| POLICY NAME | ANIMAL POLICY AND WELFARE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (APWOC): TERMS OF REFERENCE |
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| **Approving Body** | Animal Policy and Welfare Oversight Committee (APWOC) |
| **Original Approval Date** | |
| **Last Revision Date** | June 24, 2024 |
| **Next Review Date** | June 24, 2025 |

| Related Documents | - |
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## 1. PREAMBLE

The University Animal Policy & Welfare Oversight Committee (APWOC) is established by the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) (VP (RI)) to oversee that the university animal care program meets the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines. The APWOC is responsible for issuing policies regulating the humane care and use of animals in research, teaching or testing, carried out by McGill University personnel, harmonizing the work of the Animal Care Committees (ACCs) throughout the program.

APWOC's operation is governed by the following Terms of Reference.

## 2. AUTHORITY

The APWOC works with the ACCs, the Animal Compliance Office, members of the Veterinary Committee and the different working groups to ensure compliance with its decisions and policies.

With provision that issues are to be resolved with the ACC, the APWOC retains the authority in extraordinary circumstances, on behalf of the senior administrator responsible for animal care and use for the institution, to ensure compliance with the policies.

The APWOC must have access upon request to all areas where animals are or may be held or used.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

APWOC members are appointed for a term of no less than two years and no more than four years, renewable only up to a maximum of eight consecutive years of service at which point, every effort will be made to find a replacement. This does not apply to APWOC members who must be part of the APWOC because of their role within the institution (*ex officio* members). The membership includes:

a) Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) or delegate (Chair);

b) The Chair of each ACC, or ACC representative if not available;

c) The University Veterinarian, Associate Vice-President (Animal Care);

c) At least one, and preferably two, Community Representative(s);

d) A Veterinarian representative experienced in laboratory animal medicine and member of the Veterinary Committee;

e) An Animal Facilities Managers/Supervisor;

f) The Chair of each APWOC Working Group and Veterinary Committee or delegate;

g) The Associate Director of the Animal Compliance Office (ACO);

h) Other person(s) as may be deemed necessary by the Committee as the need arises;

i) The APWOC Coordinator.

The Chair represents the committee and as such, is expected to work with members at reaching consensus on decisions and action items.

A Vice-Chair is selected among the APWOC members who hold academic appointments. The role of the Vice-Chair is to support the Chair and lead meetings if the Chair is temporarily unavailable. In this role, the Vice-Chair reports to the VP (RI).

The APWOC Chair may invite other person(s) as guests to attend APWOC meetings as deemed necessary, for example to provide expertise on a given topic or dossier. Guests are not entitled to vote or otherwise participate in the decision-making.

In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, the APWOC must have a Chair who is not directly involved in the management of an animal facility, nor is the veterinarian, nor is an animal health or veterinary personnel member charged with ensuring compliance with CCAC guidelines.

Members who are, or appear to be, in conflict of interest must recuse themselves from discussions and decisions related to the matter. If the member is the APWOC Chair, then the APWOC Vice-Chair is to direct the meeting proceedings.

A Coordinator from the ACO supports the APWOC by coordinating meetings, following up on action items and ensuring that meeting minutes and reports are promptly produced, distributed to members and made available to the senior administration. The Coordinator attends meetings and is a member of the APWOC and participates in decision-making.

The Chair represents the committee and as such, is expected to work with members at reaching consensus on decisions and action items. If consensus is not reached, a vote will be taken and the decision will be considered approved by the majority of the APWOC members (. Where a matter cannot be resolved by consensus and where a vote would be appropriate in light of the issue before the Committee, a vote will be taken. The view of the simple majority will prevail. The Chair will cast the deciding vote in the event of a tie. Committee minutes must incorporate the dissenting opinion(s).

## 4. RESPONSIBILITY OF HIGHER ADMINISTRATION

The VP (RI) appoints the APWOC Chair and Vice-Chair and provides an APWOC Coordinator to support the work of the APWOC.

