PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Washington
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

March 12, 2026

Dr. Elizabeth R. Cantwell
President
Washington State University

Dr. Dori Borjesson
Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
Washington State University

Dr. Kelly Farnsworth
Professor of Equine Surgery
Washington State University

Dr. Nina Woodford
Director and Attending Veterinarian
Office of the Campus Veterinarian
Washington State University

Via e-mail: president@wsu.edu, dori.borjesson@wsu.edu;
farns005@wsu.edu; nwoodford@wsu.edu

Dear President Cantwell, Dean Borjesson, Dr. Farnsworth, Dr. Woodford:

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10.4 million members and supporters worldwide. **We join the compassionate veterinary group Our Honor,[1] along with strong objections of alumni and veterinarians, in urgently requesting that the Washington State University (WSU) College of Veterinary Medicine: 1) rescind its reported upcoming plans to use and subsequently kill eight healthy horses and 60 goats in your Junior Surgery laboratory,[2] and 2) release these animals to the verified sanctuaries and alternative placements that are ready to provide them with a peaceful retirement. Triple J Horse Haven in Apple Valley, CA, has reportedly offered to take the horses, and grazing placements are available for the goats.[3]**

[1] Heath, C. (2026, March 6). *Veterinarians, alumi and students call on WSU College of Veterinary Medicine to spare the lives of 8 horses and 60 goats*. Our Honor. https://www.ourhonor.org/blognew/wsu.
[2] EIN Presswire. (2026, March 6). *WSU veterinary school defends horse & goat killing labs amid student concerns* [Press release]. AP News. https://apnews.com/press-release/ein-presswire-newsmatics/wsu-veterinary-school-defends-horse-goat-killing-labs-amid-student-concerns-fb4ac7132fbc1c8978c1b1ae266e49b2.
[3] *Ibid.*

Entities:
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

We understand that these eight horses, apparently transferred from a U.S. Department of Agriculture experimentation program, are healthy and were never destined for slaughter prior to their acquisition by WSU. This contradicts the fundamental premise of the university's approved protocol, which purportedly limits the Junior Surgery laboratory to animals already slated for slaughter. This discrepancy raises serious ethical and compliance concerns regarding whether the WSU's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee was provided with accurate, complete information when it approved the terminal use of these adoptable animals.[4]

Subjecting these animals to invasive, terminal abdominal surgeries—procedures such as enterotomies, which are typically reserved for highly trained equine specialists—is not only cruel but entirely unnecessary for modern veterinary education.[5] A growing body of literature and the evolving standards of veterinary pedagogy demonstrate that terminal animal laboratories are scientifically and educationally obsolete. Veterinary schools across the country have successfully transitioned to humane, non-terminal training methods that better prepare students for clinical practice without costing animal lives.[6]

Effective humane training methods are available and empirically validated. For example, high-fidelity surgical simulators—such as the SynDaver equine and caprine models,[7,8,9] or specialized veterinary haptic training systems—allow students to practice complex surgical maneuvers, tissue handling, and suturing repeatedly until mastery is achieved, a pedagogical advantage impossible in single-use terminal labs.

Furthermore, clinical-based surgical training programs—where students perform necessary, beneficial procedures on real patients under the supervision of board-certified surgeons—provide superior real-world experience. Research consistently shows that students trained via ethical clinical rotations and high-fidelity simulators perform as well as, or better than, their peers trained in terminal animal laboratories, while also developing a stronger ethical foundation for veterinary practice.[10]

There is no educational justification for killing healthy, adoptable animals when effective and ethical teaching methods exist, and when sanctuaries are actively waiting to take animals in. You

---

[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Zemanova, M. A., & Knight, A. (2021). The Educational Efficacy of Humane Teaching Methods: A Systematic Review of the Evidence. *Animals*, *11*(1), 114. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11010114.
[7] Williamson JA, Dascanio JJ, Christmann U, Johnson JW, Rohleder B, Titus L. Development and Validation of a Model for Training Equine Phlebotomy and Intramuscular Injection Skills. J Vet Med Educ. 2016 Fall;43(3):235-42. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27075276/
[8] Grimes JA, Wallace ML, Schmiedt CW, Parks AH. Evaluation of surgical models for training veterinary students to perform enterotomies. Vet Surg. 2019 Aug;48(6):985-996. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31099106/.
[9] Gibbons P, Devine E, Dutton D, Pulliam T, Anderson S, Hunt J. Development and validation of an ovine cesarean surgery model and rubric. *Clin Theriogenol*. 2022: *14*(4), 348-355. https://doi.org/10.58292/ct.v14i4.9170.
[10] Fawcett A, Hazel S, Collins T, Degeling C, Fisher AD, Freire R, Hazel S, Hood J, Johnson J, Lloyd J, Phillips C, Stafford K, Tzioumis V, McGreevy P. Australian and New Zealand veterinary students' opinions on animal welfare and ethical issues concerning animal use within sport, recreation, and display. *J Vet Med Edu*. 2019: 46(2), 264–272. https://doi.org/10.3138/jvme.0717-086r.

have the power to make a compassionate, scientifically sound decision today. We urge you to cancel these terminal procedures, release the eight horses and 60 goats to the awaiting sanctuaries, and permanently transition the Junior Surgery laboratory to humane, non-animal teaching methods.

You can contact me at MaggieW@peta.org. Thank you for your time and consideration, and we look forward to the possibility of working closely with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Maggie Wiśniewska, Ph.D.
Science Policy Advisor - International Laboratory Methods Division
Laboratory Investigations Department