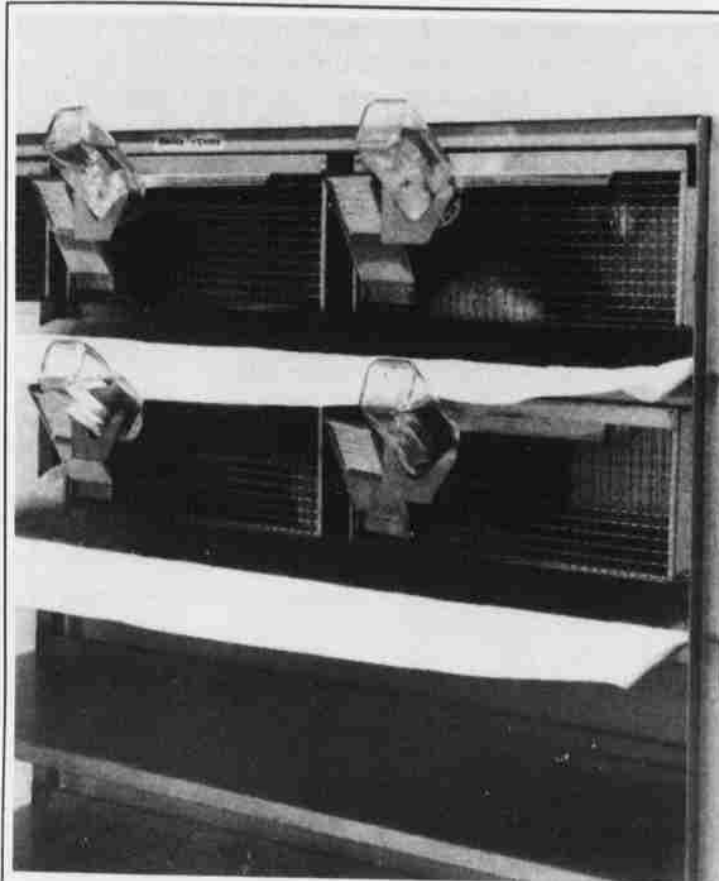




Vivisection at UNLV low key but still opposed

Research involving animal experimentation is controversial and complex



Yell Photo / Jennifer Elledge

Animal research - animals sit in cages at the Animal Research Facility waiting to be used in necessary experiments.

by Jennifer Elledge
Staff Reporter

It is the 1990's and being environmentally conscious is in. Recycling is in, vegetarianism is also in, and fur coats are out. People are joining together for several causes - one of which is animal rights. UNLV has an Animal Research Facility which is well aware of this.

The Animal Research Facility is located on the first floor of the Juanita Greer White Life Sciences building. Richard Simmonds is the director of both the facility here at UNLV and that at University of Nevada, Reno. Frances Taylor manages the UNLV lab.

Keith Dupre of UNLV's Biology department says, "The lab is pretty low key (compared to other universities' labs). It's not what people think. We don't have any primates or dogs here."

What they do have is an assortment of small animals. This includes the red-eyed, white-coated rats, mice, lizards, turtles,

desert tortoises, fish, and a variety of frogs and toads. These animals are used by the faculty for research and also serve as ex-

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amples in some biology and zoology classes.

There is a diversity of experiments being conducted. One project involves desert pup fish and the study of its reproductive system in hope of promoting reproduction. Another, done with frogs and toads observes the drinking habits and thermal regulation of these animals. Research is also being done on the desert tortoise to prevent any further decline in its population.

Dupre, Taylor and Simmonds realize there are those who do not approve of the experiments conducted. An organization called PAVE (People Against Vivisection Experiments) is one such group in Las Vegas. The president of PAVE is Veronica McPhelan. This organization opposes vivisection experiments of any kind.

McPhelan says, "We do not espouse animal rights. We oppose vivisection because we know it is counter-productive and therefore harmful to mankind." She went on to say, "We are not against research and development - we only oppose the fraud and exploitation of animal research."

Simmonds, on the other hand, views the use of animals in research as "the most ethical" use of them. He believes this because they are utilized to gather infor-

mation which may benefit the lives of other animals as well as humans. He illustrated this by saying that research, unlike pet ownership or eating meat, has a value to many, which can be long-lasting and beneficial to society.

McPhelan does not agree. She believes that animal experimentation has become just a habit of the medical and biological communities. McPhelan explained that she and her group approach the topic of vivisection from a "scientific viewpoint."

McPhelan and others who would like to abolish vivisection, suggest alternate ways of doing research. Some of these methods include using tissue cultures, human placenta, mechanical models, mathematical and computer models, etc.

Another alternative according to groups like PAVE is clinical research. This would eliminate the use of healthy animals for experimental purposes. Instead, research would only be done on previously afflicted animals and human beings.

Simmonds says researchers do perform clinical research but not in the earliest stages of an experimentation. According to him, there are four phases. During the first two phases vivisection occurs. Within the third and fourth phases, clinical research is conducted on available subjects.

Simmonds adds, "The problem is - there is not enough available clinical material to accommodate everyone."

Research involving the use of animals is a controversial and complex situation. It happens and is opposed everywhere, including here at UNLV. Both the advocates and the protestors of vivisection feel strongly about their causes.

Budget may shut out 300,000 students from loan program

(CPS)—Hundreds of thousands of two-year college students could be shut out of federal student loans next school year under the new budget plan, an education lobbyist warned in mid-November.

As many as 50,000 four-year college students also could lose their loans next year, he added.

"It's going to have a substantial impact upon poor folks," asserted Stephen Blair of the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools, which represents the private, for-profit institutions in Washington, D.C.

The five-year, \$490 billion deficit reduction package, passed

by Congress on Oct. 27, slices some \$1.7 billion out of the most popular federal student loan program by creating rigid restrictions on schools whose students have high loan default rates.

The congressional action was spurred by concern over high default rates at some educational institutions and several instances of

flagrant fraud and waste by disreputable schools.

Blair, for one, estimated the new anti-default rules will cost about 300,000 students nationwide their eligibility for guaranteed federal student loans next year.

About 50,000 of them go to "traditional" community and four year campuses that have default rates above 35 percent, thus disqualifying them from getting more loans.

About 100 of the nation's total of 3,500 community and four year colleges and universities have default rates that high, according to the American Council on Education (ACE), an umbrella group for campus presidents.

"You're not looking at a huge number of schools," said ACE's Pat Smith.

The rest of the disqualified students go to technical and trade schools, some of which were blasted in September congressional hearings as unscrupulously arranging loans for students. The students, who used the loan money to pay the trade schools,

then did not get the training or education they needed to get jobs that, in turn, could help them repay the loan to the government.

The new budget also tries to cut the default rate by requiring students without high school diplomas or equivalency degrees to pass independently administered standardized tests to receive loans.

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Yell Photo / Eileen Brady

Skywriting - a local skywriter spells out YAHOO in an effort to get his message out to the Las Vegas Valley.

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