On behalf of the VP (RI), the ACO ensures that APWOC members are provided with committee training opportunities to understand their work and role: these include at least a formal orientation session, to introduce new APWOC members to the institution's animal care and use program and its members, policies and procedures, as well as to CCAC guidelines and policies. Ongoing opportunities to better understand animal care and use in science are also provided.

On behalf of the VP (RI), the APWOC Chair receives appeals by the author of a protocol in the event that animal use is not approved by the ACC for McGill ACC projects. The APWOC Chair defines a mechanism that includes an appropriate expertise and ensures a separate, fair and impartial process.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITY OF APWOC

As mandated by the VP (RI), it is the responsibility of the APWOC to:

a) Establish policies and guidelines to ensure appropriate care and use of animals throughout the McGill Animal Care Program and harmonizing the work of ACCs in accordance with the CCAC policies and guidelines and to any federal, provincial and institutional regulations that may be in effect;

b) Support ongoing educational programs to ensure training and appropriate qualifications of animal users and animal care personnel, according to the CCAC guidelines;

c) Ensure a functional occupational health and safety program is in place for those involved in animal care and use that will appropriately protect all those who may be affected by animal-based work, according to CCAC guidelines or the most recent guidance on occupational health and safety;

d) Bring to the attention of the senior administrator any matters requiring special attention, and to make recommendations as appropriate;

e) Regularly review (at least every three years):

   i. its Terms of Reference and the ones of the ACCs, standing working groups and Committee of the APWOC which include Ethics, Training and Qualifications, Community and Communications, Quality Assistance and the Veterinary Committee, to meet CCAC guidelines or policies and changing needs within the institution, the scientific community, the animal welfare community and society as a whole; and expand its Terms of Reference to meet the requirements of each FACC;

   ii. Standard operating procedures and institutional animal care and use policies; SOP creation and review may be delegated to the Veterinary Committee or an APWOC working group with the appropriate expertise, but SOPs should be accessible to all APWOC members, and the full APWOC should review all SOPs that involve procedures that may result in deleterious effects to animal health or welfare;

   iii. Policies and procedures for monitoring animal care and experimental procedures within the institution, including the identification of the persons responsible for monitoring animal health and welfare, and the procedures carried out by the FACC to conduct monitoring;

f) Maintain liaison through the senior administrator and ACO with the CCAC and inform them of any major changes to the program such as the senior administrator responsible for animal care and use, the Chair of the APWOC, FACCs or the veterinarians or senior animal care personnel;

g) Maintain communication with the community to educate the public on the positive aspects of, and the benefits derived from, animal-based research;

h) From time to time, sponsor seminars or workshops on the use of animals in science and the ethics of animal experimentation, and encourage as many animal users, animal caregivers, students, FACC members and other interested parties to attend as possible;

i) Maintain a high profile within the institution and in the community in order to demonstrate the institution's efforts in promoting animal welfare;

j) To continue a constructive dialog with animal welfare organizations.

## 6. MEETINGS

APWOC meets at least 4 times per year and as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. Minutes detailing APWOC discussions and decisions are produced in a timely fashion for each meeting, are forwarded to members and made available for the senior administration.

