

SUMMER EDITION

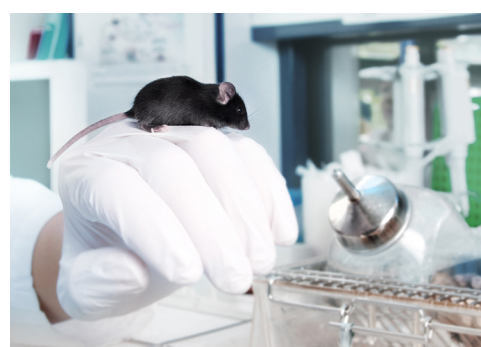
The
Lama
Review



We aim to promote the dissemination of ideas, experiences, and knowledge within the field of Animal Laboratory Management.



An important goal of the Laboratory Animal Management Association is to act as a spokesperson for the interests and concerns of professionals.



Our goal is to encourage continued education for professionals in the field of laboratory animal management.



A key focus of The Laboratory Animal Management Association is to actively assist in the training of managers.

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President's Message



Dear LAMA Members,

As we move forward in another exciting year for LAMA, I am reminded of the strength, resilience, and passion that define our community. Our shared mission—to advance the humane care and responsible use of laboratory animals—continues to guide us through both the challenges and opportunities that arise in our rapidly evolving field.

Over the past months, we have seen continued innovation in animal care practices, facility operations, and staff development across our member institutions. These advances are a direct reflection of the commitment each of you brings to your work every day. Whether through the implementation of new enrichment strategies, improvements in training programs, or the adoption of cutting-edge technologies, your efforts are helping to set new standards for excellence in laboratory animal management.

At LAMA, we remain dedicated to supporting you through robust educational offerings, collaborative networking opportunities, and resources that help you lead with confidence. I want to thank everyone who participated in our recent annual conference—your engagement and insights made it one of our most impactful gatherings yet. If you weren't able to attend, I encourage you to visit our website, where many of the session recordings and materials are available.

Looking ahead, we are focused on expanding our mentorship initiatives and enhancing online learning access. These goals can only be achieved through active member involvement, and I invite you to share your voice—whether by joining a committee, contributing to the newsletter, or mentoring a new member.

Together, we are shaping the future of laboratory animal management with integrity, compassion, and professionalism. Thank you for your continued dedication!

I hope you all have an amazing summer with family and friends!

Sincerely,

Amanda Coldwell
2025-2026 LAMA President



Innovative Approaches to Standard Attendance Policy Practices to Boost Employee Morale and Retention

Courtney P. Nesline

Assistant Director of Animal Care
Animal Resource Center
UT Southwestern Medical Center

Staffing challenges were a major issue for Animal Care Programs nationwide during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This remained a top concern for several years and only began to ease around 2023. While some institutions were able to offer higher starting salaries or implement more flexible schedules to make positions more appealing, they still faced stiff competition from other attractive job opportunities, which drew potential candidates away from the field. Staffing animal care roles presents a unique challenge due to the critical need to support both animals and researchers, requiring a minimum number of personnel at all times.

At UT Southwestern, we faced considerable difficulty filling open positions—at one point, we had 42 vacancies across cagewash and animal care roles. This shortage required staff at every level, including clinical veterinarians, assistant directors, supervisors, and managers, to step in and help cover the essential husbandry needs.

In late 2021, we increased our starting salary rates to remain competitive in the job market and to support employee retention. This adjustment helped us fill many of our open positions, but it became clear that ongoing salary increases were not a sustainable long-term solution. As a result, we began exploring other creative retention strategies, starting with scheduling flexibility.

Our leadership team, including director-level staff, held in-depth discussions about implementing flexible start times and alternative scheduling models—such as four 10-hour shifts, modified weekend coverage, and a four 9-hour/one 4-hour (shortened Friday) schedule. Many organizations have turned to schedule restructuring as a cost-neutral benefit to promote staff autonomy, greater flexibility, and improved work-life balance.

Following these discussions, we presented the proposed scheduling options to staff during an All Hands meeting in May 2024, where we addressed questions and gathered feedback. We then distributed a Microsoft survey to gauge interest in flexible start times and alternate schedules. Staff responded positively, with 80% expressing interest in at least one of the proposed options. This strong response gave us the momentum to move forward with formal implementation, pending necessary approvals from Human Resources and Compensation.

Flexible start times were implemented first in July 2024, requiring only Human Resources approval. These were added to our employee expectations document, allowing staff to begin their shifts at any time between 6:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. without incurring attendance points. Among the alternate schedules, the shortened Friday model received the most support. Human Resources approved this option promptly, and it is currently awaiting final approval from Compensation before rollout.

Our points-based system is detailed below with how it corresponds to discipline:

Points assessed over a rolling 12-month period:

Missed Time	Points Assessed
Less than 1 hour late	0.25
1-4 hours late	0.50
More than 4 hours	1

*Reward points (-0.5) earned for perfect attendance each month.

