

# Rushworth lab compact

## Principles of training

The Rushworth lab has three key principles: growth, integrity, and community.

**Growth:** Rushworth lab members should expect to be trained to: formulate meaningful hypotheses, design and conduct interpretable experiments, adhere to good laboratory practices, analyze results critically, and understand the broad significance of their research findings. All members, including myself, will grow not only through skill-building, but as people, throughout our time together.

**Integrity:** Rushworth lab members must uphold the highest ethical standards in research.

**Community:** The development of additional skills through regular, positive interactions among the lab and with our peers is considered integral to this training. These skills include oral and written communication, grantsmanship, peer review, teaching, mentoring, service/outreach, laboratory management, successful and supportive collaboration, and other leadership skills.

## Importance of mentoring

Effective mentoring is critical for success in academic science. I will dedicate as much time as I can to each lab member's career development. Lab members are also encouraged to seek advice and input from multiple individuals (not only myself, but peers and other mentors) who can provide feedback about personal and professional development.

A good mentor-mentee relationship is reciprocal. Through mutual respect and strong communication, mentors and mentees gain an understanding of each individual's expectations. I strive to be available, approachable, and willing to share knowledge. I will listen and communicate effectively; provide encouragement and constructive criticism; and offer expertise and guidance. Similarly, each lab member should be: available, approachable, and willing to offer ideas and solutions; able to listen and communicate effectively; be open to constructive criticism; and seek and respond to expert guidance.

## Fostering a successful future for each lab member

Academia is not, and should not be, the default career choice for all lab members. Academic scientists must have opportunities to learn about and develop a skill set that can be used in a wide range of professional careers. Lab members should seek out opportunities to explore career options through myself, department- or university-wide resources, and external resources. It is my responsibility and the responsibility of USU to prepare each lab member for a career they find fulfilling.

## Commitments of Rushworth lab members

- I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career. I recognize that I need to explore career opportunities and follow a path that matches my individual skills, values, and interests. I understand that there are tools such as the individual development plan that I should use to help me define my career goals and develop my training plan.
- I will develop with my mentor a mutually agreed upon research plan that includes well-defined goals and timelines. Ideally, this plan should be developed early on and reviewed at least annually.
- I will seek regular feedback on my performance and career planning. I will use this feedback to seek opportunities for development and to build on my strengths.
- I will perform my research activities conscientiously, maintain complete and accurate research records, and catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project.
- I will respect all ethical standards—including compliance with all institutional, state, and federal regulations—as they relate to responsible conduct in research, possible conflicts of interest, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, and data ownership, reporting, and sharing. I recognize that this commitment includes asking for guidance when presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties and reporting on breaches of ethical or compliance standards by me and/or others.
- I will show respect for and will work collegially with mentors, faculty, trainees, staff, and other individuals with whom I interact. I will contribute to an environment that is safe, equitable, and free of harassment. I will be an active, contributing member to all team efforts and collaborations and will respect individual contributions. I am also committed to communicating the value of research to advancing the public good.
- I will endeavor to assume progressive responsibility and management of my research project(s) as it matures. I recognize that assuming responsibility for the conduct of research projects is critical to my career path.
- I will have open and timely discussions with my mentor concerning the dissemination of research findings and the distribution of research materials to third parties. I will also work with my mentor to disseminate research results in a timely manner.
- With respect to data ownership, I acknowledge that original notebooks, digital files, and tangible research materials belong to the institution and will remain in the lab when I finish my appointment, in accordance with institutional policy. I will discuss data ownership with my

mentor(s) and reach mutual agreements on future access to tangible research materials and ideas.

- I recognize that I have embarked on a career requiring lifelong learning. To meet this obligation I must stay abreast of the latest developments in science, especially in my specialized field. I will do this by engaging in activities such as reading the literature, participating regularly at relevant seminar series, attending scientific meetings, and interacting with colleagues in my field and collaborators. In addition, I will apply for appropriate fellowships and awards that support my transition to independence.
- I will actively seek opportunities outside the laboratory (e.g., professional development seminars and workshops on oral communication, scientific writing, collaborative research, and teaching) to develop the full set of professional skills necessary for success in my chosen career.
- I recognize that the relationship with my mentor continues after my formal training period, and I will commit to being a supportive colleague throughout my professional life.
- I recognize that the responsibility of meeting program requirements and deadlines is my own, and I will provide reminders to my mentor(s) for deadlines they must meet. These links may provide guidance on requirement and deadlines:
  - [Undergrad Research BIO 5800 form](#)
  - [Undergraduate Research Awards/Transcript Designation](#)
  - [Undergraduate Research funding \(URCO, ROWS, etc.\)](#)
  - [Biology Graduate student handbook](#)
  - For postdocs, fellowship deadlines are relevant, such as the [NSF PRFB](#)

