Dear WIB Community,

As we enter the second half of 2020, I could not be more honored to work alongside WIB staff and volunteers at every level, creating opportunities to engage, educate, and empower women in the life sciences. The organization continues to respond quickly, adapting to the needs of our communities. Thanks to our staff, members, and supporters for your strong commitment to WIB’s mission.

Throughout April, our staff and volunteers worked together to transition the entire organization to virtual events fully. Members and supporters from across North America have attended events, both in real-time and on-demand through our digital library. The high-quality programming and networking content WIB provides is now available even more widely, extending the geographic reach to better serve our communities. Our member-exclusive digital library provides access to events with added flexibility during these challenging times.

The fifth annual Boardroom Ready class was the most competitive yet, and we want to especially thank the admissions committee for their time and dedication during this process. We extend a warm welcome to these outstanding leaders. They join an impressive network of women expanding influence on our industry at the highest levels. As the world continues to change, Executive Women In BIO (EWIB) is also adapting to virtual programming, providing our executive members with opportunities to connect organized at both the Chapter and National Levels.

June brought us the BIO Digital conference, where WIB organized six events in five days. The National Special Events committee, with strong support from our Communications team and numerous volunteer leaders, did an outstanding job organizing and promoting these events. The EWIB virtual brunch, hosted by Shehnaaz Suliman (EWIB co-chair), kicked off our series of events. Jung E. Choi, Chief Business & Strategy Officer of Global Blood Therapeutics, Inc.; Natalie Holles, President and Chief Executive Officer of Audentes; and Elena Ridloff, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at ACADIA Pharmaceuticals Inc. provided a candid and insightful discussion of leadership challenges during the pandemic.
Entrepreneurship was front and center during WIB’s BIO Digital events this year. During our Virtual Plenary Event, moderated by WIB’s Simone Fishburn and featuring Johnson and Johnson Innovation, JLABS, Global Head, Melinda Ritcher, the two shared ideas and vision for Entrepreneurship in 2020 and beyond, with event participants given the opportunity to submit questions. Entrepreneurship opportunities continued into the first-ever WIB National Pitch competition hosted in partnership with the RESI conference. Congratulations to our founders, and we cannot wait to see where your innovation and hard work take you!

WIB National hosted a Zoom-based “Speed Networking” session during BIO, and the feedback was immediately enthusiastic. Over 150 participants from North America and beyond registered to connect during this event. Be on the lookout for future opportunities to connect via WIB virtual platforms.

The final two events were organized by our Southern California Chapter and featured informative panels on Executive Mentoring and the opportunities in the Southern California life sciences ecosystem. Propelled by WIB’s Executive Mentorship, Advisors, Peers, and Sponsorship (EMAPS) team, I had the great privilege of moderating the panel featuring Marilyn Kronenberg, Sanofi Head of Executive Education, Talent Accelerators and Organizational Development Excellence and WIB executive members Gina Ford and Kirsten Anderson about their experience with executive mentorship groups. The final panel discussion “What Makes SoCal a Leading Hub?” was hosted by WIB’s Julie Fishman and featured Elizabeth Gibson, Vice President of Marketing, Programs and Talent, CLSA; Dr. David H. Crean, Managing Director at Objective Capital Partners; Dr. Lisa Haile, Partner at DLA Piper; and Julio de Unamuno IV, Founder, and CEO of LabFellows. The audience was invited to breakout Q&A discussions with panelist groups, for a strong and interactive close-out of programming during WIB’s BIO Digital week.

With the launch of YWIB online, and the dedicated YouTube and Facebook pages, YWIB continues to grow our presence in the virtual world. YWIB chapter events are being hosted virtually and are available online. The inaugural class of YWIB Ambassadors are being selected, and these young girls will champion and support YWIB’s efforts to create educational and leadership opportunities in STEM for young girls, both locally and nationally. Through these initiatives, WIB will keep connecting young women to STEM opportunities and professionals in life sciences.

WIB continually strives to serve our community and to create a welcoming and inclusive space. Our President-Elect, Kayla Valdes, has stepped forward to lead additional efforts in this area. WIB engages women from the classroom to the boardroom, and it is an integral part of our mission to better serve under-represented and marginalized groups through every phase of career development. The response to our call for applications for the new Diversity and Inclusion Resource Group has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are very eager to begin working with these dedicated and passionate individuals to establish new partnerships and incorporate initiatives across all aspects of WIB programming. The need for this work is clear, and we welcome the opportunity to learn from one another.

Thank you for your continued support of WIB.
Yours,

Jessica Bosc

Women In Bio National President and Board Chair

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**Email Address:**
Info@WomenInBio.org

**Young Women In Bio:**
Info@WomenInBio.org

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Women In Bio
P.O. Box 31493