Total points incurred by individuals correlate to disciplinary action:

Total Points	Disciplinary Action
More than 5 points	Documented Counseling
More than 9 points	Written Warning
More than 13 points	Termination of Employment

ARC Rolling 12-Month Turnover Rate September 2023-May 2025



Staff were also given the option to permanently adjust their schedules to non-standard start times, such as beginning work at 6:30 a.m. This flexibility allowed employees greater autonomy in planning their commutes and addressing personal needs like childcare and traffic, reducing instances of tardiness. As a result, supervisors noted a decrease in disciplinary actions related to attendance. Previously, several staff members had received written warnings—or even faced termination—due to tardiness despite otherwise strong performance.

Following the implementation of flexible start times, a post-rollout survey showed that 79% of respondents felt the option helped them avoid incurring attendance points. Many also reported earning reward points, which further reduced their total attendance-related penalties. Overall, this change received highly positive feedback and contributed significantly to improved staff morale.

However, despite the positive response, some challenges have emerged. A notable concern comes from staff who do not take advantage of the flexible schedule, particularly in cagewash operations, where there is a perception that they are compensating for others’ reduced availability or decreased productivity. While these concerns exist, no measurable negative impact on operational coverage or workload completion has been observed.

Another challenge involves the administrative burden on supervisors. Managing frequent timecard edits—especially when employees use paid time off (PTO) to leave early, after arriving late, has proven time-consuming. This also accelerates the use of PTO balances, which can limit availability for future time-off requests and complicate leave approvals for staff with low PTO accruals. About a year after implementing the flexible start time, we revamped our process to require staff to work a full 8-hour shift after their arrival. This change was made to encourage a more balanced use of PTO accruals, improve morale, and enhance the perception of productivity.

In addition to implementing flexible start times, our department has been placing a greater emphasis on staff

training and development. Specifically, we’ve been offering leadership training for both supervisors and senior-level animal technicians. These training programs cover a mix of soft skills and technical expertise, with the goal of equipping our staff with the tools they need to advance in their careers with us.

These combined retention strategies appear to be effective, as our overall turnover rate has decreased in recent years, following a peak of 41.1% in 2020. Furthermore, these training sessions provide an opportunity for senior leadership to build stronger connections with senior animal technicians, facilitating meaningful discussions about their career aspirations. This engagement helps ensure that staff feel valued and supported, encouraging their continued growth within the organization.

A recent Gallup poll found that 45% of employees who voluntarily left their jobs reported that they had not had proactive discussions about their job satisfaction, performance, or future within the organization in the three months leading up to their departure. This highlights the importance of ongoing conversations about career goals, especially as nearly half of U.S. employees are either considering or actively seeking new job opportunities. In today’s environment, employee retention has become more critical than ever. 42% of Employee Turnover Is Preventable, but Often Ignored. (<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/646538/employee-turnover-preventable-often-ignored.aspx>)

In conclusion, we believe that offering flexible start times has resulted in higher morale, increased autonomy, reduced stress, and fewer disciplinary actions related to tardiness. When paired with our enhanced focus on training and development, these initiatives contribute to a more engaged and productive animal care team. As a result, they appear to be positively impacting our retention and turnover rates. How can you implement a no-cost employee benefit to improve morale in your Lab Animal Program?

ATA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Institution or Facility:

Beta Star Life Science Equipment

Job Title:

Southern Regional Sales Manager

Years involved in animal science:

20 Years – I first started selling life science laboratory equipment in 2005

What certifications do you hold?

B.S. Business Administration

How did you get involved with LAMA?

Beta Star has been an attendee at LAMA for many years before I joined their team. My first LAMA meeting was in 2023 at Clearwater. The format of the meeting was inviting to me because I appreciated hearing the talks and spending quality time with the other attendees. A presentation about introvert/extrovert social batteries has really stuck with me. I am now always aware of my social battery level but this is a concept I had never considered before. This year's meeting in Fort Walton Beach also had a ton of great presentations.

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I was sure that I would become a Top Gun pilot until I learned that I would likely be disqualified by the scar on my head which happened when I was 2 years old and fell on a brick fireplace hearth. I would have never guessed that I would be selling tools to scientists for 20 years but I am very happy to be doing this because I am contributing to important work being done by others.

Who has inspired you?

I meet people in Animal Science that inspire me everyday which is part of the reason I enjoy this field. The passion level is higher here than I have seen in other industries. My early inspirations came from family members. My grandfather, the expert fly fisherman, showed me that the highest level of satisfaction came from doing hard things. My older brother led me off the trails on skis and dirt bikes, forcing me out of my comfort zone and forever changing my outlook. My parents put their heart and souls into their careers showing me that a job is not just a job. My uncle who passed on early told me to never get caught up comparing my possessions or accomplishments to others because that will compromise the natural joy that comes from living on this earth every day.

What are your current interests in animal science?

I like solving facility level challenges. A military veteran once told me that you do not need to join the armed forces to serve your country. I do not have a direct impact on the animals or the science but by providing equipment that is critical to operating a facility and is designed to operate for decades, I am helping to make a long-term impact.

What is the one thing no one would know/guess about you?

I once ran the mile in 4:59 and never will again.

Do you have any companion or farm animals?

I do not currently have any pets but I am an animal lover. There was a bachelor bunny living under my shed for the last 6 months who would just stand there watching while we mowed the yard. Then one day there were two bunnies and now it seems they have gone off to find a different home. An orange cat that lives across the street had claimed my house as his territory long before I moved in. He and I are great friends and he sometimes comes up to my porch for petting. I am also very good friends with Oliver the mini dachshund who lives in Houston, I have included a photo of myself with him.



Jeremy McNeal

LAMA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Institution or Facility:

UT Southwestern Medical Center

Job Title:

Supervisor of Animal Care

Years involved in animal science:

13 years!

What certifications do you hold?

ALAT

How did you get involved with LAMA?

My supervisors presented me with the opportunity to attend ILAM, and I saw it as a chance to grow in my field and expand my knowledge. My new LAMA membership came with my graduation from ILAM this past May.

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

Becoming a musician was a dream of mine growing up. I wanted to be a pianist, and I played the piano briefly as a child.

Who has inspired you?

I have so many people in my life who have inspired me in one way or another, and for different reasons. However, one person who has truly inspired me and whom I've always looked up to is my father. He always led by example, working hard and demonstrating a strong work ethic.

As a child, he would take me to work with him so I could learn how to communicate with others and develop strong interpersonal skills. He encouraged me to be outgoing and confident. He always emphasized the importance of being independent and going after what I wanted in life. He pushed me to never settle, to always strive for more, and to set high expectations for myself in order to achieve success.

Despite the many obstacles he faced—such as not speaking English when he first arrived in the United States—he never gave up. He enrolled at Dallas Community College to learn the language, not just to succeed as a self-employed contractor, but to build meaningful relationships and expand his network.

Even while battling cancer, he showed incredible strength. On his most painful days, he refused to show weakness. He will always be my greatest inspiration.

What are your current interests in animal science?

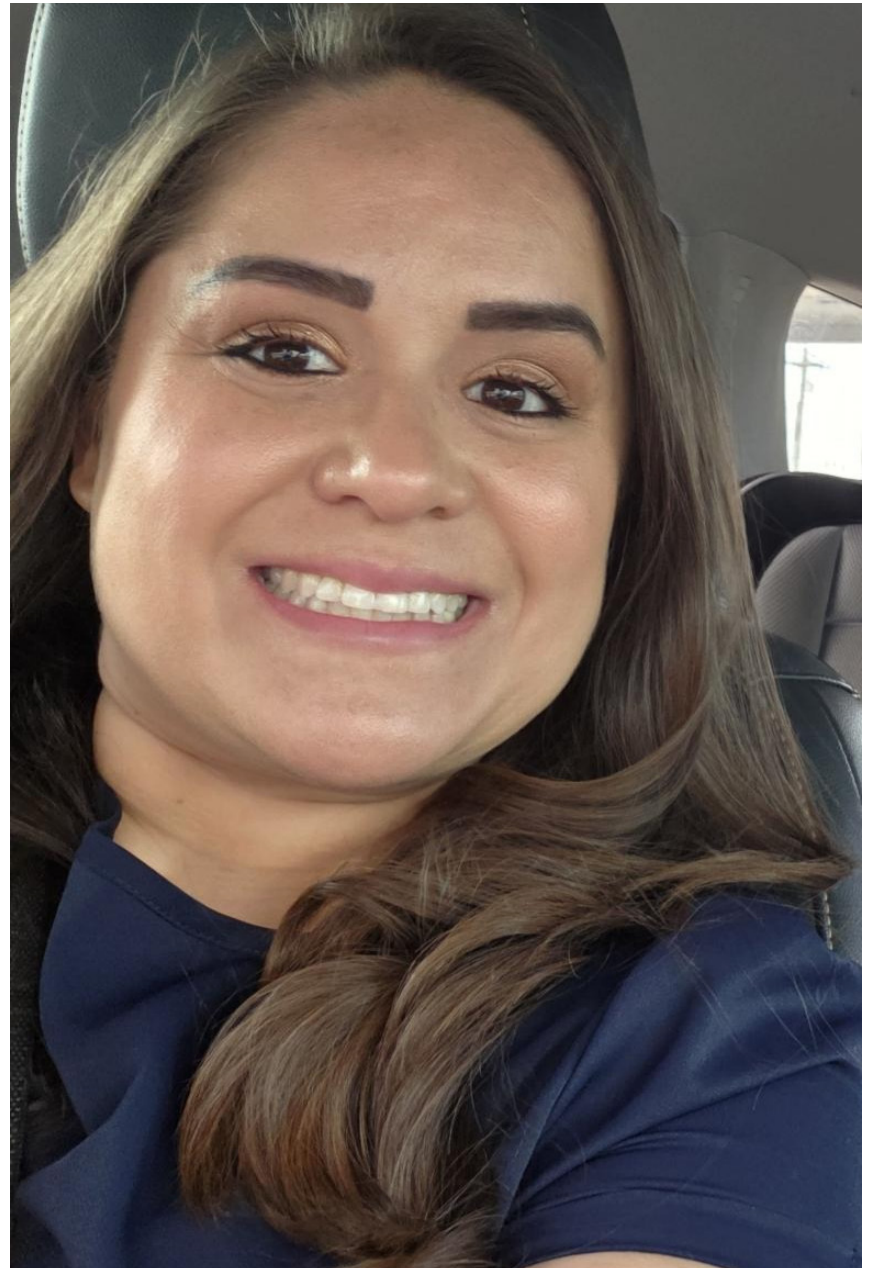
Seeing all the treatments available to improve or prolong someone's life gives me hope. I truly hope that one day there will be a cure for all diseases.

