

Hello members! My first quarter as president has been such an amazing ride, and it's only the beginning of the year! Besides getting to work with Stacie Byars, our fabulous president-elect, I cannot think of a better way to kick start the year than with the recognition that Women In Bio received as we rang the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange. One of the best parts of that experience was meeting many of the national leaders and members of the NY chapter in person. We all work so virtually that sometimes it's nice just to spend some time celebrating in person!

Across the country, our chapters have been working hard and we've hosted a total of 28 events in the first 3 months, including 6 YWIB events! I am so proud of the work that our chapters are doing. We celebrated Women's History Month with a whopping 14 events! Every single chapter participated, and I know we made great impact given the targeted programming and the focus on our 50/50 Challenge initiative.

Let's not forget the work that our National committee leaders are doing every day to help the chapters stay on top of our policies and execute on their goals. They have gone above and beyond this year creating committee-specific training presentations or guidelines, challenging our committee chairs to think outside the box, and lean on our national network for advice and ideas.

A special thanks as well to the organization's staff members – Jamie, Shannon, Debra, and Ted. Many of you have interacted with them directly, so I don't have to tell you how hard they work to get your submissions in on time, make necessary changes, support our sponsors, develop our leadership, and maintain our records and financials. We are lucky to have such a great team to make things happen!

At National, we have been working hard on a new initiative that was conceived last year and has come to fruition through the efforts of its committee chairs, Dawn Hovevar and Carolyn Brougham. If you haven't heard about it yet, I'm speaking about the Executive Leadership Development Committee, or ELDC. (Yes we are working on a new name!) The main goal of this committee is to develop and launch a Board Certification Training Program for qualified executives. This program is designed to prepare executive women with an overview of the necessary responsibilities and commitments needed to serve on a board. While graduating from this class won't guarantee a board seat, it certainly serves to start a conversation or networking campaign for a woman interested in serving on a board. The committee also plans to follow this class with a networking event, to be held at the JPMorgan conference next January. The inaugural event is designed to provide graduates who have not yet been placed on a board with an opportunity to network and mingle with people in positions to help graduates achieve this goal. By this time next year, we hope to be able to announce that we have placed many of our course graduates on boards, and importantly, that we have contributed to the goal of gender equality in our industry in a meaningful way. Our aim is to position WIB as the organization that people go to when they want to join a board or are looking for new board members. An initiative of this size takes tremendous support, not only from our volunteers, but also from industry partners and sponsors. (If your company is interested in sponsoring this important program, please contact me.) We continue to make progress toward launch of this program and will keep you up to date on our developments.

As I have mentioned, the National team, including myself and Stacie, are working hard to secure industry partnerships and sponsors to support WIB. I am pleased to announce that LifeSci Advisors has recently pledged to become a multi-year, Premier level national sponsor of WIB. I'm sure some of you

may be asking yourselves why WIB would choose to align with an industry partner that received considerable backlash following this year's JP Morgan conference where they hosted an event that did not portray women in the best light. WIB, and many others including LifeSci itself, believe that this unfortunate misstep has created an opportunity for us to take a more proactive role in addressing the gender disparity that is rampant at all levels of our industry. LifeSci has responded by taking definitive steps to change their company culture...for their employees, clients, partners *and* for organizations like WIB who are committed to the education and advancement of women. LifeSci recognizes WIB's influential and growing impact on the industry and the issues that we stand for and has offered to not only support our events across the country, but also help raise awareness of the issues that we are promoting. They are also pledging to increase our list of sponsors, provide content and speakers when necessary, and offer support for some of our larger initiatives over the course of the next two years. I hope you will join Stacie and me as we welcome LifeSci as our newest and highest level national sponsor.

Last but not least our plan for the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) International Annual Meeting 2016 plan is also in full swing. Thank you to our BIO planning committee and its leaders, Dawn Hovevar and Cassidy Cantin, who have brought together a very high-functioning team. Our theme this year is visionary leadership, and this year's plenary event will feature a panel of Visionaries who are at the forefront of leading our industry (see list below). In addition to our plenary event, we will host our second annual executive luncheon, upping our game to include an equal representation of gender in the audience. We will also be hosting BIO meet-ups, participate at the exhibit hall with our booth, and present at the BioProcess International Theater on the showroom floor. We are excited about this year's plans for BIO, and our sponsors are noticing. Sponsors already on board include Paragon, Cytovance, and BDO, with more to come!

Visionary leaders secured for our BIO panel:

- **Firelli Alonso, Senior Director, Biotherapeutics and Vaccines Outsourcing, Pfizer**
- **Renee Ryan, Vice President, Venture Investments, Johnson & Johnson**
- **Lisa Cohen, Executive Director, Washington Global Health Alliance**
- **Bahija Jallal, Executive Vice President, AstraZeneca, Head of MedImmune**

I want to thank all of you for your support of me as we continue to innovate, challenge, and participate in the unique, all-volunteer environment that is WIB! I'd love to hear from you with your ideas, thoughts, and questions, and I hope to meet many of you in person at BIO. Looking forward our continued greatness in Q2!

Kristi Sarno

WIB-President