Protecting the Integrity of California Horse Racing

California’s horse racing industry relies on a unique partnership with the school to ensure the integrity of the sport and keep it safe for horses and jockeys. This relationship is recognized worldwide as a model for public and private sector cooperation in the conduct of horse racing and has demonstrated California’s capacity for visionary leadership.

Since the late 1970s, research has been conducted at the Center for Equine Health and other campus facilities to protect the health of racehorses. In 1999, the school added the Kenneth L. Maddy Equine Analytical Chemistry Laboratory. Created through legislative mandate, this laboratory provides routine drug testing and quality control. Additionally, its scientists conduct research into the effects of drugs on racing performance and the long-term health of horses. They develop new technologies to study the pharmacology of therapeutic medications, work with the veterinary pharmaceutical industry to investigate new animal drugs, and provide information, continuing education and recommendations on pharmacology-related issues.

The Maddy Laboratory now serves as the primary equine drug testing facility for California’s five permanent race courses and seven seasonal fair venues. The laboratory is equipped to detect more than 1,500 drugs in its routine testing. It was one of the first horse racing laboratories accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation and Racing Medication and Testing Consortium, based on the World Anti-Doping Association model. Its staff tests approximately 70,000 samples a year, looking for evidence of performance-enhancing and other prohibited drugs.