



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

March 23, 2020

Janet Napolitano, J.D.
Office of the President
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Via e-mail: President@ucop.edu

Dear President Napolitano,

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide regarding an urgent matter. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, University of California-Berkeley (UC-Berkeley) is apparently planning "to ramp down, curtail, or postpone, animal research experiments"¹ which will likely lead to the destruction of many animals.

Based on the repeated and documented failure of UC-Berkeley to abide by the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), and given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,² we urge UC-Berkeley to immediately: 1) prohibit approval of new animal protocols and experiments; 2) prohibit breeding and acquisition of new animals for laboratories; and, 3) finalize and end ongoing animal experiments.

UC-Berkeley's Culture of Noncompliance: Animal Welfare Act Violations

According to public records obtained by PETA from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), UC-Berkeley was cited by the USDA after the agency's inspectors found that two bats died after laboratory staff forgot to take the animals to their main confinement area and left them in a transport enclosure. The same inspection revealed that a Rhesus macaque had his/her toe amputated after inappropriate handling by the staff allowed him/her to escape, which resulted in the animal being attacked by another monkey. Additionally, UC-Berkeley reported a violation to the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in which

¹ <https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/research-continuity-planning-covid-19>

² <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

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mice underwent cranial surgeries and had to be euthanized due to the staff failure to provide them with appropriate postsurgical care.

COVID-19: Ending Animal Experiments Protects Animals, Staff, and Patients

This week, UC-Berkeley is apparently implementing a contingency plan “to ramp down, curtail, or postpone, animal research experiments,”³ presumably leading to the killing of countless animals. This begs the question why taxpayer dollars are being used on experiments that can easily be ended or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered extraneous to the testing in the first place. Equally troubling is that the experiments themselves are not critical to advancing human health, since more than 90 percent of highly promising basic science discoveries (most of which involve animal experiments) do not enter routine clinical use in humans.⁴

As part of their COVID-19 responses, the below institutions around the country are taking steps to curtail animal experiments, and we urge UC-Berkeley to do the same with haste:

- At Johns Hopkins University “no new animal experiments” are being allowed.⁵
- At the University of Washington, at least one laboratory “is refraining from starting any new long-term animal experiments ...”⁶
- At the University of Montana, the Vice President of Research and Creative Scholarship sent an e-mail to faculty stating, “UM researchers with active animal studies should consider finalizing experimental endpoints and ... researchers should delay starting longitudinal studies until further notice.”⁷
- At the University of Michigan, the Office of the Vice President for Research states, “[Principal investigators] may want to consider the timing associated with starting new experiments and establishing new rodent breeding pairs. In addition, PIs may want to consider whether current animal studies can be judiciously ended”⁸
- At Stanford University, an official website states, “Per the [Veterinary Service Center], research labs should: ... Consider delaying new projects or new animal subjects ...”⁹

³ <https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/research-continuity-planning-covid-19>

⁴ <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>

⁵ https://researchanimalresources.jhu.edu/alerts/?fbclid=IwAR04X76L3pudTGj4-iR4naOZ3dnJ_ONS0pPkBG-iJGu7TutQiFjBw30z2Yg

⁶ http://www.dailyuw.com/news/article_110ae4c2-64c4-11ea-a058-4bbb2161540d.html

⁷ https://missoulain.com/news/local/um-researchers-prepare-for-potential-coronavirus-interruption/article_fe1cc6ca-19c9-5cc6-8661-602f67c58e4b.html

⁸ <https://research.umich.edu/covid-19>

⁹ <https://healthalerts.stanford.edu/covid-19-information-and-resources/information-for-faculty-and-researchers/>

- At Drexel University, the Provost and the Executive Vice President of Research & Innovation “have suspended on-campus, non-critical research activities starting March 18th.”¹⁰
- At Cornell University, according to their website, laboratories will “cease all invasive research procedures” and “non-essential experiments” will not “be initiated if they will extend past Thursday, March 19th (MSK [Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center]) or Friday March 20th (WCM [Weill Cornell Medicine]).”¹¹
- At Brown University, researchers and laboratory leaders were urged to ramp “down research activities.”¹²
- At University of California, San Diego, researchers were asked to consider “postponing experiments” and “the acquisition of new animals whenever possible.”¹³
- At University of Michigan, researchers were urged to “ramp down all noncritical laboratory research activities by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 20.”¹⁴
- At Massachusetts Institute of Technology, laboratory staff was invited to “limit the number of breeding cages to those needed to maintain rodents on study or any continued research.”¹⁵
- At Washington University in St. Louis, researchers were recommended to “[d]evelop plans to scale back” their “breeding colonies.”¹⁶
- At UCLA, principal investigators were urged “to ramp down or terminate research.”¹⁷
- At Yale University, researchers were informed that “animal research experiments should be ramped down, curtailed, or postponed.”¹⁸
- At The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC- Chapel Hill), researchers were informed that “[n]on-essential experiments should be delayed.”¹⁹
- At Duke University a “research curtailment directive” was issued and “no new studies in animals are permitted without justification and approval.”²⁰
- At Emory University, researchers were encouraged “to conclude experiments” and “not start lengthy or complicated ones.”²¹

¹⁰ <https://drexel.edu/research/resources/coronavirus-preparedness-information/research-involving-animal-models/>

¹¹ <https://research.weill.cornell.edu/node/6617>

¹² <https://covid.brown.edu/news/2020-03-15/research>

¹³ <https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/COVID-19-research.html#Animal-Research>

¹⁴ <https://research.umich.edu/covid-19>

¹⁵ <https://ras.mit.edu/about-research-administration-services/news-and-events/research-continuity-guidance-laboratories-and>

¹⁶ <https://research.wustl.edu/covid19/animal-care-and-use/>

¹⁷ <https://rsawa.research.ucla.edu/arc/>

¹⁸ <https://your.yale.edu/research-support/animal-research>

¹⁹ <https://research.unc.edu/covid-19/>

²⁰ <https://research.duke.edu/coronavirus-research-FAQ>

²¹ <https://www.emory.edu/coronavirus/messages/index.html?m=message-all-managing-research-march-18>

- At University of Arizona, researchers were invited to consider “to completely ramp down” their laboratories, and [r]educe or cease all unattended experiments/processes and all experiments that need monitoring.”²²

We call on UC-Berkeley to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will and/or “must continue” as part of UC-Berkeley’s “Continuity Planning” plan (such that they may be categorized as critical, essential, necessary, and/or other similar terminology);
- 2) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will not and/or must not continue as part of as part of UC-Berkeley’s “Continuity Planning” plan (such that they may be categorized as extraneous, non-critical, non-essential, ramped down, disposable, unnecessary and/or other similar terminology);
- 3) The number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 1 above (e.g., in a “must continue” and/or similar terminology category) and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a “must continue” and/or similar terminology category); and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., not in a “must continue” and/or similar terminology category), and notice of if, when, and how many of these animals have been and/or will be euthanized, culled, killed, destroyed, disposed, or reduced in cage census.

You can contact me by e-mail at ShalinG@peta.org or by telephone at 757-962-8325. We look forward to your swift reply to this quickly developing and urgent matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



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²²https://research.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/data/Temporary%20Laboratory%20Closure%20procedure%202020_03_17%5B1%5D.pdf