

Suma Jacob, MD, PhD

ADVISING PHILOSOPHY: EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(see CAN Lab statement also with Christine Conelea, PhD)

My overall mission is to help each of my advisees achieve their individual goals and for our laboratory to achieve its overarching goals. I strive to develop and co-create a lab culture with curiosity, open communication, accountability, and integrity. This document outlines our advising philosophy, and expectations and responsibilities for each lab member, mentor, and advisee.

Research

- I expect advisees to make an impact on the scientific research community by generating new knowledge through research of high quality and integrity.
- Research should be rigorous and reproducible. It is a team activity with internal and external collaborators in order to advance our field.
- Advisees are expected to co-develop their research topics. Their research focus should lead to quality peer-reviewed publications.
- It is critical to have a deep understanding of the current state of knowledge in our scientific area. I expect advisees to read and understand the relevant background literature and historical context of their research area. Broader reading in related (and unrelated) areas is encouraged as a practice for life-long learning.
- I will respond to work submitted to me in a timely manner and within the constraints of my other responsibilities. I have responsibilities that will at times limit my availability in the lab. Advisees therefore must be able to function independently and with the assistance of other laboratory members. Advisees should seek me out in person or by email when additional guidance is needed. I will respond promptly.
- Advisees must maintain an accurate and detailed record of their research. It is critical that these records be accurate and sufficiently detailed so that scientific work can be replicated and advanced.
- I expect my trainees to present their research findings at conferences at least once a year. I will help facilitate presentations at local and national meetings in order to practice effective scientific communication to specialized as well as lay audiences.

Writing and Publications

- Writing is an essential part of the research process and a skill that requires consistent application and practice. I will work with advisees to help them to improve scientific writing skills.
- I strongly encourage my advisees to participate in grant proposal writing workshops and other mechanisms to improve their writing skills.
- Manuscripts and grant proposals consist of subsections. I expect advisees to write routinely over a period of time, and to submit the portions to me frequently for feedback. I will provide feedback. Advisees should not wait to have a complete product before seeking input and feedback from me.

- Discussions about authorship and co-authorship on manuscripts need to occur early in a research activity that is likely to lead to a publication.

Meetings

- Advisees should expect to meet with me in person on a regular basis. The frequency of these one- on-one meetings will likely vary over time, but is typically one meeting each week. I am always available by e-mail or telephone, and I will respond promptly to communications from my advisees.
- Advisees are expected to attend any regularly scheduled lab meetings.
- As a member of our scientific community, I expect advisees to attend student seminars and programs related specifically to your research and your graduate program.

Timelines and Trainee Funding

- Together with the training program, I commit to securing stipend funding for each advisee. Multiple sources of funding will be explored (individual research grants, training grants, fellowships).
- The process of writing a grant proposal is an essential task for scientists. Advisees are expected to seek individual funding (e.g. NIH F-award). I will work closely with advisees to develop and submit fellowship proposals.
- I expect my advisees to work diligently and to develop and utilize effective time management strategies. Training programs often has specific timeline guidelines and I expect trainees to work with me and the thesis committee to stay on track.

Professionalism, Ethics, and Maintaining Health

- Research conducted in our lab should be of high quality and integrity. I expect my advisees to complete required ethics training and to be prepared to engage in discussions with me and other lab members about research ethics, rigor and reproducibility. I will support additional training in this area.
- Integration of diverse perspectives is essential in any learning environment. Mutual respect and professionalism are required. Harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct will not be tolerated. Incidents of discrimination, bias or racism will be reported to the Bias Response and Referral Network.
- Advisees should speak to me if there are concerns about interactions with other lab members. If there are concerns about interactions with me, please reach out to the graduate program DGS or other program leaders. The Student Conflict Resolution Center is a helpful resource.
- I expect my advisees to be aware of wellness resources available to them at the University of Minnesota and to utilize them as needed. Academic training can be stressful. Community, interpersonal, physical plus mental health supports improve quality of life and can decrease burnout.

Teaching and Mentoring

- I expect my advisees to participate in teaching assignments as required by the graduate program.

- Our lab community requires teaching each other skills and developing protocols.
- If interested, I encourage advisees to assist with opportunities to mentor undergraduates interested in obtaining research experience by working in the lab.

Assessment and Career Development

- Advisees should expect to meet with me at least annually to discuss overall progress and goals. I also expect my advisees to meet with their thesis committee at least every 6-9 months.
- In order to be an effective advisor, it is important that advisees consider the range of career paths of interest to them. I understand that professional and career development may require additional work outside of formal research activities in the lab.
- I will support your professional development goals and work with you to help define what those are and how best to achieve them. I will work to identify external resources that will help you reach those goals if they are not part of the normal laboratory or graduate program training.
- I will work with you as you become increasingly independent and increasingly responsible as you progress in your thesis research.

This is a living, breathing document that is subject to evolve, because like all trainees, all mentors learn lifelong.

We have discussed this advising statement and understand the expectations and responsibilities that come with entering into this advising relationship for PhD training.

_____ Date: _____ PhD student

_____ Date: _____ PhD advisor