

Minutes

Dental Senate Meeting Tuesday, June 9, 2020

**11:30 am – 12:15 pm
Online Meeting**

Present: Eighteen members of the Dental Senate participated in this online meeting.

Meeting was called to order at 11:32 am.

Approval of Dental Senate Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2020

The minutes from the Dental Senate meeting that took place on May 12, 2020 were approved.

White Paper in Support of Animal Research

The Senate discussed a draft of a White Paper in Support of Animal Research brought to our attention by Dr. Emily L. Germain-Lee, the Chair of the Research Council of the School of Medicine with the request for comments and support. The white paper was precipitated by an announcement by the EPA stating that they will no longer fund “studies that involve testing on mammals by 2035”. In response to a request from Government Relations at UConn Health Dr. Germain-Lee is hoping to develop a statement for UConn emphasizing the importance of animal research for medical research. There is plenty of evidence that animal-based models are useful for developing cures for human disease and we need to take a stand against certain political pressures to obstruct meaningful use of animal research.

Comments included that certain items described in the draft should be worded more broadly and include the mentioning of benefits and limitations of animal research in absence of alternative methods that appeal to individuals who do not already work with animals in order to get buy-in from a broader faculty. Animal research is already heavily regulated and approved by IACUC only if other alternatives are exhausted. Input should also be obtained from non-animal users, clinicians and ethicists.

Dr. Lepowsky asked for clarification on what specifically the Senate is being asked to do. Dr. Reichenberger replied that the request is whether Dental School researchers will endorse the draft and offer additional comments, including revisions. The intent is to have a single uniform statement across the university and in conjunction with Jackson Labs. Distributing the draft to faculty at large is premature at this stage of the draft.

Dr. Lepowsky suggested that the Senate take a position and make a statement, noting that we support the continued use of animals in biomedical research when appropriate. The Senate acts as an advisory committee so it is more important to have consensus from

faculty in general with the Senate being the messenger. It is not critical to have a vote at this time.

Dr. Reichenberger will talk to Dr. Germain-Lee and prepare a summary of the comments and clarify the role of the SDM in this.

Miscellaneous Discussion

We are in the midst of electing a new student and resident representative for the Dental Senate. According to the current bylaws, we will then call for vote for a chairperson of the Senate. The new student and resident representatives will be eligible to vote for the new chairperson.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernst Reichenberger, PhD
Chair, Dental Senate