Dear Alumni and friends of the School of Molecular Biosciences:

Happy anniversary to the School of Molecular Biosciences!
It has been 20 years since the school was created by combining the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics, the Department of Microbiology and the Program in Cell Biology and Genetics. And 10 years ago, the school moved from the College of Sciences to the College of Veterinary Medicine where we’ve found terrific partnerships in scientific research and education for our students.

To celebrate these milestones, we are inviting all former students, faculty and friends to help us celebrate our past, present and future at our fall conference on Thursday, August 15 and Friday, August 16.
The rationale for the formation of the school was to reduce the number of small departments and programs and increase academic efficiency and faculty interactions. While each of these smaller former units had some unique aspects, it was clear that the molecular basis of all these disciplines overlapped. At the undergraduate level, we have maintained separate degree programs for each of the three original disciplines, but we have integrated many of the courses to reflect the overlapping information. At the graduate level, the integration is complete, and we offer a doctorate in Molecular Biosciences.

The move of the school from the College of Sciences to the College of Veterinary Medicine was a recognition that most of the research in the school was related to biomedical questions. In addition, we physically moved from several older buildings in the science complex to a new facility that put us close to other units in the College of Veterinary Medicine. That new facility known as the Biotechnology/Life Sciences building houses all the Pullman based School of Molecular Biosciences faculty, students, and staff in a modern spacious research complex.

The school has flourished in many ways. The faculty-based research has continued to be well funded from both the NSF and the NIH. The graduate program is strong and growing and the undergraduate program is rapidly expanding. Many of our faculty members are international leaders and award winners in their disciplines. We have hired several new faculty members in the past few years to replace those who have retired and these new faculty are all on the way to successful careers. The school’s research focus is on the application of functional genomics and other molecular techniques to chromosome biology and DNA repair mechanisms, animal reproduction and development, and bacterial pathogenesis. Functional genomics uses genome-wide data and new technologies such as gene editing to study gene expression and protein function on a global scale, focusing on gene transcription, translation and protein-protein interactions. These research strengths enable strong potential interactions with every unit in College of Veterinary Medicine including the clinic and with nearly every unit at WSU that does research in biology at the molecular level.

We continue to produce skilled and productive graduates at all levels. Our graduate program continues to attract top students with significant undergraduate research experience and potential to become world class scientists. In addition, one of the deciding factors why undergraduates here at WSU choose one of our majors is because of the opportunity to participate in the diverse research programs that are run by our faculty. Furthermore, our instructional program at the undergraduate and graduate levels now includes training in scientific communication, scientific rigor, responsible conduct of science and exposure to the variety of careers available to graduates.

Given these important anniversary dates, we want to remember the history of the unit, do some self-examination, and celebrate the many accomplishments of our faculty, staff and students. For our fall conference we will begin on the afternoon of Thursday, August 15 with a poster session competition by the undergraduate and graduate students and postdocs for the faculty and the incoming new graduate students. On Friday, August 16, we will meet for the entire day to hear from some invited former undergraduate and graduate students representing the diversity of careers entered into by our graduates.

We want to use this conference to celebrate 20 years as the School of Molecular Biosciences and 10 years as a School in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Please help us celebrate by attending the 2019 fall conference. RSVP at https://smb.wsu.edu/smb-events/2019-fall-conference

If you would like to attend, let us know and we will reserve a spot for you. If you cannot attend, please help us celebrate with a donation to our School of Molecular Biosciences Development Fund which can be found at go.vetmed.wsu.edu/SMBDevFund. We use this fund to support the Faculty Seminar Series, graduate student stipends, research funds for student proposals and support for graduate and undergraduate recruitment incentives such as laptops or moving bonuses.

We hope you can join us!