What is the one thing no one would know/guess about you?

I collect Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles - The Last Ronin Action Figures

Do you have any companion or farm animals?

I have two sweet dogs, Shadow and Nova.



Nataly Carranza

**LAMA / ATA
ANNUAL MEETING**

**APRIL
13-16
2026**

We are excited to announce
the 42nd Annual Meeting will
be held at Hotel Contessa,
San Antonio, Texas

**JOIN US IN
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

**SAVE
THE
DATE**



Become A Lama Member

A LAMA Membership offers you connections to industry peers; trusted knowledge and resources on laboratory animal science management and trends; solutions to your most pressing issues; and career enhancing leadership opportunities. Whether you are a seasoned professional or just starting out, a LAMA Membership will help you succeed at any level.

Membership Includes:

- Quarterly Issue of the LAMA Review
- Discounts for LAMA Conferences
- Discounts for LAMA Sponsored Training Events
- Exclusive access to recorded webinars / training videos

We Want To Hear From You!



Please submit any management articles, "Dear LAMA's" or additional tips for the upcoming LAMA Review.

Our Review is Your Review!



Email your submissions to Amanda Coldwell at Amanda.Coldwell@mpfi.org

LAMA 2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS



Charles River Medallion Award

2025 Recipient Kevin Phelps

The Charles River Medallion, is given in recognition of distinguished contributions to the field of laboratory animal management by an administrator/manager who is a current member of the Laboratory Animal Management Association (LAMA) and is currently engaged in Laboratory Animal Management.

The Award consists of an inscribed medallion and \$1,500. To receive this award, the recipient needs to be a current LAMA member and engaged in Laboratory Animal Management (engaged is defined as active employment as an administrator/manager in an animal research facility).



U. Kristina Stephens Award

2025 Recipient Robbie Champion

The U. Kristina Stephens Award is given for outstanding and exceptional service to the Laboratory Animal Management Association (LAMA).

The Award consists of a free-standing plaque and \$500. To receive this award, the recipient needs to be a current LAMA member. This award is not to be considered as a standing annual award.



William O. Umiker Memorial Award

2025 Recipient Amanda Coldwell

The William O. Umiker Memorial Award is given to a LAMA member in good standing who has demonstrated a commitment to the field of laboratory animal management education through contributions to LAMA's publications, published articles, books and presentations at seminars and workshops.

2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS



Ron Orta Memorial Award

2025 Recipient **Stephen Keeney**

In memory of Ron Orta, LAMA will present an annual award to an individual actively employed in lab animal vivarium operations, management or administration that presents a professional/managerial presentation at our LAMA/ATA Annual Meeting.

The criteria for the award require that nominees submit an abstract to the LAMA Program Committee and have the abstract accepted for presentation at the LAMA/ATA Meeting.

The award winner will be presented with an award and honorarium on the last day of the LAMA/ATA Annual Meeting each year.

An award winner can only win the award once during their professional career.

The Cammie Symonowicz Ambassador Award

2025 Recipient **Jamie Wells**

The Cammie Symonowicz Ambassador Award is a new award in 2022. It is given in recognition of outstanding contributions in promoting LAMA and the field of laboratory animal management by a current member of the Laboratory Animal Management Association (LAMA) and the Allied Trade Association (ATA). The Award is sponsored yearly by Bristol Myers Squibb.

The Award consists of a plaque and \$500. Plus, \$500 will be donated in the recipient's name to the Alzheimer's Association. To receive this award, the recipient needs to be a current LAMA or ATA member.



LESSONS IN LAB LOGISTICS

Kimberly Muth

CASE STUDY SITUATION

A department hired a new faculty member who has active animal research at an established institution. Professor C is expected to bring around 50 mice (17 cages) to our facility over the summer with a mix of breeders and regular stock animals. Our facility is small (average 250 cage daily census) with one small room available for quarantine. Quarantine is 6-8 weeks with dirty bedding sentinels and animals may be either 1) released to a clean holding room (pathogen free), 2) released to a helicobacter/MNV positive room, or 3) sent for rederivation (if positive for excluded pathogens). The original shipment is expected to arrival in early August for release in late September. The facility staff consists of a full-time vivarium manager, 1 full-time technician who is only trained on animal husbandry and basic health treatments, and 2 part-time workers who are only trained on cleaning and basic husbandry. The Vivarium Manager has planned vacation for the first two weeks of September where they will be unavailable to be contacted, and new animal orders are on hold during that time.

