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James B. Milliken  
President

March 11, 2026

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES

Re: Issuance of a New Presidential Policy on High-Containment Research

Dear Colleagues:

I am formally transmitting the new Presidential Policy on High-Containment Research (HCR). The new Policy is effective March 11, 2026 and can be found online at [policy.ucop.edu/](https://policy.ucop.edu/). Issuance of this Policy is the culmination of several years of effort in response to recommendations from the UC Biosafety and Biosecurity Task Force, with support from The Regents of the University of California, to develop a Presidential Policy on High-Containment Research (HCR) to establish minimum requirements for the design, construction, operation, maintenance, and oversight of High-Containment Laboratories and Research activities at each UC Location.

**Background**

In 2014, several well-publicized incidents involving bio-hazardous materials led to increased scrutiny and heightened public awareness of biosafety and biosecurity nationwide. Congressional hearings and directives from the White House and National Institutes of Health (NIH) included recommendations that institutions conducting federally-funded research, such as the UC, should examine their biohazardous materials inventories and assess their practices in the handling of those materials with the goal of improving individual and public safety. In September 2014, former President Janet Napolitano responded by appointing the UC Task Force on Biosafety and Biosecurity to identify UC facilities and practices for the use of infectious agents and toxins, with an emphasis on Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories and materials.

In addition to supporting the federal recommendations to conduct an inventory of biohazardous materials and site visits to review facility operations, the UC Task Force on Biosafety and Biosecurity recommended several other actions to establish clear requirements for the safe handling and oversight of these materials and facilities at UC. Based on these recommendations, former President Napolitano issued a systemwide directive in March 2015 requiring all UC locations operating or actively planning recommissioning or construction of a high-containment facility to create and fund a High-Containment Laboratory Director position, to have the High-Containment Laboratory Director trained at the UCI National Biocontainment Training Center, and to

establish a High-Containment Laboratory Oversight Group (HCLOG). Additionally, the UC Office of the President was directed to create a systemwide High-Containment Laboratory Oversight Committee with representatives from the local HCLOGs.

This Presidential Policy represents a critical step toward the goal of achieving individual and public safety in the handling of biohazardous materials by formalizing the program requirements first mandated by former President Napolitano.

### Key Provisions

- **Policy Coverage.** The Policy covers all confirmed plans for or active High-Containment Laboratories or Research at all University-owned, -operated, and/or -leased locations.
- **High-Containment Laboratory Oversight Committee (HCLOC):** This is the systemwide body responsible for maintaining and ensuring consistent interpretation of the High-Containment Research Policy and for providing overall coordination and oversight of High-Containment Laboratory and Research management practices at UC. The committee is comprised of the High-Containment Laboratory Director and High-Containment Laboratory Oversight Group chair from each covered UC location, as well as the director of the UC National Biocontainment Training Center.
- **High-Containment Laboratory Oversight Program (HCL Program):** Each covered UC Location is responsible for developing and maintaining an HCL Program that includes the following major components:
  - **High-Containment Laboratory Oversight Group (HCLOG):** This committee acts as the local authority for High-Containment Laboratories and Research. The committee must include experts from relevant stakeholder groups, as well as the High-Containment Laboratory Director and a faculty chair, both of whom will represent their location on the systemwide HCLOC.
  - **High-Containment Laboratory Director (HCLD):** The HCLD is a designated employee at each UC Location who serves as the administrative official for local High-Containment Laboratories and Research and oversees the implementation of the High-Containment Research Policy and the local High-Containment Laboratory Management Plan. This individual serves on the local High-Containment HCLOG and the systemwide HCLOC.
  - **High-Containment Laboratory Management Plan (HCL Plan):** The HCL Plan must detail local High-Containment Laboratory and Research management practices, including the roles, responsibilities, and training requirements for affected personnel, risk assessment procedures, accurate biological agent inventories, required biosafety and biosecurity practices, facility operations and maintenance standards, occupational health and medical surveillance expectations, and incident response processes.

- **Reporting:** Each HCLOG will report annually to the HCLOC the status of its HCL Program. The HCLOC, in turn, will report triennially to the UC President on the state of High-Containment activities systemwide.

I ask that each location begin work immediately to ensure operations continue to meet the requirements identified in the Policy. These efforts will ensure that any High-Containment Research within the system will be conducted in a manner that complies with applicable laws and regulations and mitigates risks to safety, health, and the environment for the entire UC community.

Owners will assess the effectiveness of this Policy at the time it undergoes its first scheduled post-implementation review, in accordance with the schedule established by the University Policy Office.

I wish to thank all members of the University community who participated in consultation for this important Presidential Policy. Your contributions are deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,



James B. Milliken  
President

Enclosure

cc: Division Leaders  
Academic Council Vice Chair Scott  
Vice Provost Varsanyi  
Deputy Provost Lee  
Vice President Henderson  
Vice President Maldonado  
Associate Vice President and Chief Risk Officer Confetti  
Executive Director Lin  
Executive Director Smith  
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Program Manager Nelson  
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