**Rory Telemeco Q&A | RSP Newsletter | December 2020**

Fresno State is extremely fortunate to have Dr. Rory Telemeco as its new Chair of Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). In order to be better acquainted with our new IACUC Chair, Dr. Telemeco answered several questions pertaining to his new position.

**Q**. Dr. Telemeco, please tell us a little about yourself and the various positions you hold on campus?

**A**. I am an Assistant Professor of Biology in my third year at Fresno State. I teach General Ecology, Introduction to Biocomputing, and Animal Ecological Physiology. My specialty is ecological and evolutionary physiology, with a focus on reptiles and amphibians. My lab’s driving question is: “How do animals respond to rapid changes in their environment, such as habitat alteration or climate change?” We work with both native an exotic species including fence lizards, alligator lizards, crested geckos, and the endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard, a San Joaquin Valley endemic. If you are curious to learn more, you can check out our website at <https://telemecolab.org>.

The IACUC is my only university-wide appointment, but I also serve on the College of Science and Mathematics International Committee and numerous departmental committees.

**Q**. What motivated you to take on the role of our IACUC Chair?

**A**. The chair provides a crucial role steering the committee and ensuring that we meet our regulatory requirements. At the time that our former chair, Dr. Paul Crosbie, retired from the position, I was one of the most qualified people on campus to replace him. Although it is a daunting task, I accepted the nomination from the committee to ensure that the IACUC is able to continue meeting its responsibilities.

**Q**. For those not familiar with the IACUC, what exactly does this committee provide to our campus? What falls under your purview as the Chair and the entire committee as a whole?

**A**. The IACUC is the “Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee” and it is responsible for ensuring the ethical treatment of vertebrate animals on campus. Existence of the IACUC is mandated by law and the committee must include a chair, attending veterinarian, practicing scientist with animal research experience, a member without a scientific background, and a community member unaffiliated with the university. We ensure that all animal use meets the requirements of the United States Animal Welfare Act and the National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare guidelines. Regulation by the IACUC ensures both legal and ethical use of animals by the campus community.

All use of vertebrate animals for teaching and research, with few exceptions, must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC. The IACUC is also responsible for ensuring that approved protocols are followed and that all research and teaching animals are well cared for.

**Q**. What plans (if any) do you have for this committee and the services it provides? Do you plan to make any changes/updates to the current policies and procedures?

**A**. We have a number of changes in the works. First, the IACUC is in the process of moving all of our protocol review to an online system (Kuali). Along with this, we will be modernizing much of our oversite to ensure smooth yet rigorous continuing review of animal use. Additionally, we will be requiring all teaching use of vertebrate animals be reviewed and approved by the IACUC, which has not always happened historically at the university. Many of these changes will fully occur when we roll out the new online system, which is planned for early Spring 2021.