Rachel and Abi’s Joint Mentoring Philosophy Statement

Generally, **a successful mentoring relationship is centered on the mentee’s success at accomplishing (or making strides towards) their self-determined goals, and the mentor uses a particular project as a vehicle for enabling this success.** This relationship is person-focused, in that *the desires, needs, and goals of a mentee are discussed frequently and in-depth; task-focused discussions are utilized to teach a mentee useful skills and help them approach their goals.* This progresses the mentor’s project while remaining centered on the mentee.

Expectations of the Mentor

* **Punctuality:** arrives on-time or early to all meetings.
* **Promptness:** addresses issues, answers emails, responds to questions within 1 business day.
* **Honesty:** makes expectations clear, both in overall project/mentoring relationship and in weekly meetings. Provides external resources when the mentor lacks knowledge enough to answer mentee’s questions.
* **Receptiveness:** solicits and integrates mentee suggestions for future directions of the project, where appropriate and relevant.
* **Flexibility:** allows mentees to set their own schedule, when appropriate. Understands that inevitable conflicts arise and allows for rescheduling when necessary. Gives mentee time to develop their own directions for the project. Allows mentee to be independent, after the training and learning period.
* **Integrity:** holds mentees to the same scientific ethical principles as mentor and others. Provides mentees with specific ethical principles to follow.
* **Involvement:** meets with mentee once a week to discuss progress, answer questions, and assess next steps. Integrates mentee’s goals into the project; creates new opportunities for the mentee to learn what they want to learn.
* **Compassion:** ensures that mentee has time off. Regularly checks in on mentee’s mental health and physical wellness. Invites mentee to lab events (socials, lunches, meetings, etc.).

Expectations of the Mentee

* **Punctuality:** arrives on-time or early to all meetings.
* **Promptness:** addresses issues, answers emails, responds to questions within 1 business day.
* **Preparedness:** comes with data, questions, ideas, goals, etc. to meetings.
* **Honesty:** admits when experiments are going poorly and asks for help. Provides mentor with accurate goals to work towards. Is open about schedules and outside-of-lab tasks (e.g., exams, homework, projects).
* **Integrity:** keeps clear and legible records of experiments, even when they go wrong. Does not falsify data or “stretch” it to fit it to the larger project. Follows lab safety guidelines.
* **Involvement:** is engaged and excited (at least most of the time) about the project. Thinks about data & what it means before meeting with mentor. Reads relevant literature and discusses it with mentor & other mentees. Has fun creating new knowledge!

Meeting Guidelines

* **During training phase:**
  + The **mentor** will schedule biweekly, 60-minute, **group** check-in meetings on a consistent day and time
  + These meetings will be on a consistent day/time
  + These meetings will emphasize *understanding concepts, skill/technique acquisition,* and *integration of skills with the mentee’s goals*
* **During research phase:**
  + The **mentor** will schedule biweekly, 60-minute, **group** check-in meetings on a consistent day and time
  + The **mentee** will schedule **individual** check-in meetings as needed, **when they need feedback or assistance. The mentee is expected to reach out when they need help** (if you don’t ask, we – the mentors – won’t know!)
  + These meetings will emphasize *troubleshooting*, *applying concepts, identifying improvement areas, data analysis,* and *progression towards mentee’s goals*
  + The **mentor** may invite the mentee to literature club meetings, larger project meetings, *etc.*, depending on the mentee’s progress and development as a scientist and collaborator. **The mentee is expected to come prepared** to share their knowledge (e.g., reading and taking notes on the assigned paper to a literature club meeting, bringing a powerpoint of processed data to a project meeting). **The mentor will discuss expectations of these meetings with the mentee.**
* At the end of each semester, the **mentor** will schedule an **individual** **meeting** with the mentee on “State of the Research.”
  + This meeting will address *the mentee’s accomplishments*, *plans for the next semester*, and *feedback*.
  + Both the mentee and the mentor will provide feedback to each other.
  + Both the mentee and the mentor are expected to embody the qualities of *receptiveness*, *preparedness*, *honesty*, and *integrity* in giving feedback.

Communication

* The mentee and mentor will be in regular communication with each other
* The mentee can contact Rachel anytime, although she probably won’t respond to messages after 7pm until the next day.
* The best way to get in touch with Rachel and Abi is via **text message or Slack message.** In emergencies, you may call Rachel at +1 (937) 760-3045 and Abi at +1 (208) 521-3087.
* The mentee can contact Rachel and Abi anytime. Rachel doesn’t typically respond to messages after 7pm, and Abi doesn’t typically respond to messages before 8am or after 6pm.

