

Suggestions accepted after panel commended Brock on animal care

The University's Animal Care Services unit and Animal Care Committee (ACC) have issued an update on initiatives they undertook following an assessment of Brock's animal care and use program by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC).

The CCAC is a peer-review organization responsible for maintaining high standards of animal ethics and care in science throughout Canada. Its review panel visited Brock in November 2015, and delivered its report in early 2016. The review found no areas that did not meet CCAC standards, and commended Brock on five different aspects:

1. That the Animal Care Committee be commended for their dedication to the good protocol review process and the quality of their documentation.
2. That senior administration be commended for investments made to the new animal facility.
3. That senior administration be commended for their support of the Animal Care Committee and the animal use programs.
4. That the veterinarians be commended for their commitment to animal welfare.
5. That animal care staff be commended for their commitment to animal care and well-being.

The report also offered eight suggestions for improvement, which Animal Care Services and the ACC are using as the basis of an action plan. The recommendations and subsequent actions are:

1. That the ACC membership include faculty members from all required departments

It is thought this recommendation originated from a misunderstanding at the time of the assessment visit. Brock already includes faculty members from all departments involved in animal based science at the University, including a department that does not perform animal-based science. The ACC will continue to ensure every effort is made for succession planning for all members of the committee.

2. That the ACC's Terms of Reference (TOR) be updated to include a clearer definition of major and minor amendments

A revised TOR updates the terms "animal use and care" to "animal based science" and "animal care and ethics". In addition to the updating requested, the revision also corrects some typographical errors. The TOR was reviewed by the ACC, circulated to principal investigators and senior management, and forwarded to the CCAC prior to the July 29, 2016 action/response deadline. The revised TOR can be found at:

https://brocku.ca/webfm_send/41258

3. That the Animal Use Protocol (AUP) form include a section where researchers can justify the use of CO2 if it is the sole method of euthanasia

New AUP forms are in development. The ACC will ensure that euthanasia solely by carbon dioxide is justified, and will promote alternative and/or secondary methods of euthanasia. Educational resources have been made available to principal investigators and all members of the ACC.

4. That the annual renewal form include a section for animal number justification

The new AUP form will incorporate this section with improved clarity, and current annual renewal forms have been amended.

5. That the post-approval monitoring program (PAM) be re-evaluated to ensure efficient implementation

The PAM program was re-evaluated by a subcommittee composed of the two clinical veterinarians, two public interest representatives and the ACC Coordinator. It was understood from the CCAC visit that current activities in the post-approval time period may include more “post-approval monitoring” than is documented. Standard Operating Procedures were revised to reflect enhanced PAM scheduling, performance and documentation.

6. That a complete animal user training program, based on CCAC guidelines, be developed and implemented

A Complete Animal User Training program was designed in response to the CCAC’s 2012 assessment, and was approved by the CCAC. Proposed actions have been incorporated into a five-year plan for Animal Care Services, and discussions have begun with Human Resources regarding implementation.

7. That Brock University carefully review its allocation of veterinary resources to ensure comprehensive and effective service

Current and anticipated needs for veterinary resources have been discussed and are included in the five-year plan for Animal Care Services. Management of veterinary resources and succession planning will be addressed subsequent to completion of current personnel changes in the Office of Research Services.

8. That all areas of exposed wood surfaces be appropriately sealed or replaced.

The Comparative Bioscience Facility and Aquaterrium were inspected for any and all surfaces of a “porous” nature, with this recommendation being based on the decreased

ability to clean or disinfect “non-porous” surfaces. Action to remove/replace or seal surfaces has been undertaken, and ongoing vigilance will ensure continued compliance.