

# IACUC Policy on Reporting Concerns about the Use of Laboratory Animals

The following information is provided to University of South Carolina investigators, technicians, and students who work with or handle laboratory animals.

The University recognizes that the use of animals for teaching and research is fundamental to advances in biology and medicine. The momentum of discovery in the medical, biological and behavioral sciences has steadily increased and the application of this knowledge has brought incalculable benefits to society. Laboratory animals have played an indispensable role in these advances, and for the foreseeable future will continue to be essential to the success of our research and training programs.

The University accepts an ethical and scientific responsibility to provide humanely for the welfare of all animals used in education and research at USC. The University recognizes that the public has a concern for the welfare and well-being of the animals. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) has oversight over the care and use of animals at the University.

Under the Animal Welfare Act, the IACUC is given the function of reviewing and investigating concerns involving animal care resulting from complaints by University personnel or the public. The IACUC is obligated to assess the validity of the concerns and to respond in an appropriate manner to claims of disregard for the welfare of laboratory animals. Any misuse of laboratory animals whether intentional or unwitting, will be addressed.

The IACUC is given responsibility for handling charges of animal misuse in an expedient, just, and appropriate manner, with regard for the protection of both the person(s) being accused and the person(s) submitting the allegations.

## Reporting Procedure

Any faculty member, student, staff member, or other individual who feels that animal misuse may have occurred has an obligation to report their concern to the veterinarian in charge of USC's animal facilities. Alternatively, reports should be made to the chairman or some other member of the USC IACUC. Concerns may be reported in writing and signed (preferred by IACUC) or by an anonymous tip. Persons may informally consult with the veterinarian, chairman, or a committee member prior to initiation of a formal report.

The Office of Research Integrity (ORI), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), has issued guidance on protection of persons reporting animal misuse. The USC IACUC will protect any person that makes good faith allegations of animal misuse to appropriate institutional authorities. In addition, the Public Health Service (PHS) Act Part 493(e) mandates "the protection of informers for (1) good faith allegations of an inadequate institutional response to scientific misconduct allegations and (2) good faith

cooperation with investigations of such allegations". Once an allegation has been made, the USC IACUC will act in a manner which protects the reputation and well-being of both the accused and the accuser.

Persons making wrongful allegations of animal misuse with malicious or vengeful intent, or persons taking wrongful action against the accuser because they have reported suspected misuse are subject to disciplinary actions by the University.

## Investigation of Concerns:

