As I have been the Vice Chancellor for Research for about one year, this seemed an opportune time to report to you on the activities of our office during the past year and on our plans for the future with regard to animal care and research. Animal research is one of my highest priorities as Vice Chancellor. I am absolutely determined to improve our service to you, the faculty.

The goals of our office are to support animal research at UCSF by providing humane, efficient, state-of-the-art care for animals used in research and, where appropriate, by assisting investigators in their research on animals. Our aim is to have one of the leading animal care and research services in the country, with first-rate facilities and staff. As you know, we have a long way to go to fulfill that aim. We have major challenges, some of which are nationwide, and some of which are specific to UCSF. The dramatic increase in the use of mice, the increasing cost of animal care and the increase in animal research regulation all pose significant difficulties for us. Nevertheless, we have begun a number of initiatives that we believe put us on the road toward that goal - initiatives that will result in better, more efficient, and cheaper service for our faculty both in the immediate future and in the years to come.

The most important action that we have taken is the appointment of Ara Tahmassian as Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Services. Ara is a superb manager and administrative leader who will be responsible for organizational and administrative oversight of animal care. Ara has already recruited a new veterinarian, and has been working to create a rational and accountable basis for the animal care costs that we charge. At the recommendation of the Committee on Animal Research, he has also established an Education and Compliance Program, and is recruiting a new person for that position.

We have several other changes in the leadership of the animal care program. Dr. John Taylor of the Department of Physiology and the Gladstone Institute is the new Chair of our Committee on Animal Research. In his short time as Chair, John has already made a very positive impact on our program. Dr. Michael Heymann served in this position with dedication and distinction for many years for which all animal users at UCSF owe him a debt of gratitude. Dr. Diane Ralston, who has been a radiant source of energy and inspiration in the service of animal research at UCSF, has also retired as the head of the Animal User Committee. I have recharged this committee to serve as the policy review committee for animal research at UCSF, and am pleased to say that Dr. Tony De Franco, of the Department of Microbiology, has agreed to serve as Chair.

With the new leadership, I have formed an Animal Care Working Group, consisting of myself, Ara Tahmassian, John Taylor, Tony De Franco, and Sharon Friend, who is responsible for the Committee on Animal Research. This group now meets regularly to address issues of overall policy, direction, and strategic planning.

To help us with these issues, I recently asked a nationally prominent group of veterinarians and faculty concerned with animal research to visit our program and to make recommendations for improvement. Dr. Richard Van Sluyters of the Department of Optometry, at UC, Berkeley chaired the Committee. The (Continued on page 3, see Hall)
The CAR (Committee on Animal Research) is UCSF’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The CAR is responsible for the oversight and evaluation of the University’s animal program, procedures, and facilities to ensure that they comply with federally mandated guidelines for the humane care of animals used in biomedical research. These activities come under the purview of the USDA, which periodically inspects UCSF’s animal facilities and programs; UCSF is also under the purview of OPRR. We are happy to find that the most recent USDA inspection report showed UCSF’s animal care program to be in excellent shape with notable improvements in many areas. We believe that this finding reflects an increasing awareness of animal care issues and procedures by UCSF faculty and staff.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the CAR is expanding its services in several areas to help UCSF investigators remain in compliance with research animal guidelines and regulations. Many of these services can be found on the CAR home page/Office of Research Administration web site that can be accessed through the UCSF internet. The latest versions of the animal protocol applications can be downloaded to individual computers and opened in Microsoft Word 6.0 or later versions. Recent news and information relevant to the applications, as well as application submission deadlines are also found on the CAR homepage. Several links to useful internet web sites are provided to assist with animal care and research issues. The resources on the CAR homepage will continue to expand and provide supplemental information on animal use procedures and regulations as they become available.

All animals used in research, teaching, or pharmaceutical testing at UCSF must be covered by a protocol that is approved by the CAR. There are approximately 700 animal protocol applications active at UCSF, and the CAR meets twice each month to review them as they come up for renewal. CAR members include UCSF faculty, a veterinarian, and public representatives. The heart of the CAR is a superb administrative group who helps to keep UCSF current with animal care regulations and guidelines, and who manages and maintains animal protocol records. To facilitate the protocol review process, applications are prescreened by CAR administrators and by UCSF’s veterinary staff to help investigators provide the appropriate information.

A protocol issue that has created some confusion is the requirement to provide a search for alternatives to the use of animals in research. Section F in the recently revised protocol application lists 5 questions that must be completed by the investigator. These questions are in response to Federal Animal Welfare Act regulations which state “the IACUC shall determine that the principal investigator has considered alternatives to procedures that may cause more than slight pain or distress to the animals, and has provided a written narrative of the methods and sources used to determine that alternatives were not available.” This regulation is aimed at reducing the number of animals required for a study, refining procedures to minimize animal pain and distress, and replacing animals in proposed studies whenever possible. The USDA has asked that all existing approved protocols, as well as all new and full renewal applications, be brought up to the same level of compliance on the alternatives issue before July 1, 1999. Therefore, all investigators who use animals have been sent a copy of the newly revised Section F to complete. Investigators are urged to contact the CAR office to clarify any confusion regarding these regulations to minimize unnecessary delays in the protocol review process.

In collaboration with the Laboratory Animal Resource Center, the CAR has undertaken new training initiatives. An animal use certification course has been established that is now required of all first-time animal users at UCSF to provide basic knowledge of guidelines and regulations; the course schedule is listed in the CAR internet homepage.

(Continued on page 4, see Taylor)
(Hall, Continued)

Committee has recently returned its report to us. Their report contains a very thoughtful and astute analysis of our program, with a number of important recommendations.

We will be discussing this report and examining these recommendations with groups of faculty and staff in the next few weeks. Based on the report and the discussions which will ensue, I have asked Ara Tahmassian to begin preparation of a long-term plan that will set a series of goals for our animal care and research program. I ask that you address any comments that you may have about it to Ara Tahmassian, C/O Irene Anicetti at Box #0942.

To help us through the period of implementation of changes as a result of the report, we have asked the Committee to continue in a consulting role. Dr. Roy Henrickson, who was a veterinarian at Berkeley for many years, and now is a consulting veterinarian to the VA Hospital and Genentech among others, has agreed to act as a liaison from the Committee to us.

One of the changes that we will be undertaking as a result of the report is the reorganization of our Animal Care Facility to bring it more in line with other national programs. We hope these changes will let us provide more efficient, more effective service. To indicate the new direction that we are taking we have renamed it the Laboratory Animal Resource Center (LARC); we feel that this new name more accurately reflects the goals of the department.

A major challenge in the months ahead will be to recruit a veterinarian who will direct the Center. This is an absolutely crucial position for our program. Although our attempt to recruit for this position last year was unsuccessful, we believe that we are now in a much stronger position to recruit successfully this year. One important asset will be the help of our visiting committee, both in identifying suitable candidates, and in informing them about our program. I am delighted that Dr. Charles Epstein of the Pediatrics Department has agreed to chair the Search Committee. The committee is now soliciting applications for the position. If you know of suitable candidates, please notify Charlie.

Finally, I want to tell you what we are doing to address the urgent need for more animal care space at UCSF. For the long-term, we have succeeded in accelerating the schedule for the Parnassus Service Building, which will have approximately 45,000 asf for animal care. We have recently received funds to begin planning of the building, whose construction is now scheduled to begin in 2001, with a completion date of 2003. We also have plans for animal care space at Mission Bay. The first two buildings will have approximately 12,000 asf for animal care, with possibilities for expansion in both cases. In addition, we are aware of the acute immediate need for space, and have been intensively investigating possible sources of help. We hope to have an announcement for you soon.

We are indeed aware of the extraordinary challenges in establishing a first-class animal care and research program at UCSF. We have by no means solved our problems, this will take several years, but we do believe we have begun the building process. I will give you periodic reports on our progress, and look forward to working with you on it.

LABORATORY ANIMAL RESOURCE CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

As Dr. Hall indicated in his message, the UCSF Laboratory Animal Resource Center (LARC) is moving forward into a new era. LARC is charged with the housing, care, and welfare of laboratory animals, as well as a being a resource center for the faculty. To achieve our goals, LARC will adhere to the principles set forth in its Mission Statement, which are to:

- Provide quality care for all animals used at the University of California, San Francisco.
- Assist the faculty in their mission of quality research with respect to the use of laboratory animals.
- Act as a resource center for the faculty on all issues relating to laboratory animals.
- Assist the University to meet its goal of humane treatment of laboratory animals.

We will fulfill our Mission in a time and cost-effective manner by developing and implementing high quality veterinary care.
Species-specific guidelines and training modules are being revised and developed to meet the needs of UCSF investigators. Health and safety programs for investigators and staff who work with animals are also being updated and expanded. In all of its activities, the CAR will remain committed to its support of the high standards of animal care in research at UCSF.

**Laboratory Animal Resource Center Launches Web Site**
(http://www.larc.ucsf.edu)

On May 1st the Laboratory Animal Resource Center (LARC) will launch its new web site. The site is full of useful information that will assist your daily research operations and serve as a valuable complement to the existing CAR website (http://www.ucsf.edu/ora/car/index.htm). Among the information available:

- Training courses offered by LARC, including class syllabi and schedules.
- Species specific data.
- Telephone and fax numbers so you can locate the appropriate person as needed.
- Links to other University Sites, Professional Societies, Regulatory Agencies, and more.
- Sentinel Program and serological test results.
- A search function, feedback page, site map and many other options to choose from.
- A description of the LARC Purchasing program and ordering procedures.
- A table of LARC recharge rates.

We want this site to meet your needs; use the LARC site in tandem with the CAR site to obtain important information on the protocol application process, training, compliance, and operational information.

Please contact us to let us know if there are any other topics you would like added to the LARC web page.