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**DR. CALVIN CARTER RESPONDS TO STATE AUDITOR'S REPORT: CLARIFYING THE FACTS AND
CALLING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS**

IOWA CITY, IA — This afternoon, Iowa State Auditor Rob Sand held a press conference to discuss a special investigation into spending activity at the University of Iowa's Department of Neuroscience and Pharmacology related to Dr. Calvin Carter.

An initial media report by KCRG mischaracterized the Auditor's findings by suggesting that Dr. Carter had "misappropriated" funds. This assertion is wholly unsupported by the Auditor's report, which identified no intentional wrongdoing on Dr. Carter's part. Quite to the contrary, the audit identifies certain expenditures as "unsupported" simply due to internal communication breakdowns that led to a technical failure to comply with an institutional policy; a policy that, according to the Auditor's findings, was never clearly communicated to Dr. Carter or, apparently, to his supervisors.

Dr. Carter strongly disputes the narrative presented in that KCRG report (for which he was not contacted for a statement) and is therefore forced to issue this public statement to clarify what the audit actually reveals: a series of administrative failures by the University of Iowa—not misappropriation or misconduct on Dr. Carter's part.

"The idea that I intentionally misused funds is deeply hurtful and patently false," said Dr. Carter. "I love my career and have devoted my life to trying to cure cancer, diabetes and advance the science of medicine in Iowa. The University has derailed both my life and my research because of its extremely complicated, wasteful, and unnecessary bureaucracies."

Dr. Val Sheffield, an esteemed scientist and member of the National Academy of Medicine was contacted for comment and says the following:

"I've worked with Dr. Carter since 2010 both as a supervisor and scientific collaborator and can speak not only to his high honesty and integrity but also to the fact that what the audit accuses him of doing reflects a general lack of clarity and support from the University administrators for all of its scientists. The audit report is filled with inaccuracies such as a finding that Dr. Carter misused glaucoma funding for his company, when in fact that funding was used appropriately by other researchers collaborating with my laboratory, not Dr. Carter."

Dr. Carter has been an Iowan for 16 years, having been trained at Iowa in graduate school and as a post-doctoral fellow from 2009 – 2022. While heavily recruited by opportunities in other States, his commitment to serving Iowans kept him here through his work as a scientist developing therapies for deadly diseases such as cancer and diabetes. His research has generated more than \$6 million in funding and resulted in nearly a dozen patent applications that benefit both the University and the people of Iowa. For his exciting research on diabetes treatments, [Dr. Carter was the recipient of the prestigious NIH New Innovator Award in 2023.](#)

Audit Findings Reflect Systemic University Administration Miscommunications

The audit report identifies \$291,731.01 in disbursements as “improper.” But the disbursements were deemed “improper” only because certain convoluted procedures were missed. All of the expenditures were for Dr. Carter’s legitimate and important research. Given the risk that media coverage may mischaracterize the nature of these findings, we offer below a detailed explanation of each area addressed in the Audit.

1. Pig Research Study

The largest category—over \$128,000—relates to a study involving diabetic pigs, funded by the FOE Diabetes Research Center’s *Bridge to the Cure* award. This funding was awarded to Dr. Carter while he was still in his training phase. This research was openly discussed and reviewed quarterly with University leadership. To ensure proper treatment of the diabetic pigs used in the study, Dr. Carter obtained IACUC approval at the contract research organization where the study took place. The research was approved and supervised by senior leadership at the University.

“Everyone involved supported the pig project as an important next step in the research. In fact, we were awarded an additional \$175,000 in funding based on our progress *after* presenting our results to University leadership,” Dr. Carter said.

At no point during these reviews was Dr. Carter told he needed separate approval from the University’s IACUC. The audit now claims this duplicative bureaucratic review was a necessary step, but the University’s own compliance teams failed to clearly communicate that at any time prior. Senior faculty at the University, including Dr. Sheffield, have stated that they are also unaware of such a policy.

What the Audit fails to address is the substantial benefit this research has brought to both the University and the state of Iowa, including new funding and intellectual property which is owned by the University. Importantly, none of the funds in question were received by Dr. Carter or by anyone else at the University for personal gain.

2. Patent Legal Fees

Roughly \$82,000 in legal fees flagged by the audit were associated with patent applications filed *on behalf of the University*, using private philanthropic donations from Dr. Carter’s family

and a family foundation. These filings were necessary for the University to access innovation-focused funding streams like the NIH STTR and UIowa GAP programs. These efforts were coordinated while Dr. Carter was a trainee under Dr. Val Sheffield's mentorship, and the team worked through the UI Foundation to receive and apply the donated funds. The confusion arose because the University's internal agreement with legal counsel was, according to the audit itself, convoluted and poorly managed, not because of any wrongdoing by Dr. Carter.

Once again, the Audit overlooks the significant benefits these activities provide to the University and the broader public. The fees in question relate to patents that expand access to diabetes research and benefit Iowans through innovations in that field. These patents give the University ownership of novel technologies invented by Dr. Carter and aimed at addressing some of the most pressing medical challenges of our time—diabetes foremost among them. Dr. Carter receives no direct financial benefit from these fees, as the University—not Dr. Carter—retains ownership of all resulting intellectual property.

3. Lab Website

The audit also flags costs associated with developing a lab website. As a new faculty member, Dr. Carter followed common practice by hiring a vendor frequently used and recommended by other researchers. He later received approval from both the Chief Information Officer and his Department to move forward. All of this approval can be easily confirmed by speaking with the CIO and reviewing relevant documentation.

The intention of the website, was to support lab recruitment, public engagement, and education—core University missions. Any retroactive claim that this was “inappropriate” spending contradicts the guidance and approvals received at the time.

4. Broader Communication Failures by the University

The audit report itself acknowledges systemic failures in University management. It found:

- The University failed to monitor or enforce its own conflict-of-interest management plans.
- Procurement staff misunderstood vendor naming conventions, leading to internal confusion over whether Geminii was a project or a separate entity.
- Documentation and compliance systems were inconsistent, and internal policies were poorly communicated—even to University staff.

Other faculty at the University have faced similar situations. In one recent case, a physicist falsely accused in a state audit settled to clear his name after demonstrating that investigators had relied on misleading and incomplete information. ([Link to article](#)).

The auditor's findings consistently point to institutional failures in policy communication and documentation systems rather than individual malfeasance, with recommendations focused entirely on improving University communication and oversight procedures.

A Call for Fairness and Transparency

Dr. Carter emphasizes his continued willingness to cooperate and provide documentation that refutes the audit's claims. He is considering legal options, including potential defamation claims, in response to the reputational damage caused by the report and related media coverage.

“I’m committed to my students, my colleagues, and the pursuit of science that helps people,” Dr. Carter said. “But I will not stand quietly by while some administrators try to tarnish my name and the good work we do for Iowans, all over administrative policies and technicalities so obscure that others didn’t know existed either.”

He encourages reporters and the public to review all relevant documents and reach out for comment or clarification before forming conclusions.