Professor C contacts the facility manager in July requesting that the shipment be expedited to arrive in mid-July to prevent delays in research on arrival (September 1). Accepting the shipment in mid-July would schedule quarantine results to return early to mid-September. To establish a good relationship early, the Vivarium Manager works to expedite the acceptance of the animals. During the process, it is clear that Professor C is very detail oriented and expects the same level of support from our facility as their current facility, which is much larger. Quarantine results come back mid-September (positive for helicobacter) while the Vivarium Manager is on vacation and Professor C is contacting the full-time technician daily for updates. The full-time technician does not have the authority to release the shipment without Vivarium Manager approval.

When the Vivarium Manager returns, Professor C is already upset that communication has been delayed and is not happy to have their animals released to a helicobacter/MNV positive room since they only have helicobacter. The Vivarium Manager suspects that the mice are also MNV positive based on health reports from the sending institution and known false negatives from dirty bedding sentinels in the past.

CASE STUDY SOLUTION

Actions Taken:

The Veterinarian has the authority to deny the shipment or animals due to health testing, but the Vivarium Manager is responsible for the room assignment after health status approval. The Vivarium Manager realized after accepting the early shipment that release would overlap with their vacation and made the decision not to tell the PI to prevent conflict prior to their departure. First, the Vivarium Manager apologized to Professor C for failing to calculate the new quarantine release dates overlapping with their vacation when accepting the early shipment. Next, the Vivarium Manager required additional testing directly from the animals to determine if they had helicobacter and MNV or just helicobacter. While waiting for the results, Professor C was allowed to enter the quarantine room to begin their research. Results came back positive for helicobacter and MNV and mice were released to the helicobacter/MNV positive room.

Lessons Learned:

We learned that we need to communicate our expectations of health screening results based on the shipping institution's reports. It was not made clear to Professor C that their mice might be helicobacter or MNV positive, so we were not surprised, but they were. Additionally, we learned that when there is an important staff shortage, such as known vacation or extended time away for professional development, that receiving dates for a small facility are especially important to calculate and factor into staff availability and expertise. Since then, we have trained additional personnel on animal receiving and quarantine procedures to ensure we have redundancy in facility processes. We also would have communicated to the researcher early once we realized the potential conflict of timing instead of waiting to see what might happen.

ILAM SCHOLARSHIP EXPERIENCE SUMMARY



**TRACI WEBER,
LATG**

VA Puget Sound Health Care System

I am incredibly grateful to the scholarship committee for making it possible for me to attend Year 1 of the Institute for Laboratory Animal Management (ILAM). This opportunity has been both professionally enriching and personally transformative.

I had always heard wonderful things about ILAM from past participants — that it was an experience like no other in terms of the quality of the program and the lasting connections it fosters. My Attending Veterinarian strongly encouraged me to apply, and receiving the scholarship is what made it possible for me to attend. I was honored to be selected and eager to make the most of the experience.

Arriving at ILAM, I only knew a couple of people and wasn't entirely sure what to expect. However, the program's structure — from the dynamic sessions to the engaging team-building activities and social events — quickly helped me feel connected and included. I intentionally sat with new people during each session and activity, which helped me form many new professional relationships and even a few lasting friendships. I am looking forward to staying in touch through our WhatsApp group and reconnecting next year in Year 2.

Each speaker's incorporation of interactive activities made the content not only more engaging but also easier to apply in real-world leadership scenarios. I was honored to be nominated as class president and, although I wasn't selected, I'm hopeful to serve as a team lead next year. My current team lead was an outstanding mentor — she prepared us ahead of time, kept us organized throughout the week, and helped us create a team t-shirt and chant. While our team was on the quieter side, she encouraged us to be bold, competitive, and unified.

As an introvert, I was especially nervous about participating in Skit Night. However, with support from my team, we came together to create something fun and entertaining. It ended up being a highlight of the week and brought us even closer together. Seeing everyone dressed up for the banquet and graduation ceremony was a beautiful way to close out the experience. It was touching to watch the 2nd-year students reflect on their journey and emotional to see how much the program meant to them.

Thank you again for this incredible opportunity. ILAM Year 1 exceeded every expectation, and I'm excited to continue building on this foundation in Year 2 and beyond.



May 2025

Laboratory Animal Management Association continues its support for AAALAC International as a Member Organization

Laboratory Animal Management Association continues to support the mission and work of AAALAC International by serving as an AAALAC “Member Organization.” LAMA was recently represented at AAALAC’s annual meeting in May along with 70+ other prestigious scientific, professional and educational groups from around the world that have an interest in advancing animal well-being in science.

AAALAC International is the world’s largest accrediting body for animal research and education programs. Currently more than 1,140+ companies, universities, hospitals, government agencies and other research institutions in 52 countries/regions have earned AAALAC accreditation, demonstrating their commitment to responsible animal care and use. These institutions volunteer to participate in AAALAC’s program, in addition to complying with all applicable local and national laws that regulate animal research. Those that meet or exceed applicable standards are awarded accreditation—a mark of quality assurance recognized around the world.