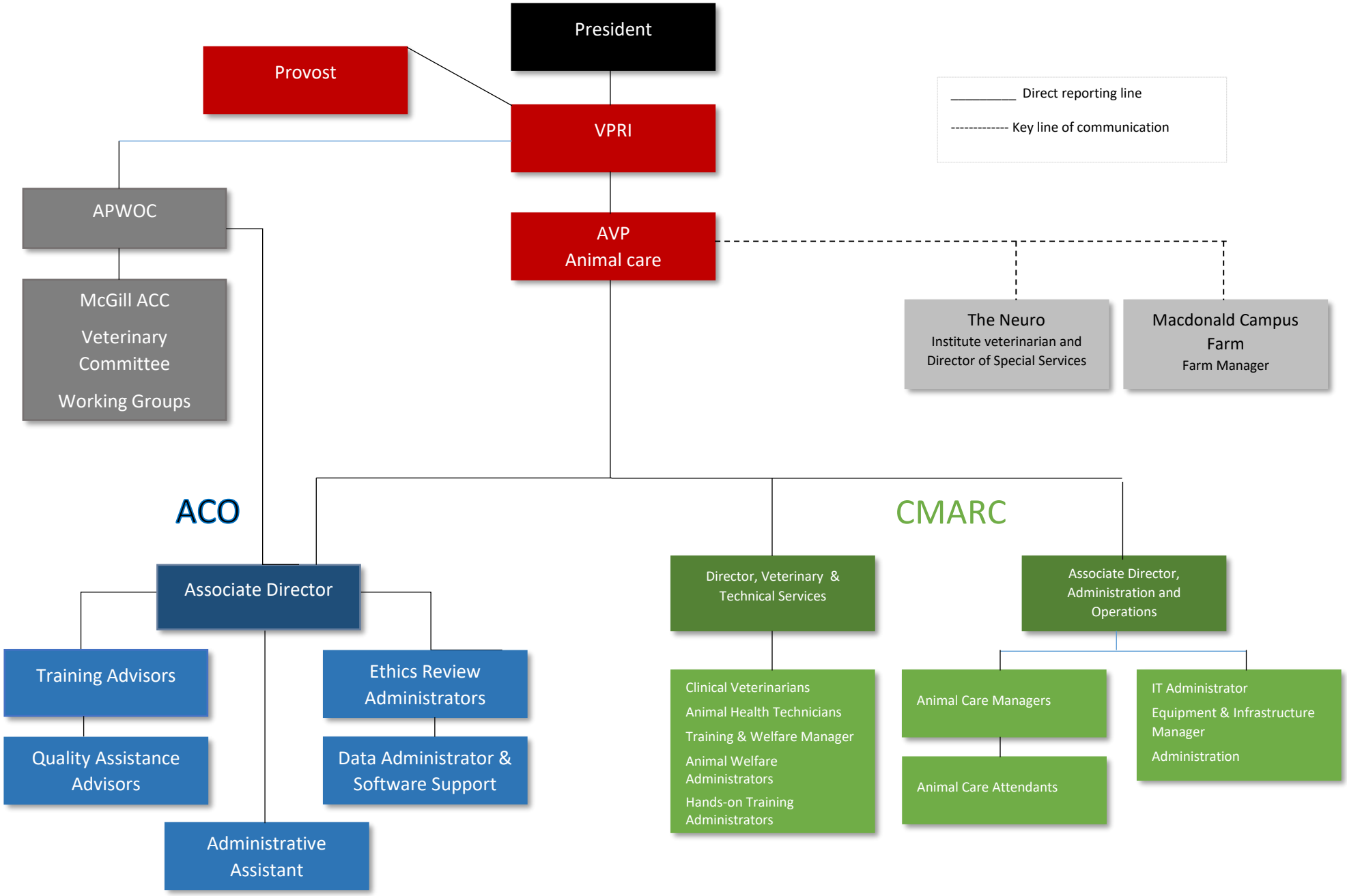
There must be quorum for a meeting to proceed, Quorum must include the Chair or Vice-Chair, a researcher faculty member, Community Representative, veterinarian, and ACO Associate Director or delegate. Meetings are scheduled at times that are convenient for all members, including community representatives.

If the Chair of a FACC is unable to attend a meeting, a representative is expected to attend. The representative is a member of the FACC, preferably a Faculty Member but cannot be a student.

## 7. REVIEW

6.1 Mandatory review periods: every 3 years.

# McGill Animal Care Program: Organizational Chart




McGill Animal Program Organizational Chart
Revised June 24, 2024