

## **STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY RELEASE OF THE REPORT**

### **Christopher J. Keane**

Last fall Washington State University (WSU) leadership was made aware of concerns regarding the operation of our Bear, Research, Education, and Conservation Center.

In response, the Office of Research, in consultation with the Acting Dean of the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, initiated a review of both the operation of the bear center and the health and well-being of our bears. As a result of that preliminary review, the Office of the Provost launched a formal investigation into the matter, which was subsequently initiated in February of this year. Today, WSU is releasing the report of the investigation conducted by the Office of the Provost.

The university's first priority as it relates to the operation of our bear research program is to ensure we are following all recognized standards of animal practice and care. WSU has a long-standing accredited animal care and use program that has been peer reviewed by AAALAC-International (the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care) every 3 years since 1979, as well as undergoing unannounced annual reviews by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure compliance with the federally mandated Animal Welfare Act. AAALAC reviewed the WSU program last fall and informed the university full accreditation status will be granted shortly.

Following our preliminary review, both the director of the bear center and the director of the Office of the Campus Veterinarian were reassigned to other duties pending completion of the formal investigative process. Dr. Nina Woodford assumed the duties of the director of the Office of the Campus Veterinarian and Dr. Keith Blatner was appointed to oversee the bear center. In addition, oversight of the Bear Center has been strengthened, and additional operational staffing for the Bear Center is being put in place. The university is also enhancing support of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and research compliance generally as the university research program expands in scope and reach.

The university will also launch an external review of the animal care program within the next month. This review will address issues raised in both the preliminary and Provost's reports. This review, as well as the other measures listed above, are a component of a broader effort to strengthen all oversight and compliance as we expand our research and teaching enterprises for the benefit of human and animal health, the environment, and society.

The report of the Provost's Office formal investigation is posted online at <https://research.wsu.edu/centers-institutes-labs/>.

If you have any further questions regarding our animal research programs, please visit our website at <http://www.iacuc.wsu.edu/default.asp>.