



# Our expectations of each other

(last revised December 2020)

Within the lab, we strive to openly communicate with one another so that our science can be collaborative, healthy, safe, and efficient. Meant only as a starting point, here are some general expectations that can (and should) be tailored to folks in the group. This is a multi-directional conversation. This is meant to be a living document that will evolve over time with community member input and our shared experiences. Here goes:

*Our general guiding principles are that we:*

*treat each other with respect,*

*be engaged members of the group and our broader community,*

*be open and honest about our science,*

*be professional/collegial*

*share/contribute to the wealth of institutional knowledge.*

*Overall, let's all just try our best to be good humans (to ourselves, and each other).*

*General note: In addition to that articulated below, our group meets weekly for ~ 1hr. We alternate between reading papers and hearing short research talks from group members (schedule established at the beginning of the term). Further, at the beginning of each semester (and preceding personal contract discussions), each lab member presents their goals for the given semester/summer.*

## **My expectations of group members:**

1. I expect honesty from you. I will not judge you for not knowing something or for breaking something in the lab; everyone has different educational backgrounds, and everyone breaks something from time to time.
2. I expect that you will respect my time as I respect yours. If we have a meeting scheduled, I expect you to be on time or to let me know if you will be late. (and I will do the same!)
3. I expect you to be a full part of the lab/research community. Learning resides at the heart of the lab. For graduate students and research scientists, this implies joining lab meetings and participating fully (doing the pre-work, presenting, asking questions, etc.). This also includes being involved in lab outreach activities, host visiting speakers, etc. For undergraduates, we welcome you in any and all activities your schedule permits.
4. I expect you to tell me when your plate is overflowing (or nearing that point). I respect the fact that you are typically juggling many parallel efforts, and time is finite. Politely explain this, and say no. This is fine and I expect you to do this.
5. I expect that you will usually respond in a timely fashion (24 hrs if during the work week). If you need more time, please respond that my note was "received" and provide a timetable on which I can expect your response. Associated with this, I expect that you will tell me when you will be out of town for extended periods, in case lab issues come up and we are looking for you.

6. For graduate students and research scientists, I expect you to contribute to the communal maintenance of laboratory resources. For me, this translates to everyone being invested and contributing time to the success of the lab (not just in your own research). Running a lab is a huge collective effort, and we all contribute to our collective success.
7. I expect you to be resourceful. Many things 'stick' better when you have to work through a problem, and related to that above, there is a solid chance someone in the lab can help. So talk about your problems and challenges. This is how we learn from each other (and I don't have all the answers, anyway!)
8. For graduate students and research scientists, I expect that you/we will discuss your role in each project that you're a part of (within and outside our lab), as well as any issues of authorship on publications, presentations and talks. This should happen early and often. From the earliest drafts, please include / acknowledge the scientists that have contributed to the ideas captured in that document / presentation.
9. For graduate students and research scientists, I expect you will actively pursue funds to support your research and help me do the same. This is easily one of the most important aspects of your training - learning how to sell your ideas - and it takes lots of practice. This will include applying for fellowships and contributing to larger scale research grants.
10. I expect you to prioritize a work-life balance that works for you. This encompasses physical and mental health, so time with family /friends and space to be active. There may be times when we are putting in more hours because of deadlines, but in general you can think of graduate school as a marathon. Making sure you're happy and healthy is key for long-term success.

**Your expectations of me:**

1. For graduate students, you can expect us to meet regularly (roughly weekly during the semester and by appointment during the summer). For research scientists, we can meet as needed. For undergraduates, we will set up a schedule that fits with your classes and that is consistent with the mentoring you seek in a given semester. For all, this may change if particular deadlines exist – this will be spelled out in advance.
2. You can expect me to ask for and be open to your honest feedback about the lab, your experience, and your perception of me as a mentor. I can't improve without feedback.
3. You can expect me to give you my honest feedback about your science and progress. I am here to support you in every way possible and giving you feedback is one of the most important ways to promote your success.
4. You can expect that I will treat everyone equally and that I will be fair to all.
5. You can expect me to discuss research plans and provide timely feedback on your work, and for me to communicate that specific turn-around time when I take receipt of the paper/poster/presentation.
6. You can expect me to listen to your concerns and be your advocate (within the group, Dept., University, and beyond). That said, I can only help when I am in the loop. And advocacy, of course, extends to the positive instances as well.
7. You can expect me to help you network. I will write emails to introduce you to people in the field and I will connect you to people at meetings. I will also guide you in knowing what to expect from these interactions. There is no fixed prescription with respect to conference attendance (this will be done based on project maturity), however you can expect that I will be receptive to a discussion about your wishes regarding meetings.
8. You can expect me to best-enable your academic and professional development and the achievement of your goals, including but not limited to choosing classes, teaching

opportunities, research directions, funding opportunities, conference attendance, post-graduation job search/career guidance. Implicit in this is my willingness to write letters of recommendation.

9. You can expect me to work very hard with you on your science, which includes making sure you have access to the resources necessary. This is one of the most important products (papers, posters, presentation) by which your professional success is measured. You can expect me to work as hard toward your success as you do. The harder you push, the harder I will push.
10. For graduate and undergraduate students, you can expect that I will be open and honest about your readiness for thesis presentations, Qualifying exams, and dissertation defenses. This includes my role in preparing you for these hurdles.
11. You can expect me to ensure that you have a safe and supportive work environment. If you have any concerns about the climate in the lab (or in the field), I want to know as soon as possible. In this context, it's important to know that, as a faculty member, I am a mandatory reporter, which means I must report any instances of harassment or abuse. However, all that 'reported' information remains confidential unless YOU choose to release it. Beyond that mandatory requirement (which only covers certain topics), I will not share details of our conversations without your permission.
12. If a conflict arises between lab members, you can expect me to serve as a moderator and resolve the issue. If I cannot, or you would like to see additional support, see #13 below.
13. You can expect me to help you find other resources and other mentors when you need additional support beyond my abilities.

**When expectations are not met, we can:**

1. Speak directly to each other and reference personal contracts. Often setting shorter term deliverables and schedules allows goals to be more effectively met.
2. Seek outside assistance.
  - i) For undergraduates, this includes the UG support staff, house advisors, EPS advisors, and other folks within the lab.
  - ii) For graduate students, you can consult the GSC and support staff (Aimee), your thesis committee members.
  - iii) For research scientists, this includes other faculty members

*These expectations were heavily influenced/inspired by many colleagues across disciplines. We thank them all for setting an excellent example of effective mentoring.*