

## **ANIMAL ISSUES RESPONSE TEAM (AIRT)**

### **I. Scope**

AIRT advises the MU Administration on preventing and responding to animal protectionist attacks against MU personnel, facilities, and programs. The committee also initiates activities that serve to minimize the risk of an animal protectionist inspired attack against MU and coordinate MU's response in an event of such an attack.

### **II. Structure**

The committee consists of five to seven members with experience in media relations, law enforcement, animal welfare/rights issues, use of animals in science and agriculture, and the rules and regulations governing the care and use of animals. Members need to be respected by their peers and good spokespersons to facilitate interaction with the public.

### **III. Selection Process**

Most of the members are appointed by their positions. The General Counsel member is appointed by the Vice Provost for Research. The practicing scientist members are nominated by the Director of the Animal Care Quality Assurance Office and are appointed by the Vice Provost for Research. Practicing scientists must have had training in media interaction on animal issues through their professional associates or such training must be provided to them.

- Director of the Animal Care Quality Assurance Office (Committee Chair)
- Director of the Office of Animal Resources
- Chair of the Animal Care and Use Committee
- University Police
- University General Counsel
- MU News Bureau
- Practicing scientists who use animals (at least two)

### **IV. Terms**

Most of the members are appointed by their positions. Scientist members are the exceptions. Scientist members serve indefinite terms.

### **V. Chair Process/Terms**

The Director of the Animal Care Quality Assurance Office is the Chair. The Chair of the Animal Issues Response Team is responsible for ensuring that committee members are informed of animal protectionist activities locally and nationally in order that the AIRT may be prepared to respond if such activities should involve MU.

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## **VI. AIRT Committee Duties**

The hope is that the AIRT never will have to do anything except be prepared. Routinely, committee members keep each other apprised of threats of animal protectionist incursions by circulating information about animal protectionist activities throughout the U.S.

In the event of an attack, the Animal Issues Response Team would receive information from the University of Missouri-Columbia police blotter. All incident reporting is to be routed to the MU Police Department. In the event of an incident, the committee would determine whether to assemble to assess the facts related to the incident and determine what the MU approach will be to handle the attack. Each animal protectionist attack is unique and will determine what procedure the committee and MU administration should follow.

If it is necessary for press releases about protectionist attacks to be composed and released, then the AIRT should compose them, or at least approve them. On the other hand, it is expected that initial press releases are likely to occur in all cases and the AIRT will assure that information provided is factual and straightforward. From time to time, media training is to be provided by the MU News Bureau to AIRT members, and others, to enable them to competently deal with print and electronic news media representatives on MU's behalf. Personnel thus trained will be designated as animal issues spokespersons who should interact with the media if such an attack occurs. The MU administration should consult with the AIRT before making any statements. Subsequent actions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## **VII. First Meeting Materials**

None

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