



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

May 6, 2020

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Via e-mail: [chancellor@ucdavis.edu](mailto:chancellor@ucdavis.edu)

Dear Chancellor May,

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 the University of California-Davis (UC-Davis) to abide by the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) and to meet the provisions of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, and given the COVID-19 pandemic that is influencing the shut-down of animal experiments around the world,<sup>1</sup> we urge UC-Davis 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.<sup>2</sup>

### **UC-Davis's Culture of Noncompliance: Violations to the Animal Welfare Act and the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals**

According to public records obtained by PETA from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), UC-Davis was cited by the USDA after the agency's inspectors found that a guinea pig fell from his/her confinement area, five feet from the floor, and died due to a staff member mistake; a rabbit died when a technician mishandled a piece of equipment resulting in air being injected into the animal's blood stream; two dogs got into a fight and were injured when a staff member ignored one of the dog's aggression flags; and a primate had to be euthanized

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/14/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-research-labs-shut-down/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US\\_FINAL\\_2020\\_300.pdf](https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Research-Modernization-Deal-Report-US_FINAL_2020_300.pdf)

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due to the injuries that he/she sustained. Additionally, public records obtained by PETA from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) via the Freedom of Information Act, show that UC-Davis has reported many violations to the PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. The following are a few of them: 25 frogs died due to exposure to bleach after staff performed an unapproved tank cleaning procedure; several mice suffered from necrosis in their tails after the administration of a cancer drug, and had to be euthanized; 54 Titi monkeys who received canine vaccines developed dermatitis, lameness, and conjunctivitis, and three of them had to be euthanized; a primate who had lost more than 15% of his/her weight was subjected to a surgery against protocol; 50 mice died and 10 more had to be euthanized after receiving an experimental drug; and mice who were used in a smoke inhalation experiment were euthanized after being exposed to smoke derived from an electrical fire.

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

As part of its COVID-19 contingency plan, UC-Davis urged its experimenters to “ramp down all noncritical on-campus research activities,”<sup>3</sup> and defined “critical research” in part as the “[m]aintenance of critical animal populations ...”<sup>4</sup> This will likely lead to the killing of many animals and 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.<sup>5</sup>

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

- 1) An itemization of all experimental protocols that will continue as part of UC-Davis’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 UC-Davis’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

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<sup>3</sup> <https://research.ucdavis.edu/research-continuity-planning-for-covid-19/#recommended>

<sup>4</sup> <https://research.ucdavis.edu/definition-of-critical-research/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/348/bmj.g3387.long>

- 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](mailto: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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shalin G. Gala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "S".

Shalin G. Gala  
Vice President, International Laboratory Methods  
Laboratory Investigations Department