

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

May 11, 2020

Ronald J. Daniels, L.L.M., J.D.  
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Via e-mail: [president@jhu.edu](mailto:president@jhu.edu)

Dear President Daniels,

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 Johns Hopkins University's (JHU) recent announcement that it will halt contributions to employees' retirement plans and prepare for layoffs in response to budget shortfalls brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup> **Rather than cutting employees' benefits, we urge you to cut the school's wasteful multimillion-dollar animal experimentation program—starting with Shreesh Mysore's cruel and invasive brain experiments on owls that do not advance human health.**

In Mysore's laboratory in Johns Hopkins' Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences, he cuts into barn owls' skulls, implants electrodes in the birds' brains, locks them in restraining devices, and then bombards them with noises and lights to observe their reactions. He claims that these experiments will shed light on human attention disorders, but not a single cure or treatment for humans has come out of them.

According to the National Institutes of Health, 95% of novel drugs that appear safe and effective in preclinical experiments on animals fail in human clinical studies,<sup>2</sup> largely because of significant biological differences between species. It is irresponsible for JHU to slash employees' retirement plans while continuing to waste money—much of it coming from taxpayers—on junk experiments on animals that don't benefit patients and

<sup>1</sup>Nick Anderson, et al., "Rising Expenses, Falling Revenues, Budget Cuts: Universities Face Looming Financial Crisis," *The Washington Post*, 23 Apr. 2020 <[www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/23/rising-expenses-falling-revenues-budget-cuts-universities-face-looming-financial-crisis/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/23/rising-expenses-falling-revenues-budget-cuts-universities-face-looming-financial-crisis/)>.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "About NCATS," National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, 4 Feb. 2020 <[www.ncats.nih.gov/about](http://www.ncats.nih.gov/about)>.

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have repeatedly violated the federal Animal Welfare Act, resulting in deaths of monkeys and others.<sup>3</sup>

On March 12, JHU Associate Director of Research Animal Resources Eric Hutchinson sent an internal e-mail about the school's COVID-19 response plan, stating that experimenters should "[r]educe cage census" of animals and "euthanize extraneous animals."<sup>4</sup> As we pointed out in our March 17 letter to you, this begs the question why these animals were forced to endure cruel and painful tests in the first place. Prohibiting such experiments from resuming and preventing the repopulation of these "extraneous animals" in JHU's labs will certainly save money, promote more accurate, human-relevant science through the use of non-animal models,<sup>5</sup> and prevent university employees from having to bear the brunt of the school's heavy-handed fiscal mitigation plan.

You can contact me directly at [ShalinG@peta.org](mailto:ShalinG@peta.org) or 757-962-8325. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to your response.

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

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<sup>3</sup>People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, "PHOTOS: Monkeys Suffering at Johns Hopkins U. Labs," PETA.org, 10 Apr. 2020 <<https://headlines.peta.org/photos-violations-agonny-monkeys-johns-hopkins/>>.

<sup>4</sup>People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, "Coronavirus Shuts Down Universities, Prompts Mass Killing in Animal Labs," PETA.org, 5 May 2020 <[www.peta.org/blog/coronavirus-animal-killing-spree-college-labs/](http://www.peta.org/blog/coronavirus-animal-killing-spree-college-labs/)>.

<sup>5</sup>People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, "The Research Modernization Deal 2020," Nov. 2019 <[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)>.