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Contact Michael Budkie - 513-575-5517 (cell) saen@saenonline.org

Research Misconduct Rampant at Univ. of Rochester - Staff Falsified Records, Endangered Public Health; 100 Animals Abused, Live Animals Found in Morgue Freezer

ROCHESTER, NY – University of Rochester (UR) internal correspondence never expected to be made public has revealed animals negligently killed – living animals were even found in a "morgue freezer" – and federal animal cruelty laws broken, according to a national research watchdog group.

SAEN, an Ohio-based nonprofit that monitors U.S. research facilities for violations of law and animal abuse, said it has uncovered the deaths, abuse and research malfeasance – which probably involved 100 or more animals – in UR's letters to a federal funding agency that admit wrongdoing and negligence.

SAEN said animals were starved to death and killed through dehydration, living animals discovered in a "morgue cooler/freezer" and the university failed to provide adequate post surgical pain relief to 80 animals. Other correspondence detailed the intentional falsification of records, and an attempted cover-up of a research non-compliance and other unethical behavior.

The University of Rochester correspondence detailed multiple serious incidents including:

- * Dated 11/15/17 discloses the discovery of living animals in the UR "morgue cooler/freezer."
- * Dated 11/15/17 discloses the deaths of multiple animals by starvation/dehydration because animals "did not receive the necessary food or water."
- * Dated 3/22/17 discusses "...a serious issue of non-compliance concerning an instance of not following the analgesic therapy in the approved protocol, and the falsification of records regarding the analgesics administered."
- * Dated 3/16/16 discusses a major health/safety issue involving influenza virus: "It was discovered that an investigator administered an influenza virus to mice without providing the required two week notice required by the vivarium. This potentially exposed staff and other animals to the virus."

SAEN said it has contacted UR's President, Richard Feldman to insist on an independent investigation and the termination of staff responsible for the negligence and abuse. SAEN said that UR's research administration has failed to do its job in a rush to approve grants and bring in funding – the university acquired more than \$60 million in federal grants.

"This is shocking. And the reality is that University of Rochester has been more interested in attracting federal grant money than protecting public safety or keeping animals alive," said Michael A. Budkie, A.H.T., SAEN executive director and co-founder. He added that the incidents endangered the public health.

SAEN's correspondence to UR's President Feldman, which contains University of Rochester correspondence, is available at: <http://www.saenonline.org/media-University-of-Rochester-President-Letter-5-3-18.html>