

Carini Lab Expectations. Last updated August 26 2018.

Date discussed: _____

PI Signature: _____

Mentee Signature: _____

Graduate and postdoctoral education are critical components for most careers in science. **My philosophy is that earning a graduate degree indicates that you are an expert in a well-defined area of science and that you have the skills needed to do independent science at a high level.** That includes dissemination of that science. If you can convince me that you have met this ideal, then you are ready to get your degree. If you join my lab as a postdoctoral researcher, you are expected to already be at this level. These expectations are a compilation of my experience and observations over the years in addition to input from several other scientists who have successful labs and/or I admire.

Safety

I care about your physical and mental health and of the people that work around my lab. That means that for your own safety and the safety of others, I expect you to follow proper laboratory practices. Failing to do so could put your safety and that of other lab members – and the viability of the lab as an entity – into jeopardy. Therefore, I expect you to:

- Familiarize yourself with the lab's chemical and biological hygiene plans;
- Follow the plans;
- Order necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) - no questions asked;
- If you have a health concern (including pregnancy), tell me in private so that we can discuss how this might affect your ability to work in the lab;
- If you see someone acting in an unsafe manner, tell them that they need to do 'X';
- Use appropriate BSL-2 technique and treat everything in the lab as a potential pathogen (even though it's *very* unlikely to be one).

Career development is a continuous process

You should have a list of things you would like to learn and apply to your research. These can be as simple as improving time management to learning how to code in python. **You will never develop these skills unless you work on them.** Plan ahead at the scale of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly for when and how you will develop these skills.

General expectations for all lab members

- We have a 'no asshole' policy. Please bring it to my attention if you identify one. Please don't be one.

- You are all grown-ups. Manage your own schedule and learn to prioritize your work. I don't need to know the ins and outs of 'when you'll be in' unless it's going to be an extended absence or when I'm scheduling something.
- Your experience in the lab will be determined by what **you** make of it. I will guide you, but it is not my job to tell you what to do (except maybe occasionally staff), and I will almost *never* do so.
- You need to be self-motivated and confident in your ability to learn new things to succeed here. If this is not you, I might not be a good match for you.
- I will always, always, always **push you** to be better than you think you can be. I expect that you are OK with that, and it's why you are working with us. If this is a problem, I might not be the best advisor for you.
- Remember, that if you are reading this, I already believe in your abilities or potential.
- "I don't know" is not a good standalone answer. Instead, try "Here's what I have tried...", "I can find out," "I hadn't thought of that," "I have the same question," "My best guess is..." or "Why don't we ask...[someone]" These subtle tweaks to your language foster a positive 'problem solving' attitude.
- Effort
 - Do your best – always. It's usually good enough.
 - For graduate students and postdocs: It's hard to be successful treating this as anything less than a 40-hour week job. When classes are in session, that number should be higher – including coursework and studying, it is probably closer to 50-60 hours.
 - Being present 40 hours isn't the same as working 40 hours.
 - Our work times should overlap by ~2-4 h per day. That means be prepared to be present for a portion of ~11 AM - 5 PM M-F.
 - Sometimes your project will need special hours. You'll need to rise to that occasion and make sure that other plans or school breaks don't interfere with your experiments.
 - If you are not passionate about what you are doing, we need to talk.
 - Be your own worst critic.
 - Seek to improve yourself without feeling the need to compete against your colleagues.
 - If you feel like you are stuck in a rut, ask for help.
- Research
 - I have a **zero-tolerance** policy towards plagiarism and data fabrication for everyone in the lab. This includes attempts at passing off old data as 'new' in an effort to make yourself 'look busy'. If you do it, you are out of the lab.
 - **Believe your data.** Often, data that looks 'incorrect' leads to the biggest discoveries.
 - **Just do it!** Fear of failure, anxiety, and insecurities in your abilities or your lack of knowledge will cripple you here and rob you of productivity. You are here to *learn* and *fall on your face*. Repeatedly. For five years (PhD). I *understand* and *expect* that. Get started.

