

**SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE**  
**Bronxville, NY**

The policy below, adopted 1994, is printed in the college's registration packet for all prospective and returning students.

Choice Policy Regarding Dissection in Biology Courses

Sarah Lawrence College does not require students with ethical objections to participate in dissection. Students who choose to refrain from such activities will be given alternatives that will provide similar experiences. Those who choose such alternatives will not be penalized, although they will be responsible for the material presented in these exercises. If appropriate, separate evaluation of their learning experiences may be designed. In courses where dissection is considered to be fundamental and therefore mandatory, students should be informed of this during registration.

Students who feel that undue pressure to dissect has been placed upon them, or question the designation of a course as requiring mandatory dissection, may file a complaint with the Dean of the College.

Proposed Student Choice Dissection Policy

This policy is to affirm the rights of students who conscientiously object to participating in the dissection of animals, and to underscore the responsibility of school officials to provide these students with appropriate learning opportunities. Students may request alternatives to dissection if they are opposed to dissection because of religious or ethical reasons. Students requesting an alternative lesson plan should be granted their request without any pressure to do otherwise. Student values or beliefs regarding dissection must be respected.

In order to provide a truly fair student choice policy for classroom animal dissection the following provisions should be implemented:

1. All biology instructors should be informed of this policy through a written memo.
2. At the beginning of the semester, biology instructors should inform students of the option to choose an alternative, both orally and in writing. This policy should be included in the curriculum guide and the Timetable of Classes, and it should also be posted in all biology classrooms.

3. A student's grade would not in any way be affected by the choice of an alternative lesson plan, and a student should not be discriminated against based upon his or her decision to exercise the right of choice.
4. Testing and evaluation should be designed to measure the student's knowledge of the course objectives rather than the process of dissection itself, and should not include use of specimens.
5. Alternative education projects should be available in all biology classes for students who wish to refrain from the participation in, or observation of, a dissection. The project should require a comparable time and effort investment by the student. It should not, as a means of penalizing the student, be more arduous than the original dissection project.
6. The responsibility should not be on the student to determine an alternative course of study, as requiring the student to create his or her own course of study unfairly burdens the student.
7. Teacher guidance and assistance should be available for all students who choose alternatives.
8. As soon as possible, the department should create separate labs that do not use any animals in classes where the number of enrolled students permits. It is the department's responsibility to indicate in the Timetable of Classes and through other means that these new labs are available.

\* Proponents of Animal Liberation presented this model policy to Dr. Dean Stetler, Director of Undergraduate Biology and Genetics Programs, on April 1, 1996.

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