy, teaching, learning and assessment methods to inform the curriculum revision process. The next phase of the process will utilize a participatory design approach that includes faculty, staff and students working collaboratively to generate ideas and design ways to incorporate best practices into a revised curriculum. Design workshops will begin in early January and continue throughout the spring semester as an iterative design process. Based on workshop outcomes, working groups will be created to further develop specific recommendations.

## Faculty and Staff News

Congratulations to four members of the School of Veterinary Medicine faculty who have retired in recent months following many decades of service to the school: **Karen Young** (July 6), **Adnan Elfarrar** (July 21), **Linda Schuler** (Nov. 4) and **Harry Moment** (Nov. 13).

Congratulations also to **Tracy Baker** in the Department of Comparative Biosciences on the Dean's Advisory Committee recommending her promotion to professor and **Kristen Friedrichs** in the Department of Pathobiological Sciences on the recommendation of her promotion to clinical professor.

Several members of the SVM faculty and staff received 10-, 20- and 30-year service awards in November: **Jason Bleedorn**, **Melinda Carmody**, **Jenny Dahlberg**, **Peter Jester**, **Kerry Ludke**, **Samantha Morello** and **Katrina Viviano** (10 years); **Jody Cook**, **Robert Hardie**, **Barry Hartup**, **Kristen Lynch**, **Karen Majerus**, **Peter Muir**, **Angela Schelvan** and **Zunyi Wang** (20 years); and **Mark Markel** and **Garrett Oetzel** (30 years).

Four of the school's new faculty members were recently spotlighted in [New Faculty Focus Q&As](#) from the university: **Fei Zhao**, assistant professor, Comparative Biosciences; **Seth Eaton**, clinical assistant professor, Comparative Ophthalmology, Surgical Sciences; **Chelsea Holschbach**, clinical instructor in Large Animal Internal Medicine, Medical Sciences; and **Kimberly Keil Stietz**, assistant professor, Comparative Biosciences.

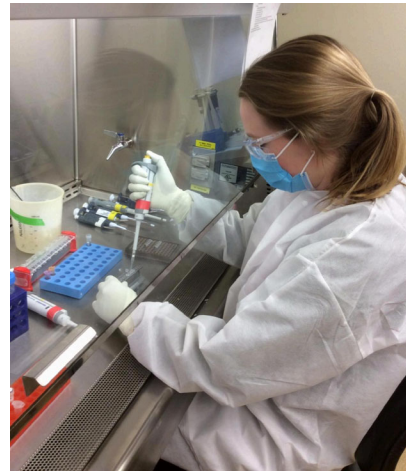
Associate Professor **Sathish Kumar** has won a [2020 Zoetis Distinguished Veterinary Teacher Award](#), given to educators in recognition of their character and leadership qualities as well as their outstanding teaching abilities. And Professor **Jyoti Watters** is the recipient of a 2020 Zoetis Award for Veterinary Research Excellence, which recognizes researchers whose innovative studies have advanced the scientific standing of veterinary medicine.

**Tom Yuill PhD'64**, professor emeritus in the Department of Pathobiological Sciences, was elected as a Fellow of the American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene at its annual conference in November in recognition of his contributions to the society and field of arbovirology.

## Research News

A family tree of more than 200 variations in the virus that causes COVID-19 helps explain why Dane and Milwaukee counties, though just 75 miles apart, had such different early experiences with the pandemic -- and shows how well public health orders initially slowed the rate of infection. Researchers in the lab of Professor **Tom Friedrich** [tracked the slight mutations](#) in the virus's genetic sequences and were able to determine the earliest introductions of the virus to each county. Their findings were published in November in *Nature Communications*.

A gene that cured a man of HIV a decade ago has been successfully added to developing monkey embryos in an [effort to study more potential treatments for the disease](#). Professor **Ted Golos** and colleagues at UW-Madison's Wisconsin National Primate Research Center and the schools of Veterinary Medicine and Medicine and Public Health employed CRISPR to edit the DNA. They published their work in *Scientific Reports*.



Graduate student Katarina Braun sequenced the genome of more than 200 variations on the SARS-CoV2 virus.  
Photo: Courtesy Gage Moreno

A new study led by UW-Madison researchers -- including Professor **Yoshihiro Kawaoka** and research professor **Peter Halfmann** -- found that a strain of the virus that causes COVID-19 mutated in Europe in February and that mutation is now the dominant form of the virus across the globe. [The study](#) was published in November in *Science*. The mutation should not interfere with the effectiveness of vaccines against the virus. **Related:** Halfmann will discuss ongoing virus research (including work on SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19) in a [Global Health Tuesday webinar](#) today, Dec. 1, at 4:30 p.m.

The application window is now open for UW-Madison Global Health Institute [annual grants and awards](#) for faculty, staff, clinicians and graduate students furthering global health. Awards are offered in five categories: seed grants, clinical research awards, virtual visiting scholar awards, graduate student research grants and the Henry Anderson graduate award. The deadline for most applications is Jan. 25 (later for Anderson grants). Seed grant applicants need to file a letter of intent by Dec. 21.

## Upcoming Events

**Webinar: From Ebola Outbreak to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Virus Research Continues**  
*Featuring Peter Halfmann, research associate professor in the School of Veterinary Medicine*  
Dec. 1  
4:30-5:30 p.m.

[Register](#)

### Virtual SVM Alumni Reception (AAEP Virtual Convention)

Dec. 7

4 p.m.

If interested in participating, contact [Kristi Thorson](#)

### SVM Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Town Hall

Dec. 8

Noon-1 p.m.

Log in details shared in email invitation from Richard Barajas

Note: A [new order](#) from Public Health Madison & Dane County restricts off-campus indoor and outdoor gatherings. Under the order, higher education institutions may set their own policies; UW-Madison continues to emphasize its own [established safety protocols and procedures](#).

## SVM in the News

### COVID-19 Mutated. Can Vaccines Keep Up?

[Bloomberg](#)

### 'Unprecedented' Pace of COVID-19 Drug Development Pushing Madison Companies to Expand

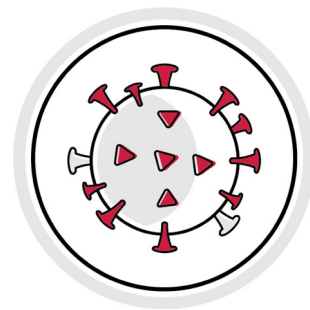
[Wisconsin State Journal](#)

### New UW Study: Limiting Travel Reduced COVID-19 Transmission Between State's Two Largest Cities

[Wisconsin Public Radio](#)

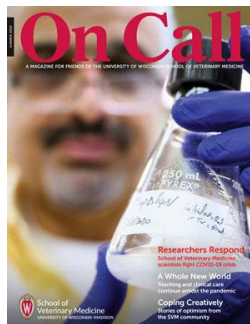
### COVID Infections in Animals Prompt Scientific Concern

[The New York Times](#)



For more media coverage of the SVM, visit the school's [In the News page](#).

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