

ANNUAL REPORT

Animal Care and Use Committee

**University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama**

Dr. Emily L. Kasl

Committee Chair

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Date submitted

Submitted to: Dr. Becky Smith
Chair, Shared Governance Executive Committee

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

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2024-2025

I. Executive Summary

The members of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for the 2024-2025 academic year were as follows:

Dr. Victoria Casson (Faculty at large, 2026) – Vice Chair
Dr. Brandon Fisher (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, non-voting)
Mr. Brian Ford (Staff, 2025)
Dr. Emily Kasl (Faculty w/experience in animal research, 2025) – Chair
Ms. Joy Kelly (Staff, 2025)
Mr. Patrick Shremshock (Faculty at large, 2025)
Dr. Hunter Waldman (Faculty in non-scientific area, 2026)

No change in the charge of the committee is recommended at this time.

II. The Committee's Charge (from the Shared Governance Document)

1. To review compliance with and administer the Public Health Service Policy on the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals
2. To examine the Public Health Service Policy on the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals annually for policy changes
3. To propose changes in university practices relating to laboratory animals
4. To oversee and enforce the University Animal Welfare Policy
5. To handle proposals the committee may make affecting university policy according to section C.2 "Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations"
6. To submit a final written report electronically by the first day of the fall semester to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost with a copy sent to the Chair of the SGEC

III. The Committee met on the following dates:

Business was conducted either through email or virtually (Microsoft Teams) when voting was necessary. On 2/17/25: the committee met virtually to review and approve a new application for animal research (Marvin). At this time, the committee also formally reviewed and voted to approve changes to the current IACUC policy, submission process and forms. On 4/14/25: the committee met virtually to review and approve two new applications for animal research (Million and Kasl).

IV. What were the Committee's actions and accomplishments this year relative to each of the items of the charge?

Charges 1-3: An in-depth review of the IACUC policies at UNA had not been conducted in some time. In accordance with Federal Guideline changes (instituted in 2022), the following changes were made:

- Instituting a 3-year approval/review period for proposals in keeping with Federal Guidelines. Researchers still have the option to request a 1-year proposal if desired.
- Requiring proof of completion of CITI Training for both committee members (Essentials for IACUC members) and applying researchers (Working with the IACUC, and animal-specific modules).
- Updating the wording for committee member designation to require a non-affiliated member.
- To streamline the application process, submission was moved from in-person/the Office of Grants and Research to a Canvas Course similar to what is used by IRB.
- The submission forms were revised to decrease redundancy in forms/reporting. There are now 3 forms – the protocol proposal form (for new proposals), protocol amendment form (for minor changes during a previously approved period), and the protocol termination form (for end of project reporting).
- UNA website updates were made to reflect these changes.

Charge 4: The committee reviewed and approved three research projects regarding vertebrate animals:

- Dr. Glenn Marvin's 1-year project focuses on how visual signals may hinder predatory behavior in Spotted Dusky Salamanders (*Desmognathus conanti*). These data will provide empirical data on whether prey movement can make camouflage from predators, something which has not been tested previously in amphibians. The vote was unanimous to approve the project, and the approval date was 2/17/25.
- Dr. Kara Million's 3-year project "Parasites and Male-Male Competition in Darters" will explore questions related to 1) the diversity of monogenean gill parasites of local darters and 2) the potential effects that parasites and intraspecific competition may have on these fish. Darters and their parasites are a relatively understudied system and the location of UNA in a diversity hotspot for these fish may provide new insight into their biology and ecology. The vote was unanimous to approve the project, and the approval date was 4/14/25.
- Dr. Emily Kasl's 3-year project focuses on surveying the diversity of endoparasites of freshwater fishes across Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi. The objectives are to quantify the types and distribution of parasites, which can provide insight into the biodiversity (and overall health) of these aquatic habitats. The vote was unanimous to approve the project, and the approval date was 4/14/25.

V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?

The committee recommends the formal addition of a designated committee member that fulfills the criteria of "not-otherwise affiliated with the university other than as a member of the IACUC" per the requirements per Federal Guidelines. Dr. Brandon Fisher fulfills that criteria currently.

VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish?

A. In the coming year?

Elect a new vice chair for IACUC for the 2025-2026 Academic Year; Dr. Victoria Casson served as vice chair and is scheduled to serve as chair.

Review research proposals that are submitted.

Inspect facilities of those projects that have been approved by the IACUC using form C.

B. In future years?

Continue to reassess UNA IACUC policy to confirm compliance with any Federal changes.

VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses?

The updates implemented this year will solve many previous issues with redundancy and lack of clarity for animal researchers proposing research. At this time, the committee believes weaknesses have been addressed sufficiently.

A. What can the Shared Governance Committee help you do to address the weaknesses?

The IACUC has no recommendations at this time.

VIII. Comments

None
