

Advising Statement

Welcome to graduate school and to the Neurobiology of Emotion, Sleep and Trauma (NEST) lab! I am delighted that you are interested in becoming a member of the NEST team. I hope that this document will provide you some guidelines in managing your graduate school experience and research with me, and help you towards becoming the independent and successful scientist you will be. This document should also give you an idea of what support you can expect from me.

As Dr. Megan Gunner says so eloquently, development involves the child being an active creator of their own experiences, rather than a passive recipient. The same goes for doing well in graduate school. **You cannot just sit and wait to learn.** You must be an active participant. If you want to meet with me, email me. If you have a research idea, begin to flesh it out and talk with me or others in the lab to hone your ideas. If there is a technique you want to learn, volunteer to help on a project using that technique. Then read up on how to use it so that you come to the experience with some knowledge already gleaned. Most of what you learn about doing research you will learn by doing research. So, get active. But, remember to think about what is on your plate. Don't overcommit. Need advice on how much to take on? Ask any of your peers, don't be afraid to ask me or the graduate director.

Collaboration

Research is a team sport. You are entering a research team. This team includes paid staff, maybe a post-doc and other students. I expect you to both receive support from your fellow team members and to provide support to them in their work. Collaboration is an integral part of the research environment. Not only does it bring benefits to the individual researcher, it also ensures that science is done in the most open and productive environment. I expect you to be open to not only sharing your ideas and knowledge with your peers and colleagues, but also receiving feedback (critical or positive).

I also am very happy when you connect with other faculty and lab groups, whether that merely means attending their lab meetings/journal clubs or designing research that integrate our two areas. I welcome collaboration as it provides a sense of community. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community of scientists to support a well-rounded graduate student. My only concern will be that you don't spread yourself too thin and take on too many projects across labs. You should always let me know what you are doing so that I can advise you best.

Communication and respect

Timely communication is a must for the success of this advising relationship. All forms of communication with me are encouraged (email, in-person, calls). **Communication and respect are key.** Issues that arise in the lab should be addressed early and in a respectful manner.

Presence in the lab

Students who get the most out of the lab, spend time in the lab. You may have your own desk/office in the graduate student office and may prefer to work there. But, spending time in the lab and being present at experiments will provide you with opportunities to get hands-on training

and support and to know what is going on in the lab. Certainly, you should plan to make all lab meetings that do not conflict with your classes. You are expected to attend journal clubs as these will be scheduled around your classes.

Time Management

Time management is a very critical skill that we all need to develop, especially if you have had personal struggles with it in the past. It is important to meet deadlines as some can have long term impact. On the other hand, things come up. Health issues and emotional issues and COVID-19 has certainly exacerbated this. I want you to succeed, and sometimes that means taking one step back in order to go 3 steps forward! **Mental health is a priority in the lab. When we take care of ourselves, we are more sensitive to the needs of others.** But if you need this, I want you to be proactive. Please let me know ahead of time if you foresee a deadline that will not be met.

In the beginning of your graduate studies you will have to climb a learning curve that will take more hours than you expect. Once you develop a regular schedule you will find it easier to get tasks accomplished efficiently. Create an outline of tasks that you will need to accomplish in order to achieve your objectives. Estimate how much time you will need to complete those tasks, and set your own personal deadlines. We are all students in this area. I can work with you in setting or designing your schedule if needed. And when you begin, you can use standing meetings with me as a way of keeping yourself on track. However, you will need to get beyond using a meeting with me as the reason to get a task done as good time management is critical to success.

Ideas (Intellectual property)

I expect that the people in my research team will be generous with one another and will share their ideas freely. I also expect people to be aware of those who have contributed to the development of their ideas and to acknowledge them accordingly. You will have many opportunities to work on papers with me and your peers. It is very important to decide up front when designing a project and planning a paper who the authors will be and their order. Authors and order depend on input, thus this can change during a project and when it does there should be open and honest discussions about changing authors and/or order. Every decision should be kept in writing, if only in a group e-mail. A paper trail makes good colleagues, just like a fence makes good neighbors.

My Commitment to You

I take my role as an advisor and mentor very seriously. To me that means my job is to help you with your career both before and after you get your Ph.D. You are responsible for asking me for help. I promise to respond as quickly and as helpfully as I can. If I do not have an answer to your problem, we will work together to find somebody who does. As a junior faculty, I am also on a learning journey, but you are a priority.