

## Sokol-Hessner Lab: PhD Student Expectations

Grad school starts out being relatively structured - with classes, clear responsibilities with deadlines & oversight. During your years working toward your PhD, though, you'll be transitioning to a more and more independent and unstructured (externally) mode of work.

### Mutual expectations

- We will use the following modes of communication:
  - *Slack* - most daily communication, extended written conversations. Conversations about projects will generally take place in those specific channels, and private conversations will take place in direct messages.
    - Please enable notifications, have the Slack app installed (e.g. on your computer, smartphone), and configure your account to ensure you have an actual presence on Slack.
  - *Email* - for larger/longer communication that is less conversational and/or includes people from outside the lab.
  - *Zoom and phone* - for live, remote meetings. We will try to use Zoom when possible to maintain social connection & interaction, relying on the phone when needed.
  - *Text messages* - for emergencies only. Phone calls may also be appropriate for emergencies.
- Conversations will remain professional. While we will share aspects of our lives as part of working together for years, generally personal information should be volunteered only, and not requested, and privacy should be a general expectation if such sharing occurs. Feel no pressure to share any personal information.
- We will uphold the DU Honor Code, be honest and ethical, respect and support members of the lab including the identities they hold, conduct ourselves professionally, and be receptive to constructive feedback.
- We will maintain personal lives...
  - All members of the lab are encouraged to take vacations or breaks, especially between terms and during parts of the summer. Members of the lab will put their vacations, as soon as they are known, in the lab calendar, and inform Dr. Sokol-Hessner that they've done so.
  - Members are also encouraged to consider their weekends and evenings their own time - you may make the choices you need to in order to balance your personal and professional lives.
  - Members are encouraged to have and enjoy their relationships with family and friends as part of being a whole, healthy person.
- If ill, isolate from other members of the lab, take the time required to heal and recover, and ensure that any time-sensitive responsibilities of theirs are met either by them or someone else.

- When unforeseen challenges or opportunities for important or difficult feedback arise, we will attempt to address them as quickly as possible, directly with the person(s) involved, in constructive, positive, and supportive ways that actively involve perspective taking, validation, patience, and belief in one another and our ability to grow.

### **Expectations of me**

- Timely feedback on what you write or analyze. Feedback will be constructive (focused on ways to improve), and may vary from high-level, abstract feedback to very detailed concrete feedback depending on the document, time constraints, and other context.
- Support (in your classes; in your professional goals, be they academic or otherwise).
- That I will seek out support for you in the form of opportunities to work with other people who can teach you stuff, identify funding opportunities to get you off of TAs and ideally get you summer support, get you professional exposure (via conferences, reviewing, etc)
- Will make time to meet with you and talk about your research and your progress.
  - Both structured times & impromptu when possible.
- Help you keep an eye on your grad school requirements.
- Will check in with you periodically about big-picture professional goals, progress, and potential or actual issues.
- I'll be understanding about challenges or bumps in the road while not giving you a free pass, and nudging and guiding you toward how to do better.
- I'll help you identify and execute the specific actions needed to get you your degree (e.g. papers to write & publish, etc).
- I will provide a safe, intellectually stimulating, supportive, respectful, and effective environment for you to grow as a scientist.

### **Expectations for you**

- You'll work independently, actively pursuing and developing your interests and projects in research & grad school. This is YOUR degree.
- You will seek out meetings and help (from me or others) when you need it, in addition to regular meetings to keep me up to date on what you're doing.
- You'll keep track of your own grad school requirements, coursework, etc. to make sure you're on track.
- You will seek out professional development opportunities for yourself (including funding to apply for; projects to do; people to learn from; etc).
- You will engage in and strive to balance coursework, research, teaching/TAs, and service.
- You will publish multiple papers in peer-reviewed journals before you're done.
- You'll be a good lab citizen by contributing to the lab, sharing your knowledge, perspective, and experience, and working with other members of the lab.
- You'll document what you do and how you do it, and share those as needed with me (or other lab members or, e.g. on GitHub).

- You'll check in with me about vacations/sickness/etc.
- You'll attend lab meeting and occasionally lead/present at lab meeting.

**A few suggestions**

- Watch your money (you mostly get paid during the academic year, like I do; be careful that you don't run out in the summer).
- Keep an eye on your teaching requirement (need to guest lecture, etc).
- Remember to periodically revisit long-term requirements and goals to ensure you're on track.
- Keep an eye on your mental and physical health - without those, nothing else is possible.

**Let's...**

- Meet weekly or biweekly, as needed, for general check-ins.
- Set up any recurring project-specific meetings needed.
- Have a special meeting at the start of each term to identify what the goals are for that term, and reflect on recent progress, challenges, and opportunities.

We have discussed the above on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

MONTH                  DAY                  YR

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE

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PRINTED NAME

**PI:** \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE

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PRINTED NAME