

## **St. John Fisher College IACUC ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY**

St. John Fisher College is committed to providing humane treatment and care for all of its animals, and to compliance with the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act and other applicable federal and state regulations. In its animal programs, the College is guided by the policies and principles set forth in the "Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. The College has appointed an institutional official to ensure that these commitments are carried out.

The body with primary responsibility for establishing animal care policies and overseeing work with live vertebrate animals at St. John Fisher College is the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The IACUC has the authority to review, approve, reject, or terminate any or all procedures and studies involving use of live vertebrate animals.

The Institutional Officer, currently the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, appoints the IACUC annually. The term of appointment for all voting members of the IACUC shall begin on September 1, or as otherwise specified in the letter of appointment, and shall expire the following August 31. Members are chosen following the guidelines set forth in the "Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," and the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. All members are required to complete and maintain the on-line CITI training while serving on the committee.

The IACUC meets semi-annually and at other times as needed. The functions of the committee include:

- reviewing annually the College's program for humane care and use of animals and inspecting semi-annually all of the College's animal facilities
- bringing about any changes in procedures or facilities necessary to rectify deficiencies found during reviews
- reviewing any concerns involving the care and use of animals at the College
- making recommendations to the pertinent College official(s) regarding the animal program, animal facilities, or training for those involved with handling animals
- reviewing the use of animals in course laboratory programs
- reviewing all research projects at the College that involve the use of vertebrate animals, either to approve them, approve them with requested modifications, or withhold approval
- reviewing all proposed significant changes regarding the use of animals in ongoing research projects, either to approve them, approve them with requested modifications, or withhold approval
- suspending an ongoing research project involving animals that is not in accord with rules set forth by the NIH
- A full committee following guidelines established by the "Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals," and the *Guide for the Care and Use*

*of Laboratory Animals* is established and can be contacted via email at [IACUCcommittee@sjfc.edu](mailto:IACUCcommittee@sjfc.edu).

All research using live vertebrate animals conducted under the auspices of the College must be submitted to the IACUC for approval. A form has been created for this use. There are two methods of protocol review:

- Full Committee Review – A convened meeting of a quorum of the IACUC can approve, request modifications of, or disapprove the proposed protocol by a simple majority vote.
- Designated Member Review – To utilize Designated Member Review, each IACUC member is provided with an abstract of the research proposal and has the opportunity to request Full Committee Review. If no member requests Full Committee Review, the committee chair designates a member of the committee to review the proposal or asks for approval from the committee to be the designated reviewer. The designated reviewer may approve or request modifications in the proposal, or may request Full Committee Review. A Designated Member may *not* disapprove a proposal. The designated reviewer will keep the rest of the committee apprised of any changes that are made to the proposal.

No committee member may participate in the review process of a project in which he/ she has a conflict of interest, except to provide information to the committee.

Animal research protocols must be submitted to the IACUC at least two weeks in advance of a scheduled meeting to be guaranteed a place on the agenda or Animal research protocols must be submitted to the IACUC at least two weeks before the intended protocol will begin to ensure there is enough time for complete review and/or modifications to be made. All faculty/staff/students conducting the research must complete the on-line CITI training prior to approval.

There are three possible outcomes to the review of a research proposal:

- Approval – A protocol that has been approved by the IACUC requires no further action by the investigator before the research may commence.
- Conditional Approval/Request for Modifications - The IACUC may request revisions to a proposal. The investigator will receive written details describing what additional information is required and the revised protocol will be reviewed an additional time with the possibility of approval if all modifications have been addressed, or sent back until all additional modifications have been addressed.
- Negative Decision – A protocol that has been disapproved by the IACUC may not be initiated. The investigator will receive written details describing the reasons for denial of approval, and will be given an opportunity to make alterations to their proposed study/methodologies in an effort to have their submission approved. An investigator may also challenge the findings of the committee, however unless the committee is satisfied with the proposal, the research may not be conducted.

**The investigator is required to wait for approval from the IACUC prior to initiation of the research study.**

If a protocol is approved, the PI/course instructor will receive an approval letter and/or email from the chair of the IACUC. The Chair of the IACUC will also request their signature and supply them with a copy of the approved and signed protocol form.

The IACUC has the right to temporarily or permanently suspend any research/teaching project/independent student research project that violates best practices in terms of how animals are cared for and used. In each room where animals are housed or used, there exists a card that a student or a worker can fill out to report abuse of animals. This card is submitted to the IACUC chair who will then bring it to the attention of the committee. After reviewing the complaint, the committee will decide upon a suitable course of action. The PI/course instructor involved will be informed, in writing, of the decision of the committee and will be given an opportunity to respond or make suitable changes. If necessary, the IACUC will then suspend the work with the animals until acceptable changes have been made. The PI/course instructor will provide, in writing, how they have made these changes and the IACUC will decide if the changes are acceptable. The IACUC may wish to visit the animal facilities to confirm compliance. If the IACUC determines that adequate changes have been made, it can reinstate the research program.

