



Office of Research

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Dear Colleagues,

This letter provides an update of the changes and improvements that The Ohio State University is making to our animal care and use program. We want to first begin, however, by thanking everyone for their help and cooperation as we move to develop and implement policies for animal care and use which are consistent with current national practices and fully comply with federal regulations and guidance.

As you may be aware, the University's animal care and use program is accredited by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC). As such, volunteer peer reviewers visit our campus every three years to evaluate the quality of our program in view of the federal regulations and the acceptable practices within the 680 member AAALAC community. Accreditation provides a necessary assurance to our federal and industry sponsors that the University and its researchers adhere to all of the applicable rules and regulations relative to the care and use of animals and animal tissue in research and teaching. In fact, a growing number of our sponsors require that institutions receiving grants maintain AAALAC accreditation.

AAALAC visited our campus for three days last October and critically assessed the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) oversight process, the University Laboratory Animal Resources (ULAR) facilities, and individual investigator laboratories. During the site visit exit interview, the peer review team identified a number of deficiencies in three major areas of concern. First, the University was found to have an inadequate occupational health program which did not adequately cover all faculty, staff and students involved in animal care. Second, the previous IACUC did not exert sufficient oversight during its review of protocols and amendments. Third, the institution did not provide adequate oversight of animal use and housing, especially individual investigator laboratories.

In response to these findings, the University took immediate action to correct the deficiencies, including revitalizing the IACUC, initiating a joint ULAR/IACUC laboratory inspection process, and assembling an AAALAC response working group that consists of representatives from across campus to help implement the necessary changes to our animal care and use program. On May 21, we plan to meet with the AAALAC Accreditation Council in Washington, DC to demonstrate that the institution has corrected the deficiencies and has taken the steps necessary to improve the University's animal care and use program, including the following:

- A new, more comprehensive IACUC animal use form was developed and implemented in January. The new application will help prevent the delays that have occurred when the University's Office for Responsible Research Practices (ORRP) has required additional information before sending protocols to the IACUC for review;
- In May, submission times will be changed from 10 to 14 days to provide ORRP and ULAR staff with adequate time to assess and better package the protocols prior to full IACUC review. This policy will be initiated due to the dramatic increase in the number of animal use protocols which has occurred as our research enterprise has grown;
- As briefly noted above, a new, cooperative ULAR and IACUC laboratory inspection process was implemented in February to assist investigators in assuring that their labs meet current practice and regulatory standards;

- An on-line occupational health program registry was begun in January. Complete details of the Animal Handler Occupational Health Program is attached;
- A new on-line basic Animal Use Orientation Course is now available that is based-upon the Veteran's Administration-sponsored course, which is used nationally by most of our peers;
- A new on-line occupational safety and biohazard training is also now available;
- The IACUC and ULAR plan to provide new, advanced, in-person, specialized species and procedure-specific training (as applicable) beginning in June of this year;
- IACUC and University policy will now require that all faculty, staff, students and volunteers who handle animals take both: 1) the basic animal handler training course (either in-person or on-line) and 2) the on-line basic occupational safety and biohazard training - once every three years; and
- IACUC policy and processes have been revised to better comply with federal regulations which require that all of the following be complete and verified by the IACUC before animals are ordered by ULAR and final approval of a protocol will be granted:
 - Documentation of appropriate training for all personnel working on the project;
 - A completed chemical hygiene plan (when applicable); and
 - Institutional Biosafety Approval (when applicable).

Please note: In order for investigators, research staff, students and volunteers to meet the above requirements, all animal handlers will need to complete the new on-line occupational safety and biohazard training course by Monday, May 17, 2006. In addition, faculty, staff, students or volunteers who have not taken the in-person animal handler course offered by ULAR during the past three years must also take the new on-line basic animal handler training course by Monday, May 17, 2006. Both courses are available at <https://rf.osu.edu/secure/education/>. Failure to complete this required training will result in the loss of access to animal facilities.

Thank you for actively participating in these new programs and requirements, including the animal handler on-line registration process, which is critical to our Occupational Health Care Program. We are well aware that these impact your workload, but these changes are absolutely necessary for the University to maintain its AAALAC accreditation. Your continued support and cooperation is essential to the University's maintaining an effective animal care and use program.

Sincerely,



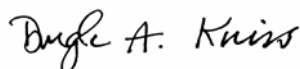
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Senior Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Animal Handler Occupational Health Program