Brains in Motion Lab

Advising Statement: Mentor–Mentee Principles and Expectations

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Welcome to the Brains in Motion Lab! I hope your time here is a great one: that you learn a lot, form positive relationships with your colleagues, and contribute excellently to science.

My job is to do good science and train good scientists. As your advisor, I aim to advance your career through hands-on mentorship, clear expectations, and consistent support toward the goals you define. This statement lays out the principles that guide how we work together and applies to PhD students and postdoctoral fellows. Day-to-day procedures (scheduling, time off, communication tools, dress code, and lab upkeep) are in the BIM Lab OneNote. If you have any questions, please ask me.

Research Goals and Productivity

1. Follow through on your commitments.

- I expect trainees to set concrete short- and long-term research goals with timelines, and to deliver on the commitments they make to me and to the team.
- Productivity is valued over hours worked. Trainees who meet their goals and are dependable for data collections, meetings, and events earn more autonomy in when and where they work.
- Postdocs are full time (40 h/wk). PhD research and teaching assistantships are 20 h/wk, separate from coursework and dissertation work. I work to align assistantship duties with your thesis direction so that time serves both.
- I expect trainees to tell me ***early*** if a deadline or plan is at risk, and to come up with an alternate plan for us to discuss.

2. Use your time wisely.

- I expect trainees to set daily and weekly goals and track their progress, so we can see momentum and celebrate your hard work.
- We value a social lab (lab lunches, runs, and outings) while staying mindful of lab mates who are working.

3. Authorship is a discussion, not an assumption.

- We will agree on authorship before each project starts and revisit it openly as the project evolves. Authorship reflects a significant intellectual and/or work contribution, such as project conception, the experimental paradigm, or the analytic plan.
- I expect trainees to use our lab writing formula and peer-review process for abstracts, posters, and manuscripts. I will provide input at the outset and throughout the writing process.

Funding

4. Be proactive and take initiative.

- I have the primary responsibility to provide adequate funding for research in our lab.
- I expect trainees to seek funding for their own projects and professional development (e.g., F31/F32, AHA fellowships, T32 and MnDRIVE training grants, DDF/IDF). Writing these applications is valuable training even when unfunded, and funded awards give you more autonomy and time to spend on your individual project.
- I expect first drafts 4–6 weeks before a deadline (e.g. grants, manuscripts, scientific abstracts) to allow me to provide substantive feedback and to allow time for multiple rounds of review, and follow-through on SPA deadlines once you commit. An applicant's lack of preparation is not someone else's urgent situation.

- While fellowship applications are in preparation and pending, I expect trainees to stay open to RA and TA opportunities that support their training.

5. Be a team player.

- I expect trainees to contribute to group efforts that benefit everyone: participant recruitment, community and outreach events, trainee recruitment, lab demos, and serving as pilot participants for lab mates and close collaborators.
- I expect trainees to contribute to grant efforts that sustain our lab's resources (pilot data, preliminary analyses, figures), which is also excellent practice for your own grant writing.

Meetings and Communication

6. Maximize my time with you.

- Weekly lab meetings are mandatory unless otherwise communicated. Come prepared to contribute, and use these meetings to practice presenting and scientific discourse.
- We will hold regular one-on-one meetings, and I expect you to lead them: bring an agenda, updates on your goals, and any materials you want me to review.
- Provide a minimum of 3 days for me to provide feedback on any given document or work product.
- I will be available to meet and work with you and will expand our time when you have a grant or paper deadline. If my door is open, come by; otherwise, message me on our team communication channel.
- I expect trainees to troubleshoot and to learn to judge how long a problem should take to solve. Some problems really are hard, so don't spend hours stuck. When you need my help, bring me the full problem and be able to describe what you've tried in detail.

Professionalism

7. Treat everyone with respect, and be generous with one another.

- We value a positive, encouraging, and collaborative environment. Be generous with your time and talents; you may teach a lab mate a skill today and learn one from them tomorrow.
- Participants' comfort and well-being are a top priority in every session.
- If you have an interpersonal conflict, tell me as soon as possible so we can work toward a resolution together.
- If you have concerns about me, you can tell me directly, use the anonymous BIM Lab Feedback Form, or reach out to the graduate program's DGS, the Student Conflict Resolution Center (students), or the Office for Conflict Resolution (postdocs).

