GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING STATEMENT

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I am providing you with this statement of advising philosophy to enhance communication and transparency in our working relationship. It is intended to supplement our ongoing interactions and informal discussions and not to stand as a set of rigid requirements. I recognize that there is individual variability among my students in their backgrounds, aspirations, talents, progress, and accomplishments. My goal is to work with you to maximize your individual strengths and to help you develop the skills to succeed in your career. I am happy to discuss with you any or all of the items in the list below. This is a working document, and will be updated through feedback and accumulated experiences.

Note: This statement was adapted from a statement of adviser philosophy distributed by Scott Lanyon, Dean of the Graduate School, and then adapted by Gordon Legge, Psychology DGS. Scott and Gordon invited faculty to edit and use their text in their own statements of adviser philosophy. Anyone is free to borrow from this document as they wish, so long as they provide similar attribution to me, Scott, and Gordon.

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Guiding Philosophy and Career Paths

My job as an advisor is to help my advisees to be successful in their chosen career. I can't do that if I don't know what career is desired. I want my advisees to let me know the range of career paths in which they are interested at the earliest possible date. I also recognize that career paths change through graduate school. My default advising model is to ensure you are getting experiences in all aspects of training (research, teaching, service/advocacy, and clinical work, as appropriate) so that you have the background to pursue different options when the time comes. This approach includes doing things that you may not be enthusiastic about at the time, but may come to see as a viable career path years down the road (e.g., teaching). Discussions about your career plans will be included as part of the annual review process, but advisees should feel welcome to bring up the issue whenever they are compelled to do so (and I will do likewise).

Although our training program is clearly designed to prepare you for an academic career, I am very well aware that not all of you will go that route. I will support you in whatever career path you choose, whether it is academic or not. I will do my best to help my advisees obtain the experiences and skills needed to succeed in those various careers.
Diversity

Students who I work with represent vast diversity with respect to race/ethnicity, SES, gender, sexuality, immigrant generation status, nationality, religion, and worldview, among other dimensions of diversity. A major aspect of our research pertains to how these dimensions of diversity are related to (or not related to) psychological phenomena. Continuously reflecting on how our positionality, and how it may influence our perspectives on the research that we do, is a required aspect of such work. As an advisor I strive to understand and respect your position and perspectives and how they inform your work. At the same time, I strive to push you to recognize your own biases and the role that they play (for better or for worse) in your work.

Personal Life

I expect my advisees to have a personal life outside the lab, and to take breaks from working when applicable (e.g., during winter break). People who spend all their time on work activities generally tend to be less productive over the long term, less creative in their work, and frankly less fun as colleagues. People with a partner, and especially those with children, become severely stressed if they do not put sufficient effort and time into their personal lives. I highly recommend creating a schedule. Mine is as follows: I work on weekdays 7am-3pm and about 7-10pm, and generally do not work on the weekends. This allows me to spend time with my family without feeling guilty about not working. This is very important!

Conduct

Open Science. We are currently in the process of revising lab policies and procedures to ensure greater transparency in our research. This includes spending time creating proper data files, making data open for other researchers unless doing so is not feasible (e.g., sensitive data, qualitative data), conducting all analyses using syntax (even when using SPSS) that is saved to the project folder on the shared drive, pre-registering all studies (even when exploratory), and explicitly rejecting questionable research practices (e.g., selective reporting of variables, removal of cases, inclusion of unjustified control variables, etc.). All students are expected to conduct their research according to these principles (see companion NICE Lab Research Manual for more details).

Time Management. This document makes it clear that I expect a lot of my advisees. The less time efficient a person is, the more hours/week it will take to meet those expectations. Therefore, I expect my advisees to learn and to practice good time management. I am happy to discuss strategies for time management including methods for prioritizing tasks.

Relationships with other advisees. My advisees learn the most from other students and/or postdocs. Therefore, I expect my advisees to develop a strong professional relationship with other people in my lab and in the graduate program generally. This relationship should be supportive, not competitive. Early career students should seek out the advice of late career students and postdocs. In turn, late career students and postdocs should be generous in providing advice.
Ethics. My advisees should familiarize themselves with, and abide by, the University of Minnesota's "Code of Conduct".

Human subjects. My advisees must abide by all University requirements for working with human subjects. Information about the implementation of these procedures in my lab is available from our Lab Policy Manual, from our lab manager and from me. It is essential for all members of the lab to be respectful of our research subjects and to comply with all of the principles of informed consent.

Resolving conflicts. Communication is key to minimizing conflicts. For example, this document is an effort to clearly communicate my expectations to reduce the possibility of misunderstandings between my advisees and me. If you have concerns about your interaction with me or with anyone else, please don't hesitate to come talk with me. If you are uncomfortable speaking with me, the DGS, the Department Chair, the College HR Lead, or the Office of Student Conflict Resolution. If you wish a conversation to remain anonymous, be sure to indicate that at the start of the conversation.

