



DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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December 13, 2014

Andrew Winterborn
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Steven N. Liss
Vice-President Research
Office of the Vice-Principal (Research)
251 Richardson Hall
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
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Dear Dr. Winterborn and Dr. Liss,

We are writing on behalf of Queen's Animal Defence (QAD), a campus animal advocacy group, to propose that Queen's establish a retirement and adoption program for animals used in research and education at the University. The program would involve rehoming animals in sanctuaries or private homes, depending on their species and individual needs.

Institutions such as the University of Guelph have shown that a formal, ongoing retirement and adoption program is realizable. Moreover, this initiative is strongly supported by the Queen's community and the wider public. So far, we have garnered approximately 1500 signatures on our petition to set up a program that would spare animals from euthanasia and instead offer them a caring sanctuary retirement or family placement. Signatories include hundreds of Queen's students, faculty and employees (see enclosed). Dr. Will Kymlicka, Canada Research Chair in Political Philosophy, formally endorses our proposal.

During a meeting with Dr. Winterborn in January 2014, Dr. Zipporah Weisberg was advised that a policy that would support such an endeavour is in fact already in place. Dr. Winterborn invited Dr. Weisberg to prepare a proposal and submit it, and we welcome the opportunity to do so now. This proposal is based on extensive research of programs within Canada and elsewhere.

Members of QAD and members of the Queen's and Kingston community have become aware that countless animals used for biomedical research at Queen's University are routinely killed upon completion of research, or after being used for training and breeding purposes. We understand that, regrettably, the killing of animals is compliant with Canadian Council on Animal Care guidelines on animal research. However, we object to this practice and believe that animals used in research are entitled to live out their lives in safety and comfort in loving homes or sanctuaries whenever possible.

To this end, we are requesting that you implement a formal and ongoing retirement and sanctuary/adoption program. We have already secured an expression of interest from Kingston

Animal Rescue to partner in such a program to find adoptive homes for rats, mice, dogs, cats, guinea pigs and rabbits. Fauna Sanctuary has expressed interest in re-homing a limited number of monkeys from Queen's (with suitable support and depending on space availability). By working with organizations such as Kingston Animal Rescue, Fauna and others, the University can help develop an expanding network of placement options, including adoptive families and sanctuaries with species specific experience. This would be a critical step in ensuring the program's long term success for finding suitable homes, for dealing with high needs and traumatized animals and for accommodating all potential retirees.

Given the success of our petition, we are confident that members of the public will want to contribute financially, and in other ways, to this program. However, since the animals are used by the University, we believe that Queen's should undertake primary financial responsibility for the care of their retirees. In other words, we envision an ongoing partnership between the University, rescue organizations, and supportive members of the community in this endeavour.

There are a number of practical issues to consider:

1. The University, in cooperation with rescue organizations, would need to develop a transparent release protocol for assessing which animals can be released and rehomed, under what conditions. We recognize that the University will have liability concerns regarding release of animals, and that this will require some kind of legal waiver once the animal/s become the residents of individual homes or sanctuaries. We also understand that not all animals will be eligible for retirement, if their release would jeopardize their own health and safety, or the health and safety of humans or other animals. However, we do not support the practice at some universities of refusing to release animals that have visible scars or other visible signs of invasive procedures, simply out of fear of negative public perception. The goal of a retirement program is to offer lifetime care to all animals who can be cared for in a way consistent with the health and safety of all involved.
2. A process for predicting and supporting the best possible ongoing care would be required. To that end, the University would need to provide background health information for individual animals in the form of complete medical records - with only proprietary information redacted but with no information relevant to the animal's physical or psychosocial wellbeing redacted - and predictions (insofar as possible) concerning ongoing care requirements. Veterinary care is the single largest expense for rescue organizations, and so a successful retirement program will require ongoing support from the University in this area.
3. Rescue organizations will require time to gradually build up adoption home networks. As noted above, the retirement and adoption program would probably have to start small, and gradually build capacity. It is in the nature of rescue work that homes are not always available on short notice. This means that the program will need to build in a transition component whereby the University temporarily cares for animals while homes are being secured. It also entails that the program be publicly promoted in order to attract potential adopters and financial supporters.
4. The University will understandably be concerned about the quality of life and care that animals will receive in sanctuary and adoptive homes. This requires working with established and responsible rescue organizations, and implementation, by those organizations, of a rigorous screening process for potential adopters based, for example, on the University of Guelph's application procedures (see attached sample application forms from Guelph and KAR). In

addition to rigorous adoption protocols, the program will require an ongoing monitoring mechanism to reassure all parties that animals are well cared for, and to make adjustments to release and adoption protocols as necessary. Stringent guidelines as to what are considered suitable homes and sanctuaries must be developed in collaboration with existing leaders of sanctuaries of excellence, as well as rescue organizations and shelter managers.

These are preliminary considerations to take into account in advance of establishing an ongoing retirement and adoption program. We can build on the experience of the University of Guelph and other institutions with adoption programs. But we can and should aspire to do better by broadening and deepening the scope of the program.

As the success of our petition indicates, a retirement program would have wide support in the Queen's community, and would help to demonstrate that the University takes seriously its ethical responsibilities towards the animals it uses. Of course many people in Kingston and the Queen's community, including the members of QAD, believe that these animals should not be used for invasive research in the first place. Many alternatives to animal models are available that are more predictive of human response, and deliver faster results, and Queen's can become a world leader by actively pursuing the use of these alternatives. But as long as such research continues at Queen's, the University should ensure that the animals have the best life possible under the circumstances, and the chance for a comfortable life outside the lab upon completion of research. It's the least that we can do.

Thank you in advance for considering our proposal. We look forward to hearing from you. We would ask for your kind cooperation in providing a timely reply (preferably by mid-January 2015) so that we can update the hundreds of individuals who have signed our petition so far. Please note that hard copies of this proposal, and all attachments, including the petition, have been sent to the addressees.

Sincerely,

Zipporah Weisberg, Department of Philosophy
Sue Donaldson, Independent Researcher
Tracy Hamilton, MA student, Department of Philosophy

(on behalf of Queen's Animal Defence)

c.c.: Dr. Daniel R. Woolf, Principal and Vice-Chancellor
Dr. Alan Harrison, Provost and Vice-Principal
Dr. Will Kymlicka, KAR, Fauna Foundation

Appended to this report, please find:

1. Link to Ridgetown Campus Animal Adoption Centre

http://www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/services/animal_index.cfm

2. Links to University of Guelph adoption guidelines and adoption application form

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/research/acs/guidelines/GuidelineHTMLFiles/AdoptionGuidelinesForAnimals.shtml>

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/research/acs/guidelines/GuidelineHTMLFiles/adoptionForms.shtml>

3. Link to KAR adoption application

<http://www.kingstonanimalrescue.com/adoptionapplication>

4. Link to QAD online retirement program petition

<https://www.change.org/p/queen-s-university-establish-a-retirement-program-for-research-animals-at-queen-s-university>