Per federal regulations, animal research protocols may be approved for a maximum of three years. At the end of the three-year approval, a de novo protocol application must be submitted to the IACUC for review. However, in order to assure compliance with all government requirements and to inform the IACUC of the current status of the project, each protocol must also be reviewed annually. A continuing review form should be used for this purpose, and should be completed 2 weeks before your anniversary approval date. This form will be distributed by the IACUC approximately 30 days before their anniversary date.

Other than the initial application, the annual continuing reviews, and the de novo protocol review after three years, there are a few other circumstances under which the investigator must submit further documentation to the IACUC. These include

- An adverse event which is related to study procedures
- A change to the described study procedures
- A change in research staff, or
- Termination of the study.

The IACUC will notify the PI/course instructor 30 days before the end of their protocol to ensure they have ample time to resubmit in order to continue their research. If they don't resubmit in the needed time frame, their research must stop until they have a new approved protocol.

Since the animal facilities on campus reside within the Biology department, the chair of the IACUC will keep the chair of Biology informed of any significant occurrences within the animal facilities.

## **PROGRAM OF VETERINARY CARE**

### **Animal Procurement and Transportation**

All animals are acquired from approved commercial vendors. Animals are acquired in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. No quarantine testing is done on these animals. Animals enter the facility in an “all in, all out” management technique. All animals are evaluated by animal care staff within 24 hours of arrival. An animal care technician enters the animal room at least once daily to perform husbandry duties. This animal care technician is trained to recognize and report signs of animal morbidity. Any cases of naturally occurring disease or death after arrival are evaluated by veterinary staff. Sick animals are isolated or euthanized following veterinary instructions. Because animals are not housed at the facility long-term, no sentinel or preventive health program is necessary.

Animals are transported to the institution by the vendor. Within the institution, animals may be transported from the housing room to a laboratory as necessary. Animals may be transported in their cage unit on a transport cart or in an approved carrier.

A licensed veterinarian with experience in laboratory animal medicine is available for consultation or examination of animals at all times. Any diagnostics or treatments are performed under the supervision and at the direction of this veterinarian. All observations, diagnostic tests, treatments and communications with investigators are recorded.

### **Surgery**

No surgery on animals is performed at this institution. Protocols that may be approved in the future will conform with requirements set forth in *The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*.

## **Pain, Distress, Analgesia and Anesthesia**

Pain and distress levels are assigned to animals in the protocol based on the procedures that the animals will undergo. Each animal is placed in the category that represents the most pain/distress that will be experienced. This is determined by the PI and reviewed by the IACUC. The categories are based on those suggested by the USDA:

- *Category C: animals that experience minimal pain, discomfort, or distress (eg needle stick)*
- *Category D: animals that may experience pain, discomfort, or distress but will be administered appropriate anesthetic, analgesic, or tranquilizing drugs to alleviate these effects*
- *Category E: animals will experience pain, discomfort, or distress for which anesthetics, analgesics, or tranquilizing drugs would customarily be given but will be not administered because their use would adversely affect the interpretation of experimental results or interpretation. Scientific justification is required.*

The pain/distress category, as initially indicated by the PI in the IACUC proposal, is critically evaluated during protocol review with special attention given to the investigator's answers to questions about potential pain or distress, measures taken to avoid or minimize pain or distress, and scientific justification for placing animals in Category E.

Animal care staff and all persons working with animals are trained to recognize pain and distress in the animals under their care and have a procedure for reporting their concerns. The PI or the Attending Veterinarian follows up on all concerns and documents any treatment plans. Animals are monitored for pain and distress and are provided supportive care or euthanized when they have met the clinical endpoints described in the protocol or when recommended by the Attending Veterinarian.

The IACUC protocol guides the PI through steps ensuring unnecessary pain and distress are avoided. The IACUC and the Attending Veterinarian place emphasis on evaluating alternatives to and justification for procedures involving pain and distress, procedures likely to cause pain, distress or impairment, and clinical endpoints for providing animal care. Unless it is scientifically justified, the IACUC requires that any animal exhibiting significant weight loss (>10%), inability to ambulate, inability to maintain food or water intake, and clinical signs of pain, including ruffled fur, hunched posture, vocalization, and guarding behavior, be removed from the study, euthanized, or provided with supportive care at the direction of the Attending Veterinarian.

The Attending Veterinarian assists in evaluation of anesthetic and analgesic administration as necessary. The IACUC requires as part of the review/approval process that the PI describes clinical indications for administration of analgesics or implementation of non-pharmacologic techniques (such as moist chow for rodents).

## **Euthanasia**

The IACUC requires the PI to provide for dispensation of animals at the completion of the study in the protocol. If euthanasia is required, all euthanasia methods comply with the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia. Euthanasia is conducted humanely by properly trained personnel. Any exceptions require scientific justification and must be approved by the IACUC. All personnel involved in euthanizing animals are provided training prior to performing euthanasia unsupervised.

## **Drug Storage and Control**

No protocols require the use of controlled substances at this time. Drugs are discarded and not used if past the expiration date.