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Board of Regents
University of Washington
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PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

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The University of Washington (UW) is at risk of repeating a familiar and dangerous pattern: responding to institutional failure not with accountability and reform, but with opacity, image management, and rebranding. Given the information detailed below, we ask the Board to clarify whether UW's rebranding of its primate center reflects a decision to end experiments on monkeys, or whether it is intended solely as a change in name while existing practices continue.

In mid-July 2025—just weeks after a catastrophic failure at UW's Arizona primate breeding facility—Washington National Primate Research Center (WaNPRC) senior leadership and scientists convened a meeting devoted to reputational risk, funding vulnerability, political strategy, alignment with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and accelerating efforts to [remove the word “primate” from the center’s name](#). The meeting notes, obtained through a public records request, were exhaustive in their attention to optics, funding risk, and reputational strategy, signaling what leadership chose to prioritize in the immediate aftermath of a serious failure at their federally funded breeding facility that has been continuously plagued by uncontrolled infections, staffing shortages and infant mortality. This latest failure occurred in late June 2025, when staff removed a newborn macaque from their mother's arms, failed to recognize the infant was alive, put them in a plastic biohazard bag, and placed them in a cooler.

On January 12, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued a critical violation to UW stemming from the June 2025 incident. This was [posted](#) on UW's Office of Animal Welfare website on February 11, 2026. Two days later, on February 13, 2026, UW's Office of Research began rebranding WaNPRC as the Washington National Biomedical Research Center (WaNBRC), eliminating the word “primate.”

The slow pace of regulatory oversight, buried reports, and a new name do not alter reality. The failures that led to a newborn macaque being bagged and tossed, alive, into a cooler occurred in real time, to a real animal, under a research model that has remained unchanged at UW for more than six decades. A genuine transition away from primate experimentation toward state of the art, human-relevant science would be leadership. Rebranding without that transition is not.

That distinction now matters. With NIH already engaging Oregon Health & Science University to transition its primate center into a sanctuary, UW's rebranding will be judged by whether it is followed by real change.

Sincerely,

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