Mentoring Philosophy: Eric A. Newman

My approach to graduate student training and research involves extensive interaction and discussion with my students. My laboratory is relatively small, currently consisting of three graduate students, a lab manager/technician and several undergraduates. This allows me ample time to meet with my students. I meet informally with them several times a week to discuss their research projects. In addition, we hold weekly lab meetings to discuss research progress. My students give a formal presentation of their research progress at a lab meeting approximately every four weeks. They also have discussions with members of their thesis committees and they convene formal thesis committee meetings every six months where they give a presentation of their latest research results and receive advice from committee members. My students also present their research to the faculty and students of the University of Minnesota’s Program in Neuroscience in a formal seminar each spring.

The following represents my commitment to training and mentoring as well as expectations I have of my students.

Research:

- I expect my students to develop, in consultation with me, concrete short and long term research goals as well as a timeline for reaching these goals. We will meet regularly to discuss progress toward the goals.

- I expect my students to submit and publish a minimum of one peer-reviewed first author publication.

- I expect my students to keep up to date with the literature related to their research project.

Funding:

- It is my responsibility to provide adequate funding of both the research and stipend for my students. However, I expect my students to submit at least one fellowship proposal and proposals for other awards, such as travel awards.

Professionalism and Ethics:

- I expect my students to participate in all laboratory group meetings as well as seminars and programs related to their research and their graduate program.

- I expect my students to be good laboratory citizens: helping to train new students, helping to maintain equipment, and ensure supplies and equipment that are jointly used are maintained.

- I expect my students to maintain an accurate and detailed laboratory notebook. It is critical to be accurate and sufficiently detailed so that every experiment can be replicated.

- I will maintain ethical standards in my research and scholarly work, including compliance with institutional and federal regulations for research, as well as issues of copyright. I expect my students to complete all required training and to maintain ethical standards for their research and scholarly work.
Together, we will set specific guidelines for work hours, sick leave, and vacation time, and these should be discussed and approved by me.

Career and Professional Development:

- I will support my students’ professional development goals and work with them to help define what those are and how best to achieve them.

- I will be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful, and expect my students to recognize that constructive criticism and feedback is intended to improve their work.

- I am committed to being my students’ advocate during their tenure in my laboratory and will continue to be their advocate during their future careers.