## My commitments to Rushworth lab members

- I acknowledge that graduate school and the postdoctoral period are devoted to advanced training intended for the development of skills needed to promote the careers of researchers in training. I will ensure that each trainee has sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to become an expert in an area of research investigation. I will work with each individual as they create a documented individual career development plan, which we will use as the basis for periodic discussions. I will respect each individual's career goals.
- I will ensure that a mutually agreed upon research plan with well-defined expectations and goals is established early in the postdoctoral training period, and as early as possible in the graduate training period. Each individual and I will collaboratively review the plan's progress regularly.
- I will provide regular feedback on performance and career planning and provide a formal evaluation at least annually. I also hope that you'll give me a performance evaluation at least annually! I will be accessible to give advice and feedback on career planning and each lab

member's individual development plan to help define career goals and identify training milestones.

- I will strive to maintain a relationship with each lab member that is based on trust and mutual respect. I will provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, equitable, and free of harassment. I acknowledge that open communication is essential. I will ask for your honest feedback about the lab, your experience at USU, and my performance as a mentor. If there are problems, I need to know about them so that I can fix them.
- I will demonstrate respect for all postdoctoral appointees as individuals, and I will cultivate a culture of mutual respect among all members of the Rushworth lab.
- I will promote all ethical standards for conducting research—including compliance with all institutional, state, and federal regulations—as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, and data reporting, ownership, and sharing. I will clearly define expectations for the responsible conduct of research in my lab and make myself available to discuss ethical, safety, and any related concerns as they arise.
- I will provide each lab member with guidance and mentoring and will seek the assistance of other faculty and departmental/institutional resources when necessary. I will also encourage each lab member to seek input from multiple mentors. I recognize that I must serve as a role model for each lab member and provide access to formal opportunities/programs in complementary areas necessary for a successful career.
- I will provide a supportive training environment to facilitate personal and professional growth. I will encourage each lab member to progressively increase levels of responsibility and independence to ensure a successful transition to an independent career.
- I will ensure that the research performed is submitted for publication in a timely manner and that appropriate credit is given to each individual for work they've done, both in authorship and in oral presentations. I will acknowledge the appointee's contribution to the development of any intellectual property.
- I will clearly define future access to tangible research materials according to institutional policy and will discuss this with the trainee and reach mutual agreements that support the trainee's transition to independence.
- To foster career development, I will encourage and assist student researchers and postdoctoral appointees to apply for appropriate fellowships and awards that support the transition to independence. I will encourage and facilitate the interaction of Rushworth lab members with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally. I will facilitate attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.

- I recognize that there are multiple career options available for scientists and I will provide assistance in exploring appropriate options. I recognize that not all Rushworth lab members will become academic faculty. To prepare lab members for a variety of career paths, I will direct them to the resources that will allow for exploration of various careers, and I will be available to discuss these options.
- I will commit to breaking down the “hidden curriculum” of academia to the best of my ability for each trainee, so that all Rushworth lab members have equal opportunities to engage productively in academic science.
- I commit to being a supportive colleague to each trainee as they transition to the next stage of their careers and, to the extent possible, throughout their professional lives. I recognize that the role of a mentor continues after the formal training period.
- I commit to writing many letters of recommendation for you. If you are requesting many letters at once (for example, if you’re on the academic job market), please make a spreadsheet with the information listed below and any particularly relevant information for each position. For all letters, please request the letter from me at least 2 weeks in advance of the submission date, and provide the following:
  - The opportunity you’re applying for
  - The due date
  - Name (if known), institution, and email address of the person/committee to whom the letter should be addressed
  - Instructions for how to submit the letter (direct email, Interfolio, etc.)
  - Any instructions for what the letter should discuss
  - Send me a reminder 3-5 days before the deadline

I have read the above and will do my best to adhere to these commitments.

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Your signature

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Today’s Date

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Catherine Rushworth

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Today’s Date