- **Ask for forgiveness, not permission.** Side projects and experiments are OK (as long as all other work is on track), just don't tell me about it until you have cool data.
- You need to have plans in place to keep projects going when you will be away.
- You have **30 minutes of guaranteed** weekly face-to-face time to give me an update on last week's effort, plans for the next week, and progress towards achieving long term goals. Be efficient with this time and come prepared to ask questions take notes, delve into details, etc. This usually means you should bring: a notebook and use it, your lab notebook, your laptop, and any relevant plots, screenshots, data analyses, etc. **Come prepared and with questions.** If you need more time than this, you will need to schedule it at least a week in advance.
- Me being a bottleneck to your research is not a good excuse. I should never be a bottleneck to your research moving forward. You need to become independent and find ways to work around your research problems.
- **Own** and **drive** your research project. I will not do this for you.
- Present at a national meeting each year (see conditions below)
- Apply for **any and all** funding that is available for research and travel
- **Don't chase ghosts** in the lab or elsewhere. Make decisions based on the basis of sound facts or data.
- Reading
 - **Grad students 3+ papers per week** – no exceptions. **Undergrads: 1+ paper per week.** I will occasionally ask you about this and when I do, I will expect an answer. Yes, lab meeting papers count.
 - Read broadly and within your area
 - Sign up for e-Table of Contents alerts; review search terms regularly
- Writing
 - Grad students: 1000+ new words per week. Undergrads 350+ words per week. I'll ask about this and expect an answer.
 - Doesn't matter what the topic is (science or otherwise), just write. If you'd like, we can feature your work on the lab blog section of our website or post somewhere else.
- Lab Culture
 - Share your "life hacks" with other members of the lab (like where the free food is located)
 - Give information about career development opportunities as you learn of them
 - Provide support to colleagues in the lab by reading drafts, engaging in discussions, and being a positive influence
 - Acknowledge and build off the work of others in the lab
- Lab meetings
 - You have 3 options when it's your time to present: Research / chalk talk / journal club format. Everyone presents. All presentations should be uploaded to #lab_presentations on slack.
 - **Research slides** should be sent out the **Monday before** the lab meeting

- Papers for **journal club** should be sent out the **Friday before lab** meeting
- **All people are expected to read the slides and paper before lab meeting. If you don't – don't bother coming!**
- Only one person speaks at a time
- Seminars (practice talks or seminars, Honors thesis talks, etc.)
 - Plan presentation date to work with my schedule
 - Give me complete slides 10 days in advance of talk
 - Practice talk with me and lab
 - Practice talk with your colleagues
- Vacation
 - Generally, not a problem. Let me know well in advance.
 - Don't tell me, ask me
- Personal well-being
 - I care about you immensely but cannot read minds and bodies
 - I cannot speak highly enough about the value of self-care in the form of counseling, exercise, or new-age stuff like acupuncture. The University has counseling services for students, and there are acupuncturists nearby. You should look into them.
 - If you are sick physically or mentally, I need to know
 - I realize 'life' happens. While I don't need to know specifics (unless you are OK sharing them), you should communicate 'life' things that will affect your work here and we can work out leaves of absence, reduced hours, altered expectations, etc.
 - Respect and uphold all relevant University policies regarding professional conduct, including but not limited to the Code of Academic Integrity, Student Code of Conduct, University Policy on Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment, and Student Records and Privacy.

Specific expectations for each rank of lab members

Me

- I promise to care
- I will fight to keep funding
- I will nurture a culture of curiosity and exploration, teamwork and solution-oriented attitudes
- Ensure a safe and harassment-free workspace that **welcomes diversity** and **facilitates equality**. And no Assholes.
- I will always ask 'what do you think?' first (you've been warned, come ready with an answer).
- **I will show you the path** (you need to learn how to walk it). Think of me as Mr. Miyagi.
- Do what I can to mentor you to receive a PhD within 5 years of joining my lab, MS within 2 years.

