Advising Statement  
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Introduction

My lab studies the neuroanatomical connections that subserve reward and decision-making processes. We are fundamentally interested in brain structure. I enjoy studying neuroanatomy, even though it is an older part of our discipline. I get excited about discovering how the brain is wired and figuring out what those connections mean for function. At home, I like to do jigsaw puzzles; I think neuroanatomy feels like a giant, difficult jigsaw puzzle! If this sounds interesting to you, you might find my lab’s research a good fit.

I came to UMN to start a faculty position in Fall 2017. That means my lab is relatively new, but not brand new. I am still learning how to advise effectively, so I am very open to feedback. I hope that you will come to me if you have ideas on how we can work together more effectively.

Research Goals and Support

- Project development: When you first join the lab, you will likely be assigned to an ongoing project. At that stage, you can have input into the details of data collection and analysis, but the originating idea is unlikely to be yours. As you advance in the lab and become more familiar with our work and the literature, the goal is for you to generate your own research ideas, within the framework of what the lab can accomplish.

- Literature: I expect my trainees to read both broadly and deeply in order to become experts in their subject areas. However, reading papers is a skill. Lab journal clubs are an excellent opportunity to learn this skill. You can also ask me for a guide to reading papers (which I have permission to email-share, but not post here).

- Funding: Each student is funded in a unique way. If you are working on one of my existing grants, applying for your own funding may not be a priority. If your interests are outside of my current grants, it may be necessary to apply for grants. Anyone is welcome to apply for grants in order to obtain experience with grant-writing and expand your CV, but we
may need to brainstorm how your application will or won’t fit with existing funded projects. For GPN PhD students: I will not take on a student unless I can be reasonably confident that I can fund your PhD (in fact, I have to assure the program that this is the case), even if your own independent applications are unsuccessful.

- Collaborations: I enjoy collaborating with other labs inside and outside of UMN. Collaborations allow us to link our studies of brain structure to function and use newer, exciting tools. Please talk to me before initiating a new collaboration. We will then have a conversation about how/whether I should also be involved.
- Conferences: Funding permitting, the lab attends the Society for Neuroscience conference each year. This includes grad students, postdocs, and staff, but not usually undergraduates. If you obtain outside funding to attend another conference, terrific! Just let me know you’re applying and what you’re planning to present. Similarly, if you are able to obtain funding to cover your own salary and/or research, it is more likely that I can free up funds for you to attend other meetings, such as American College of NeuroPsychopharmacology, Organization for Human Brain Mapping, and Gordon Conferences.
- Publishing: Papers are the ‘output’ of science. A discovery that lives only in your brain cannot move the field forward! Writing papers with me is an iterative process that might involve forming outlines, scheduled joint writing sessions, and intensive feedback. Please do not be scared if you receive a manuscript back with a great deal of requested changes! This is a normal part of the writing process and does not reflect poor performance on your part.

Meetings, Communication, and Feedback

- Group Meetings: Everyone is expected to attend weekly lab meetings and monthly Mega-lab meetings (with Chafee, Hayden, and Zimmermann labs). If you are not going to be present, please alert me. The exception to this is undergraduates: we cannot accommodate every undergraduate’s course schedule, so please simply let me know at the start of the semester what you expect your lab meeting attendance to be. All those who can attend are expected to present at least once per semester. You are welcome to present your own data, practice talks/posters, or lead a journal club. If there is an article assigned for our lab meeting, I expect everyone to read it in advance; I will too.
● Individual Meetings: I currently meet with my graduate students and postdocs weekly on Mondays. My office is also physically inside the wet lab space, and I work most frequently from that office. Right now, a closed door to my office doesn’t mean you can't come and knock—it means I’m afraid of Covid! But do knock if you would like to speak to me.

● Communication: I try to be *extremely* prompt with feedback about student grants and manuscripts (within 1 week). Unfortunately, I do not always manage to meet these deadlines. Importantly, if I have not gotten back to you and you need feedback, please email me again. I will never be offended over receiving multiple emails.