8. Remember that you are a representative of the Brains in Motion Lab.

- I expect trainees to represent themselves and our work professionally with participants, visitors, and collaborators, and to refer questions they can't answer to me.

Ethical Behavior

9. Be honest.

- If something goes wrong, tell me ASAP. An honest mistake is typically one I can help fix; covering it up, no matter how small, makes it a much bigger problem.
- If you discover an error in past work (data collection, analysis, or interpretation), report it immediately, however far along the project is. Mistakes reported promptly are learning opportunities; intentional misrepresentation is a serious matter.
- I expect trainees to take ownership of their mistakes and use them as opportunities to learn. Accountability is how we all grow as scientists.

10. A culture of integrity and excellence.

- I will maintain, and I expect trainees to maintain, ethical standards in research and scholarly work, including institutional and federal regulations, plagiarism, data management, and copyright. All trainees complete and maintain required training, including human subjects training.
- I expect accurate record-keeping: a well-organized file structure, an organized electronic lab notebook, a master spreadsheet documenting each participant/dataset and any deviation from the standard analytic approach, and well-commented, shared code. Reproducible science relies on good documentation.
- We are committed to a lab where everyone does their best work. When expectations aren't being met, I will tell you directly in a constructive manner and we will work together to make a plan; consistently not meeting expectations after that may affect continued support in the lab.

Independence and Professional Development

11. Practice tough love and constructive criticism.

- Scientific criticism is not personal criticism. The best criticism is the criticism you get at home, from people you trust. Feedback in our lab should always be constructive and actionable, and I will model this in lab meetings and one-on-ones. I aim to deliver feedback with care, and I never want it to land as harsh. But I also don't want to see your opportunities in this lab wasted because I didn't tell you difficult, but important, information.
- I expect trainees to build critical thinking and increasing independence by asking questions, proposing new ideas, providing well-grounded rationale for their approach, and taking ownership of their projects.

12. Your effort is noticed and will be rewarded.

- Individuals who are reliable, resilient, consistent, hard-working problem solvers and great team players stand out here.
- Rewards include strong letters of recommendation, special projects and new skills, conference presentations, paid opportunities as new grants come in, and authorship. Letters of recommendation are earned, not assumed, and new responsibilities follow from how well you handle your current ones.
- PhD students should plan to present posters locally by the end of year 1 and apply for national oral presentations by the end of year 2. Conference travel support is discussed case by case, so start planning 10–12 months ahead. Communicate *early* with me which conferences you want to attend and what you would potentially present.

13. What you can expect from me.

- I will really care about your professional and scientific growth, and I will go to bat for you during your time in the lab and beyond.
- I will provide consistent, hands-on mentorship and help you navigate your training and next career step, whether in academia, industry, public service, or elsewhere.
- I will strive to be equitable, encouraging, and respectful, and to share resources and my time fairly across trainees.
- At the start of each semester we will outline your deliverables, and at least once a semester we will review your progress through your Individual Development Plan (IDP) and mentor-mentee agreement.
- If you see ways I could provide you with better mentorship, I want to hear them and will do my best to support you.

Work-Life alignment

- Work and life should align in a way that feels right to you, and what that looks like differs for each person. Research can be deeply fulfilling, and so can the parts of your life outside it. I encourage

you to invest in the other dimensions that make you a whole person, whether that's family, community, creative work, or something else entirely."

- I also encourage you to protect time for physical movement and exercise. It supports the cognitive demands and (sometimes) psychological stress of doing science, and it's something we study in this lab. Let's practice what we preach!.
- If you have increased mental or physical health needs, I will do my best to support you, connect you with resources, and provide reasonable accommodations. See UMN mental health resources and, for postdocs, the UMN Employee Assistance Program.

Timeline

- PhD trainees are expected to complete their PhD in 4–5 years. Postdoctoral appointments are reviewed and potentially renewed annually. Our grant budgets follow these timelines, so support beyond them cannot be guaranteed.
- PhD students are expected to first-author at least 2 papers during their PhD training; postdocs are expected to first-author two papers per year, typically from existing data and/or ongoing studies.

I very much look forward to working with you!

We have discussed this advising statement and understand the expectations and responsibilities that come with entering into this advising relationship.

_____ Date: _____
Trainee

_____ Date: _____
Advisor