



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

August 31, 2020

Elaine M. Howle, CPA
California State Auditor
621 Capitol Mall, Suite 1200
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Via e-mail: elaineh@auditor.ca.gov

Dear Auditor Howle,

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. **Based on the information below, we request that your office audit the performance of the University of California (UC) Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco regarding the apparent waste of state resources allocated to support animal research activities.**

In FY 2019, these universities received more than \$428 million¹ in state appropriations, part of which may have been used to support animal experimentation activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco issued directives that likely led to the destruction of hundreds of animals they deemed extraneous, noncritical, or "non-essential"² or described using similar terminology:

- UC-Berkeley implemented a plan "to ramp down, curtail, or postpone, animal research experiments."³
- UC-Davis urged its experimenters to "ramp down all noncritical on-campus research activities,"⁴ and defined "critical research" in part as the "[m]aintenance of critical animal populations."⁵

¹University of California. (n.d.). *Annual financial report 18/19*.

<https://finreports.universityofcalifornia.edu/index.php?file=18-19/pdf/fullreport-1819.pdf>.

²University of California-San Diego. (2020, March 18). *COVID-19: Continuity of research*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200318202601/https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/COVID-19-research.html>. The original source of this information is now password-protected (<https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/COVID-19-research.html#Animal-Research>).

³University of California-Berkeley. (2020, April 22). *COVID-19 Research operations & continuity planning*. <https://vcresearch.berkeley.edu/research-continuity-planning-covid-19>

⁴University of California-Davis. (2020, March 17). *Campus guidance on reducing on-campus research activities due to COVID-19 (March 17, 2020)*.

<https://research.ucdavis.edu/campus-guidance-on-reducing-on-campus-research-activities-due-to-covid-19-2/>

⁵University of California-Davis. (2020, March 17). *Classification of critical research*. <https://research.ucdavis.edu/definition-of-critical-research/>

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- UC-Los Angeles requested its experimenters "to ramp down or terminate research."⁶
- UC-San Diego urged its experimenters to "[c]onsider culling non-essential animals."⁷
- UC-San Francisco informed its experimenters "[i]n mouse facilities, breeding should be reduced to the minimum possible; no increases in cage counts will be permitted and all researchers should plan for additional reductions of cage counts in the future."⁸

That activities supporting unnecessary, nonessential, "noncritical," or extraneous animal experimentation are taking place at UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco at an apparent annual cost of millions of dollars, some of which may have been funded by the state, is the height of absurdity and wastefulness, and it is well within the mandate of your office to investigate this matter and rectify it.

We respectfully urge that your office investigate and assess the following information as it relates to the apparent waste of state funds by UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco on activities supporting experiments—and/or on the animals used in them—that the schools deemed extraneous during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 1) Any and all state-funded activities supporting animal experiments that UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco suspended and/or ended in accordance with its response to COVID-19, such that the experiments may be categorized as unnecessary, extraneous, noncritical, or nonessential or described using similar terminology
- 2) The number and species of any and all animals used in state-funded research activities at UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco covered by item number 1 above
- 3) The number and species of any and all animals used in state-funded experiments who are categorized by UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco as unnecessary, extraneous, noncritical, or nonessential or described using similar terminology
- 4) The endpoint disposition (to include—but not be limited to—euthanasia, cull, sacrifice, killing, destruction, disposal, and/or reduction in cage census) of any and all animals used in state-funded experiments at UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco covered by item number 1 above

⁶University of California-Los Angeles. (n.d.). *Animal Research Committee (ARC)*. <https://rsawa.research.ucla.edu/arc/>

⁷University of California-San Diego. (2020, March 18). *COVID-19: Continuity of research*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200318202601/https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/COVID-19-research.html>. The original source of this information is now password-protected (<https://blink.ucsd.edu/research/COVID-19-research.html#Animal-Research>).

⁸University of California-San Francisco. (2020, March 15). *Directive to UCSF researchers to cease research activities*. <https://research.ucsf.edu/important-directive-ucsf-researchers-cease-research-activities>

- 5) The endpoint disposition (to include—but not be limited to—euthanasia, cull, sacrifice, killing, destruction, disposal, and/or reduction in cage census) of any and all animals at UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco used in experiments receiving state funds who are themselves covered by item number 3 above
- 6) State funds used to support experiments at UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco covered by item number 1 above, to include—but not be limited to—the purchase, breeding, housing, feeding, maintenance, and/or veterinary care of any and all animals used in these experiments, and/or the payment of salaries and/or wages of personnel who attended to any and all animals used in these experiments
- 7) State funds used to purchase, breed, house, feed, maintain, or administer veterinary care to any and all animals—or pay the salaries and/or wages of personnel who attended to them—at UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco covered by item number 3 above

Furthermore, the decision by UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco to keep purchasing, breeding, housing, feeding, and maintaining animals to be used in state-funded research activities—where the experiments or animals themselves are deemed unnecessary, nonessential, noncritical, or extraneous or described using similar terminology—is at odds with the U.S. Public Health Service's *Guide for the Care and Use of Animals*, which includes the principle of "consideration of alternatives (in vitro systems, computer simulations, and/or mathematical models) to reduce or replace the use of animals,"⁹ and with the *U.S. Government Principles for the Utilization and Care of Vertebrate Animals Used in Testing, Research, and Training* (1985), which state, "The animals selected for a procedure should be of an appropriate species and quality and the minimum number required to obtain valid results."¹⁰

When UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco buy, breed, trap, and/or use animals who at any time—not just during the COVID-19 pandemic—can be deemed unnecessary, extraneous, nonessential, or noncritical or described using similar terminology, they are squandering limited public resources and flouting the bedrock "3Rs" principles of reducing, replacing, and refining the use of animals in experimentation that are enshrined in government regulations and policies.

Moreover, the Congressional Research Service has found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, "[s]uspending research may result in additional costs for activities such as animal care," and "[r]estarting research, when conditions permit, may also incur costs

⁹National Research Council (U.S.) Committee for the Update of the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. (2011). *Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals*. 8th edition. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/guide-for-the-care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals.pdf>.

¹⁰National Research Council (U.S.) Committee for the Update of the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. (2011). *Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals. Appendix B: U.S. government principles for the utilization and care of vertebrate animals used in testing, research, and training*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK54048/>.

for staff time and supplies to ... reestablish laboratory animal populations."¹¹ California taxpayers should not be responsible for incurring additional costs to re-establish research activities involving animals, since UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco deemed many of them not to be essential to the experiments and because resuming these activities and repopulating animals in laboratories at taxpayers' expense would appear to violate federal regulations and policies that mandate the minimization of animal use in experiments.

Based on this information, we urge your office to assess the use of public money, personnel, property, equipment, and space by UC-Berkeley, UC-Davis, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, and UC-San Francisco for activities supporting experiments on animals that they deem unnecessary, extraneous, nonessential, or "noncritical" or describe using similar terminology. If wastefulness is corroborated, we request that you take all corrective actions to ensure that current state-funded research activities involving such animals are permanently terminated, that new state-funded research activities that include such animals are no longer approved, and that the breeding and acquisition of such animals for state-funded research activities are prohibited.

You can contact me at ShalinG@peta.org. We look forward to your reply regarding this important matter. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



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¹¹Congressional Research Service. (2020, April 10). *Effects of COVID-19 on the federal research and development enterprise*. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46309>.