LAMA’s continued participation as an AAALAC International Member Organization demonstrates our commitment to responsible animal care and use. It’s an opportunity to join with other respected organizations to communicate that excellence in animal welfare is critical to quality science and education.

For more information on AAALAC visit www.aaalac.org.



OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

By Bruce A. Baldwin

Ways to handle the self-imposed barriers to achievement that we place in our lives

Have you heard about the harried executive who asked to name the best labor-saving device known to mankind? “The answer,” he said, “is simple. It’s tomorrow.” Right in line with this philosophy is Mark Twain’s classic comment: “Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow.” Though they chose different ways to express it, the individuals who made these remarks were really talking about procrastination—that unique human proclivity to find ingenious ways to justify doing later what you should be doing right now. It’s a familiar topic because, to one extent or another, we are all practitioners of this ancient human art of avoidance.

The distressing facts are that procrastination accounts for a plethora of organizational, professional, and personal problems. Decreased productivity, inefficiency, and mismanagement stem from it. It is the root cause of unkept appointments, late projects, incomplete reports, low grades, disordered files, and missed deadlines. On the home front this same tendency to put things off until later is the cause of much marital conflict and miscommunication. For both men and women, the avoidance habit produces worry, guilt, sleepless nights, depression, anger, and anxiety, just to mention a few of the emotional consequences.

However, looking at the problem more closely, it can easily be seen that much procrastination is rather benign and may amount to no more than a difference in priorities between individuals. One partner in a marriage puts a high priority on fixing the kitchen door: the other wants to putter around in the yard. A supervisor wants a report tomorrow, and a staff member has a full schedule right now. These individuals are then accused of procrastinating; and indeed, putting off home or office projects can cause problems.

However, problems in matching personal priorities with those of others are minor when compared to a more serious form of procrastination. These are barriers to achievement and success that have much deeper psychological roots than simple differences between people in their views of what needs to be done and when. When serious achievement avoidance is seen, several characteristics must be understood as a framework to begin resolving it.

A specific pattern can be perceived. Most people with serious achievement avoidance problems do not procrastinate indiscriminately. Usually, beginning rather early in life, there is a pattern of quite specific circumstances that bring out the tendency of putting off, delaying, or otherwise avoiding.

Involved are fears usually related to self-esteem. Basically, self-esteem and where or not an individual perceives himself or herself to be personally competent is involved in the circumstances that produce avoidance. Interestingly, the specific fears of the individual may be related to failure or success.

A double approach-avoidance conflict is present. In most cases of achievement avoidance, there is a specific choice to be made. Each option or alternative perceived by the individual has both pros and cons. The result of this situation is inner turmoil and psychic conflict. Emotional paralysis causes avoidance or delay because an active decision cannot be made.

The conflicts are not always in conscious awareness. One of the first steps in resolving achievement avoidance patterns is to conceptualize the ego-driven fears that are the basis of the emotional conflict. Often these lie just below the level of conscious awareness but can be brought out to the surface and understood relatively easily. It should be clear that all types of procrastination are not the same. Serious blocks to achievement have extremely detrimental effects of self esteem and on the actualization of personal skills and potential. Unaddressed, they can continue to impede development for a lifetime. If they are understood and become the focus for a commitment to personal change, these conflicts can usually be resolved. Then that individual is free to choose among important life options. Here are a few of the most common psychological conflicts that produce symptomatic achievement avoidance.

The Pleasure Priority

Whenever there is a choice between a pleasurable experience now and self-sacrifice to work toward longer-range goals, this individual inevitable chose fun times with a hollow promise to self (or to others) to get necessary work done later. There are two workable tactics to handle this kind of achievement avoidance. First, if your real priority in life is to have a good time, then you must stop kidding about attaining career or other goals. Be honest with yourself and give up your unrealistic fantasies of achievement. Instead live with the consequences of your pleasure priority. This will reduce the conflict between your behavior and your expectations of success. You’ll have a good time, but you won’t get to the top or anywhere near it.

Learning to work more efficiently is the best way to cope with added responsibilities.

The second tactic is more difficult: Learn to work for payoffs that will come at some point in the future rather than immediately. This requires gritting your teeth and choosing to give up some fun times to work instead. Doing this is the only way to learn self-discipline that is the antithesis of the pleasure priority. When your self-discipline develops and it will, with effort and energy directed toward it—you will be more inner-directed and can then work effective

toward long-term goals. And because you are making active choices about the use of your time, your pleasure priority no longer controls you. Only then can you actively choose to have some good times along the way without jeopardizing your movement toward long-term personal goals.

Overwhelmed and Confused

This individual consistently becomes emotionally paralyzed because an overwhelming amount of work has been accepted or allowed to build up. The result is constant worry about how it's going to get done and the personal failure that will result if it isn't done. This is the most painful form of achievement avoidance. Many talented professionals set themselves up for this kind of problem because perspective on what can reasonably be accomplished never develops. Or the problem may be an inability to say no because of an inordinate desire to please others. Still others get hooked into extra work through the skillful use of flattery by a co-worker or supervisor.