● Calendars: We make heavy use of our internal google calendars and lab email list. We have separate gcals for general lab (meetings, journal clubs, absences, procedures) and each of our 2 Zeiss AxioImager microscopes. Please make sure you can see and edit all of the relevant calendars.

Professionalism

● Attendance: Expectations for physical presence in lab depend upon your role and the specifics of your project. In general, postbaccs and staff members responsible for ‘wet lab’ work are going to be required to be physically present in lab more than graduate students and postdocs, who might be writing or coding. I myself am an ‘in lab’ type of advisor; my office is physically located inside the wet lab, and, when there is not a pandemic, I come to the office during business hours on most days. I very much enjoy the resulting ‘ad hoc’ interactions. For me, these are some of the most enjoyable parts of science. (I also bug my fellow professor colleagues by showing up unexpectedly at their offices!) That said, I understand that some people work more effectively (particularly writing or coding) in coffee shops or at home.

● ‘Common Good’: We have a number of procedures and tasks that require your help, but may not seem like they contribute to your immediate success. These include everything from small tasks like washing glassware to large ones like performing surgery. I expect everyone to perform *some* of these tasks, for a few reasons. First of all, there is often some training value to these, even if it is not immediately obvious. Second of all, many of them simply can’t continue on without extra hands. At the same time, you will have access to data generated before you arrived in the lab. If you start to feel like you are spending too much time on these ‘common good’ tasks, please feel free to speak to me about it.

● Timing: I don’t do things last-minute. I like to be able to take my time with letters, feedback, presentations, papers, grants, etc, and put long pauses in between
bouts of working on a particular project. Please give me as much notice as you can for any of these needs. For letters: If I have never written a recommendation letter for you before, please give me at least *3 weeks' notice* before the deadline. If I have written one for you in the past and am just being asked to edit it and submit, please give me 1 week's notice.

Ethical Behavior

- I strive to run a lab that adheres to the highest standards of ethical behavior. This includes domains of authorship, data management and sharing, and animal welfare.
- Our work and studies require regular training in these topics. I expect all members of my lab to complete them in a timely manner.
- Harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, and retaliation are unacceptable. All UMN employees are required to report potential sexual misconduct to the [Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action](https://www.umn.edu/careers) office.
- We follow guidelines from the [Society for Neuroscience](https://www.sfn.org) regarding authorship.

Independence and Career Development

- I am happy to support your career aspirations regardless of whether you intend to stay in academia or not. I also acknowledge that many students are not certain what their career plans are, and may want to explore many options during their time here at UMN. To that end, I encourage you to take advantage of career development opportunities. You do not need to get special permission from me to participate in these, unless they will lead to long (>1 week) cessation of research activities.
- If you have an interest in a particular career path, I hope you will be willing to discuss it with me. I will do my best to share contacts and useful resources as I am able.
- I have found that staying in contact with former students has helped current students, so please stay in touch after you leave the lab, and let me know where you are working.
Personal Life and Wellness

I am very concerned by reports of extremely high prevalence of mental illness among graduate students. Many of the lab’s research efforts are dedicated to improving the lives of those with mental illness; it would be wildly counterproductive if our lab environment contributed to this crisis. I encourage all lab members to be aware of the mental health resources available at UMN, including:

Student mental health
Employee Assistance Program

We follow the UMN policies on holidays, sick leave, and vacation. I ask that you make a good-faith effort to give me notice of upcoming time off, particularly if we are planning procedures that may require your presence.

Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

There is overwhelming evidence that science in general, and neuroscience specifically, are not equitable. I am committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive laboratory environment that helps to move issues about justice in neuroscience forward. I am part of the GPN’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and I strongly encourage students to be part of outreach and service efforts related to justice and community building.

In all, this statement is to serve as a guideline for a successful working relationship between advisor and trainees and does not convey or express any specific outcomes from this relationship. In the event that circumstances arise where these guidelines must be altered, the advisor will make a good faith effort to communicate the changes to the trainee and any resulting effects.