

MUNDIM LAB STATEMENT

The Mundim lab is a respectful and friendly environment that appreciates and welcomes the differences among us, whether in race, gender identification, sexual orientation, ethnicity, beliefs, or disabilities. In the Mundim lab we believe that a diverse group is essential to help us query the world from multiple perspectives and in inventive ways! Our unity lies in our shared reverence for the scientific process and our joint commitment to producing exceptional, captivating research. We extend an open invitation to anyone dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in science and who approaches others with respect and consideration.

In our laboratory, we uphold a set of core values that form the bedrock of effective scientific inquiry: integrity, diligence, communication, creativity, trust, and collaboration. These principles underpin our commitment to fostering an environment where all members feel empowered to freely express and discuss their ideas, with trust and respect serving as the cornerstones of our interactions.

My overall role as your mentor is to support you, in identifying and pursuing your unique objectives, whatever they may be. I am dedicated to establishing a relationship built on mutual trust and respect, characterized by transparent and candid communication, and adaptable to your evolving needs.

Our ultimate aim is to ignite groundbreaking scientific exploration by cultivating an atmosphere free from constraints, allowing individuals with diverse perspectives and a shared passion for biology to engage positively and productively.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Lab Philosophy and Mentorship:

- *Teamwork and Personal Responsibility.* Lab members operate as a team while upholding personal responsibility.
- *Work Ethic and Well-being.* We expect dedication to your work, without compromising your well-being or that of others.
- *Ethical Standards and Open-mindedness.* High ethical standards and open-mindedness towards new ideas and perspectives are paramount.
- *Self-directed Learning.* Graduate school is a platform for self-directed exploration, and we encourage you to take ownership of your research and educational goals.
- *Mentorship Approach.* We do not micromanage but collaborate closely, serving as invested co-owners of projects.
- *Progress Assessment.* Progress is evaluated based on the achievement of short- and long-term goals, with adjustments made if necessary.
- *Advisor for Life.* Your mentorship extends beyond your time in the lab, and we are here to support you throughout your journey.

- *Lab Representation.* We hope you will continue to uphold our lab's principles and standards as you progress in your career.
- *Setting Goals.* Mentors will collaboratively establish clear objectives with undergraduates, encompassing various aspects such as presentations, skill development, or lab proficiency.
- *Ongoing Goal Monitoring.* Throughout the undergraduates' lab experience, mentors will regularly review and ensure progress toward these defined goals.

Lab Operations and Guidelines:

- *Project Goals and Anticipated Outcomes.* We establish clear project goals and anticipate outcomes to guide our research.
- *Timeline of Activities and Meetings.* Our activities and meetings follow a structured timeline for efficiency and progress.
- *Student's Learning and Professional Development Goals.* We collaborate to define your learning and professional development objectives.
- *Training Requirements and Plans.* Customized training plans equip you with necessary skills.
- *Communication Preferences and Contact Information.* We respect your communication preferences, maintaining open channels for effective contact.
- *Expectations, Cultural Norms, and Ethics.* We adhere to expectations, cultural norms, and ethical standards fostering collaboration and respect.
- *Dissemination Strategies.* We devise strategies for sharing our findings through conferences, publications, and more.
- *Lab notebooks:* As we collaborate in experiments and collect data, it is expected that the lab notebooks be shared. An up-to-date copy should be kept in the shared folder, while the physical copy must be stored in the lab notebook drawer at all times.

Funding, Mentorship, and Authorship:

- *Funding.* While we strive to secure funding, we'll work together to explore opportunities and create grant proposals.
- *Grant Proposals.* Regardless of funding, applying for research grants enhances critical thinking and writing skills.
- *Mentorship.* I guide proposal development by assisting with questions, hypotheses, predictions, and experimental design.
- *Recommendation Letters.* I am happy to provide recommendation letters for grants or fellowships with three weeks' notice. However, unexpected situations can arise, and we can discuss a plausible timeline that accommodates both parties.
- *Authorship.* Typically, graduate students lead and correspond in thesis research papers. Exceptions can be discussed. If undergraduates contribute original data that becomes

part of a publication (even if not authored by them), they will be included as authors. This applies to both independent work and contributions to larger projects.

- *Co-Authorship*: Lab members making substantial contributions to a project are co-authors, regardless of payment. Agreements on authorship are preferable in advance. Authorship eligibility for undergraduates working under graduate students will be clearly communicated, maintaining transparency in authorship guidelines within the lab.
- *Data Ownership*: None of us individually owns the data; it belongs to the lab/USU. However, lead authors and I are responsible for the proper storage, organization, and dissemination of the data. Please refer to the *Mundim-Data Management Plan* for more information on how to properly manage the data.

Mentoring and Communication:

- *One-on-One Meetings*: Regular one-on-one meetings set short- and long-term goals for education, skills, research, and career development.
- *Email Expectations*: Emails outside working hours are acceptable, with responses expected during normal hours within a few days.
- *Other Communication*: We can use Slack-text for quick coordination or accommodate preferred communication modes.

