Welcome to the first edition of The ACU Sentinel! ACU Animal Science Worker, Tanya Spacek, ALAT, created the name for our new publication. Thanks Tanya for your creativity. The ACU Sentinel will be published quarterly and is intended to provide the KU research community with up-to-date and pertinent ACU information. This issue features important information about ACU personnel changes, equipment upgrades, and policy changes. I hope you find our newsletter helpful. I also welcome content suggestions for future editions.

I appreciate so many of you welcoming me to KU. Kansas now feels like home! I am honored to serve as University Attending Veterinarian and ACU Director. I wholeheartedly believe the ACU exists to advance the research and teaching missions of the University by providing, faculty, staff, and students training and support in the use of laboratory animals and by maintaining exemplary standards of animal care through effective resource management. In short, the ACU exists to serve you. We will endeavor to provide excellent service with each customer encounter. Feel free to tell me how we are doing.

Since my arrival, the ACU has implemented several changes. These changes have been deliberate and were instituted to further our mission—to serve you better. Over the past several months the ACU and KU Office of Research have invested over $100,000 in capital expenditures, including purchases of rodent caging and cage change station. These upgrades will help us better protect rodent colony health. In addition to having personnel staff the Unit between 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday, we have hired a clinical veterinarian, and promoted Heidi Lewis, RVT, ALAT to West Campus Supervisor. These personnel changes should increase our efficiency and ensure quality service delivery. We have also revised many ACU policies to ensure appropriate balance between animal welfare and investigator needs. New policy examples include the Mouse Cage Density Policy and species-specific enrichment standard operating procedures.

I hope these changes allow you to do your work better and positively impact animal welfare! Together, I am confident we can build and maintain a model Animal Care and Use Program.

Thanks again for taking the time to read this edition of The ACU Sentinel, and please contact me if I can be of assistance.

GREAT THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN THE ACU
Contributed by Dr. William A. Hill, Director - Animal Care Unit
NEED ANIMALS? 
THE ACU IMPLEMENTS NEW ANIMAL ORDERING PROCEDURES

Contributed by Laura Albin, Accounting Specialist - Animal Care Unit

On December 1, 2013, the ACU implemented a new animal procurement policy. This policy will help the ACU effectively manage our accounts receivable balance and allow us to continually provide excellent animal care to the KU research community. The policy is detailed below for your information.

- Investigators will receive monthly per diem invoices. The monthly invoices will be sent out by the 5th day of the following month.
- A notice will be included on the monthly statement for any balances that are 30 days past due. This will help investigators and accountants monitor the status of their respective accounts.
- If an account has a balance that is 60 days past due, then a notice will be sent to the investigator and the investigator’s department chair.
- When an account has a balance that is 90 days past due, a notice will be sent to the investigator, the investigator’s department chair, and the dean of the investigator’s department. Additionally, the ACU director will request a meeting with the investigator, the respective chair or dean, and the Institutional Official to outline a plan to resolve the outstanding debt.
- Investigators that have a balance that is over 120 days past due and who have not been able to identify a satisfactory payment plan after consultation with the appropriate personnel will not be permitted to place any further animal orders until all invoices 90 days and greater have been resolved.
- All investigators will now be required to provide an account or grant number when submitting an animal order. ACU personnel will verify that the provided account number can support the animal purchase cost and the cost of housing the animals for a minimum of 30 days per diem.

Our goal in the ACU is to provide excellent customer service with each customer encounter. If you have questions about the policy, please contact our office at 864-5587. Laura Albin, ACU Accounting Specialist, is available to answer your inquiries regarding invoice and payment concerns. We are here to serve you. Call on us.

LAURA HAS A NEW TITLE

Laura Albin, Administrative Associate Sr., has a new job title with the ACU. Although Laura’s duties will remain the same, her new job title is Accounting Specialist. Laura has been with the ACU since 2006 and is responsible for all the department’s accounting transactions and procurement of animals from approved vendors. She will remain in the front office to assist you with any questions that you might have.
The ACU has recently purchased four rodent cage change stations. Cage change stations are primary containment devices that provide product and some personnel protection. In other words, these devices will keep our mice “clean” and reduce personnel exposure to allergens from animal dander and bedding during cage changes. The purchase of change stations moves our Animal Care and Use Program forward as previously most animal and cage manipulations were performed on the open bench.

One of the new stations is already in use in the Malott Hall Animal Facility. Two stations will be placed at the Higuchi Facility. The fourth station will be used in the Malott Hall Quarantine Suite. Additional change stations will be purchased until each rodent room is outfitted. Research personnel performing cage manipulations in the animal room should use cage change stations where available.

