

## Eco-Evo Lab at Cal State Northridge

### Who Are We?

If you are interested in joining our lab, it might help you to know who we are. Here are some guidelines for those joining the lab that reflect the values that we, as a lab group, identify as important to the science we do and who we are as scientists. If there is something that you want to know that isn't addressed here, please feel free to ask!

### The Lab Culture

- If you are in the lab, we are invested in your success. You would not be here if we didn't know that you could hang.
- All interactions and feedback should come from a place of making each other better. We can challenge and criticize each other, but we do so positively and in support of one another.
- We each recognize our strengths. We recognize the strengths of others. These may be different, but we benefit from each others' strengths. It's important to recognize our own weaknesses and that we are not afraid to share them, while also maintaining a growth mindset; everybody who is good at something was once not good at it.
- The Campsite Rule: Leave the lab a better place than when you arrived. Physically, this means leaving the lab cleaner than when you started. More broadly, help those around you and use your skills to improve our lab group and all of our research.
- We listen. We learn from other people's experiences. We develop empathy.
- We have various career goals in the lab and different motivations for doing science. Some people want a career in academia. Others want a job in government or a non-profit organization. Still, others don't plan a career in science and are here for experience. All of these are worthy goals and none are better than others. We are all here to do science in the best way we can.
- We intentionally include a diverse group of people working in the lab. We recognize that some people face challenges that we do not. We help others overcome challenges when possible and expect allyship from others in the lab. We make space for people to talk about their experiences and believe them.

- We invest in learning and self-education about systemic biases in science and in our society. We participate in learning about these issues when we discuss them as a lab group. Although we learn from others, we do not put the burden to teach us on those to whom we serve as allies.
- We do not tolerate sexual harassment, or harassment of any kind. This includes unwanted touching, suggestive remarks, undesired attention, or use of power to take advantage of others. This includes behaviors directed toward anybody in the lab, students in our classes, or others in the Biology department.
- We do our best to be aware of microaggressions. We recognize that we may have offended somebody without it being our intent. Rather than being defensive when offenses are noted by others, we use this as an opportunity to learn.
- New members of the lab are expected to read this handbook, along with an onboarding document for new members that lays out some of the hidden curriculum and pathways to success in science.

#### What We Owe To Each Other

- All people in the lab should expect Casey to be a mentor and to devote time to your needs. Casey generally maintains an open-door policy when he is in the office and you should expect that it is ok to interrupt him if the door is open, or propped open. If his office door is closed, he is asking not to be interrupted.
- Post-docs and graduate students should expect to meet individually with Casey at least once per week. However, interactions do not need to be limited to that time, and you should feel free to ask for what you need when you need it.
- You should treat your research experience as a job. Post-docs are expected to spend half of their time working on projects in the lab and half of their time on their own work (publishing former research, applying for jobs, etc.); you should expect Casey to help with all of the above. Graduate students should treat this experience as a full-time job that will be divided between research, teaching, and coursework. Undergraduates should not expect to work beyond the hours they are assigned to work, but should also feel free to use the lab and office space to hang out when there is space available (other than during public health crises). Everybody should serve as a mentor to others in the lab.
- Lab meetings are once per week and all are expected to attend and participate regularly, unless there is a conflict with a course.

- All are expected to be a presence in the lab and in the department. Half of your job is just being present and paying attention. In addition to our lab research and events, this includes reading groups, thesis proposals and defenses, and departmental seminars. Be a good departmental citizen.
- Social media is an important part of science communication and you should take your role as a scientist seriously online. Active interactions with others in the academic community and outreach to those outside of that community are strongly encouraged. However, be aware that your words and actions on social media reflect on the lab, even on your personal accounts.
- You deserve a break on weekends and you deserve a vacation, during which the lab should not expect you to check in. You may find yourself working some weekends, but if you are working every weekend, that is too much. Even if somebody from the lab sends you an email or Slack message over the weekend or at night, we do not expect a response until Monday or in the morning.
- Success is not defined by the number of hours you work. Recognize that you may naturally work faster or slower than others. Don't define your success by the number of hours that other people have worked. Define your success by your achievements, and not by the achievements of others.
- We prioritize work-life balance. Scientific productivity is best maintained when it is balanced with a happy personal life. Take breaks. Exercise. Prioritize your mental health. We check in with one another about mental health and are open to sharing to the degree that we feel comfortable. Most academics experience some number of mental health issues in their career, so if you find yourself struggling, you are not alone.
- We conduct exit interviews with each person that leaves the lab, to learn about what we are doing well and what we need to do to improve.

### What We Owe the Field of Science

- Collect data responsibly. Be aware of distractions that might cause mistakes. Nevertheless, we all make mistakes. If you do, report the mistake immediately and note it on the datasheet. Fix the mistake, if possible. It is a bigger sin to hide a mistake than to ruin an experiment.
- All data that is collected in association with our lab is the property of both the lab and the lead of that project. Post-docs, graduate students, and undergraduates may serve as project leads. All data should be shared on our lab Box folder, where it is backed up in the cloud.

- If you are the project lead and follow the project through to publication, you should expect to be lead author on the publication. If you contribute intellectually to the planning, design, analysis, or writing on any project, then you should expect to be an author on any manuscript that results from it. Authorship discussions should occur early, preferably before data are collected.

If you feel that somebody in the lab or others in the department are not abiding by these values, please bring this to Casey's attention. He will work with you to find a resolution, which may range from a quick conversation to a formal report to the university or removal of a person from the lab.

If you feel that Casey is not abiding by these values, you should let him know through one of these avenues, in order of preference: (a) talk to him, (b) ask a trusted faculty, staff, or lab member to talk to him, (c) discuss the issue with the Department Chair, or (d) discuss the issue with CSUN's Equity and Diversity Office.

This is a living document that will be updated over time. In at least one lab meeting per year, lab members will review this handbook and update it appropriately.

Last edited: 8/30/21