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THE ETHICAL
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OF ANIMALS

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April 17, 2020

Neeli Bendapudi, Ph.D.
Office of the President
Grawemeyer Hall
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Louisville, Kentucky 40292

Via e-mail: Neeli.Bendapudi@louisville.edu

Dear President Bendapudi,

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. Given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,[1] we urge the University of Louisville (UL) to immediately: 1) prohibit approval of new animal protocols and experiments; 2) prohibit breeding and acquisition of new animals for laboratories; 3) finalize and end ongoing animal experiments; and, 4) prove that all of these animals and experiments are concretely advancing human health, and if they're not then switch to superior human-relevant, animal-free research methods.[2]

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

As part of its COVID-19 contingency plan, UL informed its experimenters that "all non-essential research activities are suspended" and that "[n]on-essential research studies and experiments that have not yet started should be immediately postponed."[3] This begs the question why taxpayer dollars are being used on experiments that can easily be ended or delayed or that involve animals who, apparently, are considered by many universities to be 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]

[1] https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/
[2] https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf
[3] https://louisville.edu/medicine/tech/updated-covid-19-guidelines-for-the-uofl-research-community-updated-3-24-2020
[4] https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long

We call on UL to publicly release the following information:

1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of UL's COVID-19 response 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 continue as part of UL's COVID-19 response 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 critical 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 critical 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 critical 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,

Shalin G. Gala
Vice President, International Laboratory Methods
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