Meetings and Consultation

Lab Group Meetings. I expect my advisees to attend weekly lab group meetings that we jointly schedule unless they are traveling or have some other unavoidable conflict. Lab meetings in the summer change from year to year depending on if I am in Minnesota, but when I am present we typically meet every other week instead of weekly. I generally see summer as a time of independence.

NICE Workshop. In addition to the weekly advisee meeting, all advisees are expected to attend the weekly NICE workshop. This workshop is open to any other interested students. The purpose of the workshop is to a) provide a venue for students to present their work, b) learn how to receive constructive feedback on their work, and c) learn how to provide constructive feedback.

Individual Meetings. I expect my advisees to schedule individual 30 minute weekly meetings with me and to schedule additional ad-hoc meetings as necessary.

Communication. I am available by email or face-to-face in my office. The phone is not a reliable way to reach me. Additionally, my email response time may be slow because of competing demands on my time. If there is a matter of urgency (personal or lab crisis, deadline for a letter, etc.) please let me know immediately. Given the way the world currently operates, I do like to exchange mobile phone numbers for the purposes of text messaging. Text messages are to be used sparingly and only in matters of urgency or in other cases where immediate communication is necessary.

When I submit a letter of reference or other document on behalf of my advisees, I will typically notify you by email when the task is completed. Advisees should email me a few days prior to a deadline as a reminder.

Independence
Although we will have several points of contact during the week, I expect my advisees to work without daily input or guidance from me. My general approach is for you to “figure it out” on your own, but contact me for support if you are stuck. Indeed, I am available for consultation, but you are expected to use your own good judgment. If an advisee needs input from me in order to move forward, it is their responsibility to seek me out or schedule a meeting. I am happy to initially provide more regular guidance to advisees who are not accustomed to working independently but by the time they leave the university I expect them to be able to function as independent researchers and teachers.

**Working in Other Labs and Switching Advisors**

You are certainly welcome to work in other research labs, paid or unpaid, during your time in graduate school. In fact, I encourage it, as working in other labs helps you diversify your research experience, exposes you to different mentoring styles and lab operations, and allows you to build relationships with other faculty who might serve on your committees and write you letters of recommendation. Sometimes faculty will have assistants available that they may advertise, but generally the best way to get involved in another lab is to contact the PI directly to express your interest. Be clear upfront whether you are only looking for a paid position, are willing to volunteer your time, or are just interested in “sitting in” on lab meetings. Finally, although you are encouraged to work in other labs, if you are funded to work on a specific project (by me or someone else) that work must be your priority.

Although we adopt a one-on-one mentorship model and students are slotted to work with a specific faculty member, it is also the case that students are technically admitted to the Psychology Department as a whole. This means that changing advisors is permitted for personal or professional reasons. However, such a change must be mutually agreeable to all parties: student, original advisor, and new advisor. Ideally, a change would occur relatively early in a student’s graduate career (first or second year), but this need not be the case. Additionally, students have the option of adding a secondary advisor at any point. Doing this could make a lot of sense if a student’s interests wind up aligning with another faculty member’s expertise, but the student does not wish to make a full change of advisors.

**Publications and Authorship**

Publishing is essential for most career paths followed by my advisees. I expect my advisees to work on manuscripts for publication continuously from the beginning of their graduate school career. By the time they graduate I expect my advisees to have multiple publications in the pipeline (published, in press, in review, in preparation). Ideally, you would have one first-authored paper for each year of your program plus a few additional co-authored papers. This is aspirational, and not often achieved, but doing so would make you competitive for whatever job you were interested in (assuming the papers are high quality, which is expected).

I am constantly involved in writing several manuscripts at a time, many of which involve colleagues at other universities. Many of these papers will not involve student advisees. My general approach is to invite students to work on such papers when it is clearly related to their expressed interests and I have a sense that they can contribute to the paper. In this regard, it is very important that you communicate
your interests to me, those that are both ongoing and emerging. It is difficult for me to direct papers your way when I don’t know your interests!

**Authorship.** Resolving authorship arrangements early is essential if we are to maintain positive relationships with our colleagues. If I have had significant involvement in a research project (developing the original idea, collecting data, analyzing data, and/or writing a portion of the manuscript or editing the manuscript), then I expect to be listed as an author (typically last, as “senior” author). I prefer to decide roles and authorship early in the collaboration on the project. This decision can be altered by mutual agreement at a later date if roles have changed. Usually, the first author has played the lead role in the project execution and will take the lead in writing the manuscript and overseeing the revision process. I expect the first author to retain primary responsibility for the publication process even if he or she leaves my lab to take a position elsewhere. The same general procedure applies to authorship for conference presentations as well.

**Professional Meetings.** Developing a professional network is essential, regardless of career path. Therefore, I expect all my advisees to attend national and international meetings and to report on their research at those meetings. Ideally, you would attend two conferences per year, pending available funds, but minimally you should attend one per year (there are typically sufficient department funds available to support this). I am happy to chat with you about how to strategize your conference attendance.