Avoiding the build-up of that critical mass of work is the key to preventing feelings of being overwhelmed and confused. The remedy is to accept your limits and learn to say no to extras that are going to overwhelm you. When a problem does occur, the best strategy is to break your work down into manageable pieces that can then be tackled one by one. The feelings of accomplishment as each small task is completed builds momentum to keep you going until the project's conclusion. As with most forms of procrastination, the biggest step is to get started.

It would be remiss not to mention that some men and women are set up for emotional paralysis through no fault of their own. Too much work may be demanded of one person. In this era of staff cutbacks and reorganizations, one or two individuals may be asked to do the work for three or four. If this is the case, learning to work more efficiently is the best way to cope with added responsibilities. In the end, however, you will have to make a decision about whether the job is worth the emotional distress that it causes, particularly if there is no end in sight.

The Fantasy of Competence

This individual consistently avoids facing a challenge directly by failing to prepare adequately for it. This ploy allows that person to continue to believe that what could have been done would have been fantastic, if only more effort had been put into preparation. This form of achievement avoidance poses a most distressing dilemma: to continue to procrastinate to keep alive an untested fantasy of competence or to squarely face yourself and the limits of your capabilities. To choose the procrastination alternative is to live with constant reminders of what you could have done but didn't. Yet to give your best shot triggers fear that you will find out that perhaps you aren't quite as capable as you thought.

If fear of disappointing your expectations of yourself is producing avoidance reactions to challenges, then the basic tactic is to put your abilities on the line-not only once, but many times. You can then assess your true capabilities. You may have to give up realistic expectations or dreams of success that can't be fulfilled. On the other hand, they won't be fulfilled either if you continue to procrastinate. When you face yourself and your limits, then you can realistically determine your strengths and weaknesses. By using that data to build critical skills, the way is cleared to set realistic skills, the way is cleared to set realistic goals for yourself and to succeed in attaining them.

Resistance and Rebellion

Many otherwise motivated men and women have their careers compromised because they haven't worked through conflicts with authority figures. On the job, you can't directly refuse an assignment or a request, but there are many irritating little things that you can do to rebel against that. These passive-aggressive maneuvers frequently take the form of procrastination covered by a convenient excuse so you can't be confronted directly. More often than not, this telltale pattern of behavior has its roots early in life.

Overcoming this form of achievement avoidance requires several steps. First, you must emotionally accept that you have entered into a contractual agreement with a company or an individual to perform specific duties in return for payment. Under these circumstances, you are not being victimized because you have chosen to be where you are. Second, you must learn to deal with interpersonal problems directly instead of through passive resistance. In short, you must take yourself out of the role of sullen child and put yourself into the role of competent adult. Assertiveness training is often helpful in teaching you how to deal effectively with figures and your anger are concerned. problem situations at work, especially where authority figures and your anger are concerned.

Novice Phobia

Seen in children as well as adults, novice phobia is the fear of putting yourself in the position of a learner and therefore, not being perfect. "If I can't do it the first time, I won't do it at all" is the guiding theme. Interestingly, once a novice phobic begins a task, it usually turns out very well. However, this lesson is never learned, as low self-confidence maintains a pattern of inhibition that creates significant barriers to personal and professional growth.

In every area of competence, you've been a novice at some time, some place. To fear learning from your mistakes as you develop new skills involves a form of false pride. You seek to protect your image of competence. If you don't do well, then your image suffers-but you've created that unrealistic image in the first place. If you do away with that pretense, you won't have to spend all that energy maintaining a front that will limit you over the long haul. You'll also be more flexible and get more done because you won't always have to be perfectly competent. And because you're willing to learn even at the price of goofing off now and then, you'll broaden your skills and put yourself in a position where you'll be able to advance.

Procrastination as Self-Sabotage

This individual's self-doubt and mixed feelings about changes or new responsibilities produce a consistent avoidance reaction, and this fear of success takes many forms. For some professionals promotion would disrupt a stable family and social life in a desirable location. Sometimes it's the unknowns of promotion that causes procrastination. For still others, low self-confidence and insecurity about accepting specific new responsibilities produces resistance. For those who are confronted with this dilemma, procrastination sabotages career advancement as ambition and the fear of advancement's consequences collide.

The best tactic to resolve such problems is to clearly conceptualize the choices-each with pros and cons. List them on a piece of paper and contrast them. Seek outside help to clarify any aspects of the choices that you have not thought about. Then actively make the decision. Remember that no decision is engraved in stone. It's only for right now, and you can change it later if you want to do that. In the meantime, however, you can remove yourself from the emotional energy drain caused by avoidance and move ahead-or stay where you are-because you have decided to do just that.

Actively Choosing Your Path

Achievement avoidance and procrastination are such pervasive habits that they are often accepted as almost normal aspects of human behavior. To resolve detrimental forms of achievement avoidance, you must first recognize and define the emotional conflict that is at the psychological root of your particular kind of avoidance reaction. This definition must include three factors: the choices available to you in a given situation; your specific fears; risks associated with each option; and the payoffs of each choice. Write these down on a piece of paper, then decide which option you are going to pursue. Remember, even to continue avoiding advancement is not necessarily a bad choice, as long as you make an active decision to do so and accept the consequences.

