Problem statement:
The Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals states that all personnel using animals, including students, should be appropriately trained and apprised of risks involved with using animals. Most institutions have a process for tracking and training laboratory personnel; however, there is more of a challenge in tracking and training students involved in such activities as part of a surgical training class, university course, or as participants in animal demonstration activities. Are these students listed on the protocol as personnel or are rosters simply kept and, if so, where? How does the institution ensure these people receive appropriate training with respect to animal care and use, as well as information pertaining to the species and zoonosis or hazards risk? Is enrollment in the institution's occupational health animal handler program required?

Description of research:
Based on a survey of 11 teaching institutions, most institutions do not have a specific policy regarding teaching courses and do not list the students on protocols. However, all of the institutions require instructors and teaching assistants to be listed. Most of the institutions do not require students to take formal training courses or to enroll in their occupational health animal handler program. In most cases, training on animal use and occupational risks is given by the instructor and varies from course to course.

Additional information: To tackle this issue, we developed a policy that specifically addresses requirements for students and demonstration participants in teaching/training courses that use vertebrate animals. Teachers and teaching assistants must be listed as personnel on the protocol and enrolled in the occupational health animal handler program. Depending on the level of involvement (short-term vs. long-term), students and participants must either be listed on protocols as personnel, or the principal investigator (PI) must submit a roster to the IACUC office to be attached to the protocol. Level of involvement also determines whether the students/participants must attend mandatory training courses or an IACUC-approved orientation provided by the PI, and whether they must enroll in the occupational health animal handler program. Zoonosis and hazards risks are covered either in training courses or by the PI's IACUC-approved orientation. It can be difficult to satisfy the regulatory requirements for ensuring animal handlers. In this case, students in teaching courses are appropriately trained without overburdening the PIs. By providing information on how a large institution handles this unique problem, we hope to offer ideas to other institutions with similar challenges.