Title: Husbandry Care of Bats

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for bats (species of the order Chiroptera).

II. Policy:

All units providing animal care for bats must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the USDA Animal Welfare Regulations (AWR), the ILAR Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Guide), and Public Health Service Policy (PHS). Deviations or exceptions must be approved by the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC.

III. Procedure:

**Daily (365 days a year without exception):**
- Observe each animal and check for health concerns (AWR 2.33).
- Ensure adequate feed and potable water is available (Guide pg. 65-68).
- Record sick and dead animals, and report them to Campus Veterinary Services (CVS) or designated clinical veterinarian per standard operating procedure for reporting sick or dead animals.
- Record minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity.
  - Temperature range for bats is species-dependent.
  - Humidity range for bats is species-dependent.
- Change any excessively soiled (Guide pg. 70).
- Clean and organize room, anterooms, and surrounding premises (Guide pg. 72).
- Record daily completion of tasks, initial, and date log sheet.

**Weekly:**
- Provide clean feed and water dishes (Guide pg. 70).

**Biweekly (not to exceed every 14 days):**
- Provide clean cages (AWR 3.31 & 3.131).

**As needed:**
- Disinfect the animal room including walls, floors, and ceilings (if possible) (Guide pg. 72).
• Remove and replace worn or damaged equipment from primary enclosures and surrounding facility (Guide pg. 72).
• Chow must be discarded after 6 months of the milling date unless manufacturer guidelines recommend a shorter or longer expiration date (Guide pg. 66).
• Clean and sanitize feed storage containers (Guide pg. 67).

**Environmental Enrichment:**
• Refer to the Environmental Enrichment policy.
• Bats should be provided the opportunity to demonstrate species typical behavior. Examples of enrichment for bats include shelters and perches (Guide pg. 53).
• Devices must be checked regularly for wear and discarded when safety hazards are observed.

**Facilities:**
• Temperature alarms must be installed in all rooms housing bats (Guide pg. 143).
• Adequate ventilation must be provided for the health and comfort of the animal at all times.
  ◦ A minimum of 10-15 fresh room air exchanges per hour shall be provided in animal housing areas (Guide pg. 46).
• Floors shall be moisture-resistant, non-absorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth (Guide pg. 137). Refer to Physical Plant and Facilities Maintenance policy.

**Housing:**
• Whenever possible, and as appropriate based on species, bats should be socially housed in compatible groups (Guide pg. 51).
• Floor space taken up by food bowls, water containers, and enrichment devices should not be considered part of the floor space (Guide pg. 56).
• Animals must have enough space to express their natural postures and postural adjustments without touching the enclosure walls or ceiling, be able to turn around, and have ready access to food and water. In addition, there must be sufficient space to comfortably rest away from areas soiled by urine and feces (Guide pg. 56).

When housing this species, please also refer to the Animal Care Program’s Standards of Care Policy on Pest Control, Identification and Labeling of Cages, Environmental Enrichment, Food Storage, House-Keeping in Facilities Housing Biomedical Research Animals, Physical Plant Facilities Maintenance, as well as the IACUC’s Policy on Social Housing of Social Species.