Dr. Keith Anderson joined the ACU in December 2013, as Clinical Veterinarian. Keith grew up in Colorado and attended high school in Aurora. Keith is a graduate of Colorado State University where he received both a BS in Animal Science and the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. Following veterinary school, Dr. Anderson practiced companion animal medicine in Denver, Chicago, and Miami. After eight years in private practice, Keith decided to pursue a career in laboratory animal medicine. To prepare for his new career, Keith completed externships at the University of Illinois, Chicago and Emory University, Atlanta, GA. Dr. Anderson further served a two year residency in laboratory animal medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Anderson is excited to join the KU family and is ready to assist investigators to achieve their animal research goals. Welcome Keith!
ACU’S WEST CAMPUS FACILITY SUPERVISOR

Heidi Lewis joined the ACU in March 2011 as the ACU veterinary technician. She graduated with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Veterinary Technology from Maple Woods Community College. After a number of years in private practice, Heidi entered into the world of laboratory animals, earning her RALAT certification in February 2013. In January 2014, Heidi entered into the new position of West Campus Facility Supervisor. She enjoys providing assistance to the ACU team members she supervises, and also providing excellent customer service to KU Lawrence’s animal investigators. In addition to her ACU duties, Heidi also currently serves as a voting IACUC member.

ALLISON TAJCHMAN PROMOTED TO ACU FACILITY MANAGER

Allison Tajchman started at the ACU as an Animal Technician in January of 2005. She was promoted to Animal Husbandry Supervisor in 2007 and also became RALAT certified during this year. Allison has now been promoted to the Facility Manager position at the ACU this January. Her new position builds upon her supervisor role and will focus more on facility upkeep and workflow at all the ACU facilities. Allison grew up in Topeka, KS, and before working at the ACU she was a supervisor at a pet store for six years.

NEW RODENT HOUSING AND NEW CAGE MANIPULATION TECHNIQUE

Contributed by Allison Tajchman, Facility Manager - Animal Care Unit

In December 2013, the ACU discontinued all use of suspended rodent cages. Static microisolator caging is now the standard rodent housing used in ACU facilities. The hallmark cage design for rodents, microisolator cages provide a cage-level barrier between the cage interior and the external environment. The new cages, purchased from Alternative Design, Siloam Springs, AR, are composed of a plastic resin and consist of a solid bottom and a filter top lid. The filter top lid allows only the transfer of passive air and is suitable for catching most rodent pathogens and microorganisms. The new cages are an excellent addition to the KU Animal Care and Use Program and will help ensure the health of our rodent colonies by providing enhanced protection against cage to cage disease transmission thereby preventing costly disease outbreaks.

With the incorporation of microisolator caging, the ACU has also introduced a new technique for rodent cage manipulations. The new technique called “microisolator technique” or “aseptic cage technique” is intended to further reduce the likelihood of cage to cage disease transmission. Aseptic cage technique involves use of a broad spectrum
chlorine dioxide disinfectant, Clidox, to decontaminate surfaces, including hands, between cage manipulations. The guiding principal of the technique is “what’s inside the cage stays inside the cage, and what’s outside the cage stays outside the cage”. ACU husbandry personnel have already begun using the technique. Research personnel are also expected to use aseptic cage technique for any cage manipulations. Below is a pictorial description of the technique. Microisolator caging and use of aseptic cage technique, coupled with use of our new ACU cage change stations will provide an improved standard of care for KU rodent colonies. Let’s work together to maximize effectiveness.

**ASCEPTIC CAGE CHANGE TECHNIQUE**

A Step-by-Step Guide

1. Begin with a clean surface and clean gloved hands. To clean the work surface and hands, spray each with Clidox and use a paper towel to wipe off excess.

2. Place cage on the clean surface. Remove the lid and place the lid “inside up.”

3. Spray hands again with Clidox. Be sure to wipe excess Clidox before handling animals.
Turn “clean” wire bar sideways to allow for manipulation of animals; you can place the water bottle on the clean surface to prevent cage flooding.

Following animal manipulation, return the wire bar to proper orientation. Be sure to replace the water bottle if removed.

**THE GOLDEN RULE:**
WHAT’S CLEAN IS CLEAN AND WHAT’S DIRTY IS DIRTY.

Spray hands with Clidox and wipe off excess.

Place the cage lid back on the cage.

Clean the work surface, leaving it clean for the next user.
New Rodent Housing and New Cage Manipulation Technique (continued)

Between manipulations of an individual cage, for example removing the microisolator lid and removing the wire bar lid, spray hands with Clidox and wipe off excess. Remember the rule of aseptic cage technique, “what’s inside the cage stays inside the cage, and what’s outside the cage stays outside the cage.” Remembering this rule, will help you know when you need to disinfect or clean your hands.

Between manipulations of multiple cages, for example, performing procedures on animals in different cages, spray hands with Clidox and wipe off excess. Be sure to wipe off all excess Clidox from your hands before handling animals.