



UTAH PRIMATE FREEDOM PROJECT

info@utahprimatefreedom.com

(801) 347-7501

www.utahprimatefreedom.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U OF U TRIES TO HIDE IDENTITY OF ANIMAL RESEARCH STAFF

Citing security concerns, the University of Utah has refused to hand over the names of employees of their animal lab to animal rights activists. Katie Patterson, a member of Utah Primate Freedom and a student at the University of Utah, has been denied access to what she claims should be public information. Under Utah open records statutes, she has now officially appealed the University's decision to the Utah State Records Committee.

"I am mindful of the University's security concerns and issues with public safety. However, I believe in this case the principles of a democracy outweigh the theoretical safety issues," said Katie. "In reality, I believe the University is hesitant to hand this over because they do not want members of the public acting like a watchdog agency over their operations."

The University has a history of classifying documents related to their animal research programs. In September 2004, Utah Primate Freedom president and U student Jeremy Beckham won his appeal to the State Records Committee to gain access to protocols related to primate research.

"It doesn't surprise me that a vivisection lab would do everything possible to avoid transparency," said Jeremy Beckham, "not only are they worried we'll start calling attention to the worst abusers in the lab, they're also concerned we may try to reach out to compassionate individuals who have been inside the lab and have stories to tell us. For the U, the less we understand their operations, the better."

Utah Primate Freedom Project (UPF) is a student organization affiliated with the national Primate Freedom Project. UPF's stated goal is to see an end to all primate research on the University of Utah campus. UPF activists have been participating in demonstrations at the homes of U of U researchers almost every week to call attention to the treatment of primates inside the University laboratories.

With the support of UPF, Katie is determined to continue the struggle for an open government and ultimately for animal rights. "The U will contradict state law and their own standard operating procedures to hide their cruel practices. I'm proud to be another University student standing up against these horrific atrocities."