



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

March 25, 2020

Christina Hull Paxson, Ph.D.
Office of the President
Brown University
Box 1860
Providence, RI 02912

Via e-mail: president@brown.edu

Dear President Paxson,

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. Based on the repeated and documented failure of Brown University (BU) 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,¹ we urge BU 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

Brown University's Culture of Noncompliance: Animal Welfare Act Violations

According to public records obtained by PETA from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), BU was cited by the USDA after the agency's inspectors found that in two different incidents, five bats starved to death when laboratory staff forgot to feed them; two macaques sustained injuries that required surgery when the staff failed to secure the area where one of them was confined, allowing him/her to escape and reach the other primate; and another macaque injured his/her hand when staff failed to secure his/her confinement area allowing the animal to escape and getting into a fight with other primates.

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

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

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As part of its COVID-19 contingency plan, BU is urging experimenters to start “ramping down research activities” and be prepared for the restriction of “non-critical” research,³ which will likely result in the killing of hundreds of 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

We call on BU to publicly release the following information:

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of BU’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 BU’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 other similar terminology category), and the number and species of animals who are in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., in a non-critical and/or other similar terminology category); and,
- 4) The endpoint/disposition of animals used in experimental protocols covered by item number 2 above (e.g., in a “non-critical” and/or similar terminology category), and notice of if, when, and how many of these animals are euthanized, culled, killed, destroyed, disposed and/or have reduction in cage census.

You can contact me directly 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
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³ <https://covid.brown.edu/news/2020-03-15/research>

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