TAMUK Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP)

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) regards the use of animals in research and teaching to be an integral component of continued progress in science, education, and agriculture. TAMUK expects all of its animal facilities and programs to maintain the highest standards of animal care and use, and to be operated in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines.

Authority
The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) derive their authority from the law. The Health Research Extension Act (HREA) of 1985 and the Animal Welfare Act of 1966 mandate the existence of IACUCs. The laws require the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an organization to appoint the IACUC, whose responsibilities are delineated in the law as well as federal policy and regulations. The Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) considers the CEO to be the highest operating official of the organization. The President of Texas A&M University – Kingsville delegates authority to the Institutional Official (IO) to appoint and remove individuals to and from the IACUC on an annual basis.

The Associate Vice President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies shall serve as the IO. The IACUC reports to the IO. The Associate Vice President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, TAMUK’s IO, is given the administrative and operational authority to commit institutional resources to ensure compliance with the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR) and other requirements.

The IACUC’s mandate to perform semiannual program evaluations as a means of overseeing the animal care and use program puts the IACUC in an advisory role to the IO. In its semiannual reports the IACUC advises the IO of the status of the Institution’s compliance, establishes plans and schedules for correcting deficiencies necessary to either maintain or achieve compliance, and makes recommendation to the IO regarding any aspect of the Institution’s animal program, facilities, or personnel training.

The IACUC’s authority to review and approve protocols is independent of the IO, who may not overrule an IACUC decision to withhold approval of a protocol. If the IACUC approves a protocol, however, the Institution is not required or obligated to conduct the research activity. The Institution may also subject protocols to additional institutional review (e.g., department head, Biosafety committee, etc.).