Training & Onboarding Structure

* **During training phase:**
  + The **mentor** will schedule one-time (per technique), 2-hour **group training**
    - Group training will emphasize *shadowing/observation, identifying skill acquisition needs,* and *conceptual understanding*
    - There will be a maximum of 2 of these per week
  + The **mentor** will schedule **individual guided training**
    - Guided training will emphasize *practical application, ability to apply observations,* and *skill acquisition*
    - This will be scheduled for 1 or 2 business days after group training
  + The **mentor** will schedule **individual supervised training**
    - Supervised training will emphasize *skill application, troubleshooting*, and *skill integration*
    - This will be scheduled 1-3 business days after guided training
  + The **mentee** will schedule an **individual checkout** 
    - Individual checkout will emphasize *skill demonstration*
    - Successful completion of the individual checkout will release mentee to work freely on the technique as required by their project
* Initial training is expected to take 4-5 weeks to complete.

Completion/Termination of the Mentoring Relationship

* **The person wishing to terminate the relationship** (mentor/mentee) will **inform the other party** (mentee/mentor), either verbally or in writing *(not necessary if the mentee is graduating)*
* The end of the obligation for the mentee will be the end of the semester. **Two weeks’ notice** **should be given**, except for emergencies or if the mentee is graduating
* **The person wishing to terminate the relationship** will **schedule a 30-minute exit meeting** with the other party
* At the exit meeting, the following will be discussed:
  + Mentee’s progress towards their personal goals
  + Mentor’s performance in support of mentee
  + Current state of the mentee’s project (what still needs to be done to complete it, etc.)
  + Mentee’s suggestions for future work
  + Anything else the mentee would like to discuss
* **Remember: it is always possible to leave a project with honor, but it is never honorable to disappear without a word.**
* Providing no severe transgressions of the above expectations, we (the mentors) will be more than happy to write letters of recommendation/etc. Please give me at least two weeks’ notice!

Research Guidelines

* ***RESEARCH HOURS.* “Research” is defined as reading papers, attending meetings, running experiments, and performing lab-related tasks.**
* Allotted research time is not to exceed the predetermined number of hours (typically 10) per week, unless explicitly agreed upon by mentor & mentee.
  + This time commitment will be averaged over the course of the semester, to account for week-to-week variations in schedules (exams, travel, *etc*.)
  + Increasing allotted research time is acceptable, given the following conditions are met:
    - Credit hours are adjusted commensurate with increase in time
    - Mentee is at a B- or above in all courses
    - Mentee still retains at LEAST 1 day research-free per week
    - Mentee’s mental & social health are not negatively affected by increased research demands
  + Decreasing allotted research time is acceptable in the following circumstances:
    - Mentee is falling behind in classes
    - Mentee is struggling to balance research, academics, and personal life
    - **Research time MUST be decreased if mentee is below a C- in ANY class.**
    - **The mentor OR the mentee may initiate this conversation. Please communicate your needs! 😊**
* ***WORKING HOURS.* The mentee is expected to work during regular working hours (8am – 6pm) for the first 6-8 weeks of research.**
  + Once the mentee is comfortable with executing experiments and has successfully completed at least 5 experiments without mentor intervention, the mentee will be released to work on weekends, if they prefer.
  + **Absolutely NO research by mentees is to be performed after 11pm or before 6am.** This is for the mentee’s safety.
* ***PROJECT ASSIGNMENT.*** In the first semester, the mentee will be trained on basic execution of lab experiments, and then given a “mini-project,” for which outcomes are generally known, to complete for the rest of the semester. This will allow the mentee to acclimate to the lab environment in a low-stress setting.
  + The mentee will be offered project options for future semesters, and can choose a project based on their interests.
  + If the mentee demonstrates exceptional progress in their understanding of their research, the mentor can offer the mentee the opportunity to develop their own work.
  + These options and opportunities will be presented at the end-of-semester meeting and during meetings and conversations throughout the semester.

Grading

* How we will “grade” you is mostly on your *process*, not any particular outcome:
  + Do you make progress when we meet each week?
  + Do you meet the mentee expectations consistently?
  + Have you contributed to solving a problem, filling a gap in the literature, or answering an interesting question?
* If you have done all the above, you will likely get an A. We’re not out to get you!