**Funding**

**Graduate Student Stipends.** The Psychology Department guarantees funding for five years. The nature of that funding (TA, RA, Fellowship) is often unpredictable but there will be funding. Nevertheless, I expect my advisees to write and submit fellowship proposals whenever possible. Writing such proposals is excellent experience and receiving such fellowships increases a student’s competitiveness for future fellowships and jobs.

**Research Funding.** Funding the research of my advisees is a joint responsibility between them and me. I will work with my advisees to find the necessary funding. Often, this funding comes from research grants from the department, college, or some external source.

**Grant Proposal Writing.** Grant proposal writing is a critically important skill regardless of career path pursued. Therefore, I expect all my advisees to be active in writing proposals for both university and external funding opportunities (fellowships, research grants, travel grants...). They are also expected to assist in the preparation of federal grants (NIH, NSF) or grant reports that fund my lab. By the time my advisees graduate I expect them to be capable of preparing their own research grants.

**Summer Funding.** There are ample resources for summer funding both within and outside the department. All of these require relatively brief applications. Students are expected to take the initiative to apply for these funds. However, they should always discuss their summer funding situation with me, typically in March or April, which is when they should seriously begin looking for opportunities. I often
have summer stipends available that are associated with specific grants. Summer is also an excellent
time to work in a different lab, as faculty often have stipends available.

**Dissertation**

The dissertation is your final project prior to receiving the Ph.D. Rather than conceiving of it as a
discrete and monumental experience, you should think of it as the next stage of your developing
program of research. That is, from entry to the program you will be working towards developing a
coherent program of research of your own. You are not expected to know what this is or what it will look
like right from the beginning of graduate school! Rather, it is an evolving process that takes shape over
time. Generally speaking, I expect students to be reasonably clear about their research focus by the
end of the second year in the program. Students should anticipate proposing their dissertations to their
committee by the end of the fourth year in the program and hold their final defense by the end of their
fifth year.

The dissertation itself should be a well-designed study or set of studies that clearly addresses gaps in
the existing research base. It should be written up as a journal article (or set of articles) so that it will be
ready to submit for publication shortly after the final defense. The topic of the dissertation will be
determined by the student, in consultation with me as advisor.

**Coursework and Research Background**

I don't have any standard course requirements beyond those of the Psychology graduate program.
Instead I expect my advisees to have, or to develop while at the university, a solid background in the
concepts and skills that their research and career path require. This could be accomplished in the form
of coursework but also workshops and informal arrangements with other individuals (students,
postdocs, faculty or staff). I do, however, expect all students to be well versed in quantitative,
qualitative, and mixed methods research designs, and they should take as many methods courses as
their schedule allows (most of these will be in other departments). Students are also expected to
develop excellent proficiency in SPSS for database management and analysis and at least one other
program, preferably Mplus (which is what I use), SAS, Stata, and/or R. Additionally, proficiency in Nvivo
for qualitative data management and analysis is highly recommended.

**Original Literature.** Regardless of career path, a current knowledge of the literature is essential.
Therefore, I expect my advisees to spend significant hours each week reading relevant literature that is
both specific/directly related to their research interests and of broad relevance to the field. For example,
students with interests in ethnic identity should not limit their reading to that identity domain, but should
engage with the broad scholarship on identity and personality. Students should begin by reading all of
the articles on the NICE Lab Required Reading List. From there, they should do all of the following to
stay abreast of current literature:

1) Sign up for journal article alerts. You will receive emails notifying you of new issues and new online
articles for the journal. Please talk with me about appropriate journals for which to receive alerts.
2) Google Scholar alerts. You can input custom keywords to receive alerts (usually 2-3 times per week) of matching articles from all across the disciplinary spectrum. You can also set alerts for specific researchers who have a Scholar profile. Additionally, you should set up your own Scholar profile upon entry into the graduate program (even if there is not yet anything in it).

3) Blogs and Facebook groups. Journals are slow. Much of the newest developments take place on blogs, Facebook groups, and Twitter. You should follow a reasonable set of these to stay up to date on the most cutting edge issues in the field.

Teaching

Teaching is a tremendous way to learn to communicate complex concepts to a non-specialist audience. I expect all my advisees to be involved in teaching. I encourage graduate students to take opportunities to act as course instructors or section leaders, as well as TAs. Furthermore, any career path pursued by my advisees will require that they be able to balance multiple diverse responsibilities (such as teaching and research). Graduate school is a low-risk place to learn to balance such responsibilities.

I encourage students pursuing teaching careers to TA for multiple courses during their graduate career. This is more demanding of their time but this diversity of experience is excellent training for the heavier and more diverse course loads of faculty at primarily teaching colleges. I invite all my advisees to give a guest lecture in one of my courses.