



May 14, 2020

Dennis Assanis, Ph.D.
President
University of Delaware

Via e-mail: president@udel.edu

Dear Dr. Assanis,

We're writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters, 17,389 of who live in Delaware, regarding the University of Delaware's (UD) [recently announced](#) plans to implement a hiring freeze that could impact the school's approximately 850 adjunct faculty members, suspend all [discretionary funding](#), and [slash salaries](#) of top university officials in response to a \$65 million budget shortfall resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. **Rather than suspending employment, we urge you to cut UD's wasteful animal experimentation program—starting with Tania Roth's cruel child abuse experiments on rats, which have not yielded any meaningful treatment for human children.**

For over 20 years, Roth has tormented and killed mother rats and their infants in painful, inhumane, and completely worthless laboratory tests. In a recent study, she surgically severed the lower thoracic spines of baby rats one day after they were born. She reported giving them only one dose of pain medication following these painful surgeries and using hypothermia—chilling them in an ice bath to the point of unconsciousness—to anesthetize them. In another experiment, she intentionally terrified pregnant rats by squeezing them into PVC tubes only 2.5 inches wide, three times a day for three weeks, and bombarding them with high-frequency strobe lights and white noise. Rats have also been subjected to the "forced swim" test, in which they are dosed with a test substance and dropped into a water-filled beaker, forcing them to swim for their lives while experimenters observe and record how long they struggle.

Federal documents reveal that UD has repeatedly violated federal animal welfare guidelines. Many of the violations have resulted in the suffering and deaths of dozens of animals. According to the documents, one rat drowned during a "forced swim" test. In another incident, an experimenter ostensibly studying fetal alcohol syndrome withheld food from 23 rats, who lost nearly 15% of their bodyweight in just nine days. In a third incident, 75 rats were killed after smoke from a nearby fire poured into the room where they were caged, potentially affecting experimental results. Such incidents undermine the university's attempt to paint itself as a forward-thinking, modern campus.

[A Pew Research Center poll found](#) that 52% of U.S. adults oppose the use of animals in scientific research. Other surveys suggest that the remaining group accepts animal experimentation only out of the mistaken belief that it is necessary for medical progress. But according to the National Institutes of

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Health, 95% of new drugs that appear safe and effective in preclinical experiments in animals fail in human clinical studies, calling into question the role of animal experimentation in most medical advances. It is irresponsible and cruel for UD to suspend the hiring of faculty members while continuing to waste money on junk experiments that don't benefit patients and have repeatedly violated federal animal welfare guidelines.

COVID-19 restrictions have brought animal experiments to a standstill, presenting an opportunity to let go of these archaic practices, save money, promote human-relevant science using non-animal models, spare sentient beings unimaginable suffering, and prevent university employees from having to cope with harsh budgetary measures.

You can contact us directly at KatiB@peta.org or AlkaC@peta.org. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,



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