When you find yourself avoiding a task, tackle it when you're functioning at your peak

If your choice is to move ahead and confront directly your barriers to achievement, then you must create the right working conditions to get critical tasks done even when part of you is resisting. Here are some tips for creating positive conditions that will help you win over your avoidance reaction and your tendency to sabotage success.

Pick your time for a key task. Some individuals work best in the morning, while others do better in the late afternoon or evening. When you find yourself avoiding a key task, tackle it when you are functioning at your daily peak.

Decide if you need a support system. Some men and women work best alone and find it difficult to concentrate if there are any distractions at all. Others prefer to work in teams or in group settings. Decide which setting you prefer and then create that condition when you are confronting that difficult work you've been avoiding.

Don't waste time preparing. It is amazing how much time you can waste preparing to work on a key task. Getting your desk cleared, making a cup of coffee, and making sure pencil and paper are handy are just part of the avoidance routine. It is better to jump right in and get started.

Break down a big job into small pieces. This technique pays off because a big job isn't so overwhelming when it is broken down into smaller, manageable pieces. You also get the satisfaction of seeing your progress as each step is completed.

Choose your starting point. Perhaps not all your tasks are unpleasant, or some parts are easier than others. Start with aspects of the job you don't mind or perhaps even like. If you choose an easy and personally fulfilling place to start, your momentum will more than likely carry you forward through the difficult parts to completion.

Reward yourself for getting done. Create an incentive for completing that task or making that decision you've been avoiding. A steak dinner, a new shirt or blouse, or some other extra adds attraction to getting that specific task completed once and for all. Knowing there is a bonus waiting for you when you're done makes your resistance much easier to overcome.

In the final analysis, two related aspects of consistent achievement avoidance are worth considering. First, this kind of problem usually doesn't go away. Rather, it returns again and again to plague you. Compounding the problem, many men and women unfortunately learned in childhood that if things were put off long enough, someone else would eventually take over and do it. Or if one waits long enough, someone else or a certain circumstance would decide.

This is a most clever but self-defeating ploy, because it lets the individual off the hook. On one hand, that person doesn't have to make a decision, face a challenge, or complete a difficult task. On the other hand, if another person makes the decision, that man or woman doesn't have to take responsibility for anything that happens. It's always someone else's fault if things don't turn out well. Unfortunately, this tendency often continues from childhood into adulthood with ever more serious consequences.

Recognize that consistent achievement avoidance, no matter what the cause, creates inner turmoil and personal doubt that continues to erode self-esteem as the years pass by. It prevents you from defining a clear direction for yourself and actively choosing the path that will get you there. Only when you short-circuit an avoidance reaction can you make a clear and active decision about your personal direction.

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT BANKS AND HOWARD MOSHER

In this issue, we take a moment to honor the memory of two remarkable individuals who left a lasting impact on the LAMA community - Robert Banks and Howard Mosher. Both men were active members of LAMA for many years, generously sharing their knowledge and passion as frequent speakers at our Annual Conferences and as dedicated volunteers on various committees. Howard Mosher also served with distinction as Treasurer on the LAMA Board of Directors, providing steady leadership and guidance over the years. Their contributions helped shape the organization we know today, and their presence will be deeply missed.



Robert "Bob" Banks (March 24, 1959 – March 12, 2025)

Born in Belle Glade, Florida, Bob Banks was a proud "muck baby" with deep Florida roots, tracing his heritage to the pioneer days of Orange County. A passionate Florida Gator, Bob graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Animal and Meat Sciences, where he was vice president of the Block & Bridle Club and a member of the Agriculture Council. His early career included managing cattle herds for P.R.I.D.E. and working as a USDA inspector before transitioning to academia, eventually becoming Associate Director of Research Program Services at the University of Central Florida. He was also an active community advocate through Save Orange County.

Bob was a longtime LAMA member, frequent Annual Conference presenter, and valued contributor to the laboratory animal science community. Known for his humor, strong opinions, and dedication to both family and profession, Bob leaves behind his wife Emily, children, stepchildren, many grandchildren, and a wide network of colleagues and friends. He will be deeply missed.



Howard Mosher (July 28, 1949 - April 30, 2025)

Howard Mosher of Killingworth, Connecticut, was a respected and dedicated member of the laboratory animal science community, with a career spanning over 50 years at Bristol Myers Squibb, where he retired as a Supervisor of Animal Sciences. He later continued his work through Johnson Controls and Edstrom, remaining involved at the Wallingford site from its opening to its closing—an achievement he took great pride in. Howard was also a long-time and valued member of LAMA, where he served on various committees and as Treasurer of the Board of Directors for many years, contributing significantly to the organization's growth and leadership.

Known for his steady presence, warm spirit, and love of photography, Howard was also actively involved in the Masons and cherished time spent with his family. He is survived by his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and extended family, who remember him with deep affection. Howard's legacy of service and kindness will be felt throughout the LAMA community and beyond.

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