- Review drafts within 24-72 hours of receiving them (the more complete the draft, the faster this will be) .
- Make room on my schedule to meet with you within 7 days of request, beyond our weekly meeting. Of course, I am available on a more casual basis and always if it's an emergency. But be aware that on most days, my schedule is full. Because of this, I am not always able to give your questions/comments the attention they deserve in casual meetings. Also, I have hard deadlines of when I need to leave at the end of the day due to parenting duties.
- At least once a year (usually before Spring term begins), I will review your Individual Development Plan (IDP) (Grad students and postdocs) and provide written feedback regarding your work in the lab. I will discuss these items with you in person during a separate longer scheduled meeting (not your weekly one-on-one)
- Give information about career development and funding opportunities as I learn of them
- Be your biggest advocate
- Nominate you for awards as appropriate
- Support you to attend one conference per year assuming you have a poster to present (attend as many as you want if you provide the funding through your own grants)
- Direct you along a project that is capable of generating **3 papers** that belong together in a PhD Dissertation (ie-these are papers you lead), **1 paper** in a MS thesis, **0.75 paper** per year (postdocs), and liberally offer authorship to research staff. These are Carini lab **minimum publication requirements**.
- Include you in ancillary papers as your availability permits.
- Invite you to work on side projects - it is up to you to say yes or no. But once you decide, you cannot change your mind.
- Be enthusiastic about everyone's projects (to a flaw)
- Protect confidences and will not discuss you with any other students. I may seek mentoring advice from people I respect and will always do so with your best interest in mind
- Do my best to maintain a team of scientists that is demographically and scientifically diverse
- If you think that I have broken these promises, then you have the right to call me on it. If you do not think that is likely to be productive, you should contact the departmental chairperson, Dr. Jon Chorover who can set up an independent arbitration process.

Undergraduate students

- You can join the lab for credit (by enrolling in independent study, honors courses, etc.) or as an employee for pay. Not both, regardless of what Kathleen tells you. This is my rule based on what I think is fair for everyone involved.
- Succeed in your regular coursework.
- Be here regularly and when you say you will be here.
- Keep a logical and clear lab notebook.

- Listen and pay attention to guidance and follow through.
- Ask questions.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Become more independent researchers.
- Be conscientious lab citizens.
- Post when we are low on something on #items_to_order.
- Include me on any outside communications that involve our research.

Graduate students

- **This is *your* degree. You** need to be on top of the following:
 - Important dates and benchmarks related to your degree.
 - Your course choices and schedules (I will assist in picking electives, but will not do it for you). Come with ideas and details and we can discuss. Make sure your schedule includes good chunks of time for your dissertation/thesis research.
 - Selecting your graduate committee and meeting with them semi-regularly. Again – come to me with suggestions and rationale and we will discuss together.
 - Anything related to your employment (HR-related, etc.)
- Obtain at least a B in each of your courses (or you are out of the lab)
- Pass preliminary exam on your first try (or you are out of the lab)
- Complete and keep up to date an Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- I do not need specific updates on everything that you do. Just general updates on progress.
- **Making sure you are getting research done when taking classes.** Yes, it's hard, but your degree is contingent on *both* course work *and* research. And, of those two, research is the priority. You *will not* get a degree without research. I advocate that you do the minimum to achieve a 'B' in your courses and apply the extra effort you would otherwise use to get better grades, to your research.
- Investigate and apply for appropriate funding opportunities with discussion.
- At least **two published** peer-reviewed papers before you defend (but you will be able to get more than three). Your third paper must be nearly complete before you defend. This roughly means you should be writing your first paper in the second half of your second year and submitting it before the start of year 3. Assume it takes 1 year to see a paper accepted after initial submittal.
- As a senior graduate student (after prelims), look for opportunities to mentor undergraduates.
- Fight for your project - don't let me break it up to give to someone else.
- **By the time you defend, you should be the smartest person in the room on your topic.**
- You have my priority (over undergrads and postdocs).
- Communicate your career goals to me as they develop.
- If you are interested in TA-ing, speak with me before volunteering.
- Include me on any outside communications that involve our research.

Postdocs

- Finish papers from your PhD in a timely manner, preferably outside of normal business hours.
- Talk with me about pursuing funding opportunities.
- Complete and keep up to date an Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- Work with me to find a project.
- Own and drive your project.
- Look to me more for suggestions than direction.
- At least a paper per 1.5 years.
- Look for opportunities to mentor undergraduates.
- Contracts are to be renewed each year depending on progress towards these goals.
- My goal will be to give you three month's notice if funding is short or I think it is time for you to move on.
- When you start, you should have a good sense of where your career is going, communicate those to me so that I can help you to work towards them.

Staff

- You report directly to me. If anyone asks you to do anything, tell them you need to talk to me first
- You will have a research project that you will work on with my direction
- Communicate your long-term career goals to me so that I can help you
- You will likely be asked to entertain far more of my crazy ideas than anyone else in the lab
- Although you have finished (or paused) your formal training, I still expect you to continue to develop skills while you work in the lab