Lab Meetings, Presence, and Safety:

- *Lab Meetings*: Weekly lab meetings lasting one hour are encouraged.
- *Work Schedule*: Flexibility is allowed; tasks should be completed on time, with collaboration during intense periods.
- *Teaching and Research Assistants*: GTAs allocate 20 hours for teaching; GRAs spend up to 20 hours on their projects, ensuring responsibilities are covered during absences.
- *Parental Leave*: We collaborate with the department to accommodate family-related circumstances.
- *Lab Maintenance*: Lab members maintain a clean, safe workspace, reorder supplies when needed, and follow safety protocols.
- *Data Management*: All data must be properly recorded, stored, and organized; original copies remain in the lab.
- *Lab safety*: Safety in the lab is a shared responsibility that involves everyone.
 - o Undergraduate Safety Training: Prior to commencing lab work, undergraduates are required to complete lab safety training and stay updated with refresher trainings.
 - o Task-Specific SOPs: For every new task assigned in the lab, undergraduates will receive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and hazard assessments. It's crucial to read these documents thoroughly and adhere to the outlined procedures.
 - o Open Communication: If there are any questions or concerns about the procedures, handling of chemicals, or any aspect of the task, undergraduates are

encouraged to discuss them with graduate students or Dr. Mundim. We value questions and prioritize safety over everything else.

- o Safety Advocacy: Undergraduates should never be compelled to perform tasks they consider unsafe, and they should promptly communicate any safety concerns to Dr. Mundim. Your well-being is paramount, and your concerns will be addressed promptly.

Conflict Resolution

- *Initial Contact*: In case of conflict, the first point of contact should be Dr. Mundim, who bears the ultimate responsibility for maintaining a healthy and inclusive work environment. Share your concerns or conflicts, and Dr. Mundim will work to resolve them.
- *Escalation*: If Dr. Mundim's intervention doesn't lead to a satisfactory resolution or if there are concerns about their involvement, the next step is to approach the Department Head.
- *Undergraduate Perspective*: Undergraduates may also discuss conflicts with lab members or their mentors, if they believe it can lead to a constructive solution.
- *Additional Resources*: In cases of academic grievances or for general conflict management advice, you can refer to resources like the USU Academic Grievances procedure (https://www.usu.edu/academic-support/conflict/academic_grievances) and the USU Guide for Healthy Conflict Management (<https://extension.usu.edu/relationships/research/healthy-conflict-management>).
- *Mediation*: If necessary, and after exhausting the above steps, graduate committees, department heads, or college officials may be consulted for advice or mediation to ensure a fair resolution.

MENTOR COMMITMENTS

- *Structured Meetings*: Mentors will provide structured lab and one-on-one meetings to track goal progress and facilitate group feedback.
- *Timely Feedback*: Timely responses and feedback, typically within one work week (M-F), will be provided, with any expected delays communicated in advance.
- *Safe and Inclusive Environment*: A safe and inclusive research environment will be maintained to enhance the undergraduates' research experience.
- *Tailored Experience*: Research experiences will be tailored to benefit undergraduates the most, aligning with their desired outcomes, training, analysis, and presentation opportunities.
- *Adaptable Advising*: Mentor advising styles will be adjusted to meet any communicated needs.

- *Project Funding.* Efforts will be made to secure funding for lab projects, with clear communication of project parameters and expectations when lab-funded.
- *Resources for Success.* Additional resources and tips will be provided to ensure a successful mentor-mentee relationship.

GRADUATE STUDENTS' COMMITMENTS

- *Preparedness.* Graduate students (GT) are responsible to arrive prepared for lab meetings and mentor interactions, ensuring productive engagement.
- *Communication.* GT should maintain open and honest communication with advisor(s), addressing any lab-related challenges, interpersonal conflicts, or alterations in hers/his/their academic or research trajectory during and beyond graduate school.
- *Project Ownership.* GT should take the initiative in managing hers/his/their projects and goals, adhering to schedules to meet project milestones promptly.
- *Funding Initiative.* GT should actively seek funding opportunities, and when supported by grants, execute projects aligned with grant expectations or mutually defined objectives. Participation in reporting, presentations, and project-related activities is expected.
- *Teaching Commitment.* When funded as a GTA (Graduate Teaching Assistant), GT will allocate an average of 20 hours per week to teaching responsibilities, seeking approval for any absences due to travel or other reasons from the course instructor. GRAs (Graduate Research Assistants) will receive specific expectations, hours, and travel guidelines based on the funding source.
- *Conference Presentation.* GT will adhere to conference guidelines when presenting the lab's research at conferences.
- *Participation.* GT is advised to regularly attend USU Biology seminars and engage in the USU community through events and activities in alignment with hers/his/their comfort level.
- *Teamwork.* GT will foster a collaborative environment by proactively assisting lab-mates, with senior members offering guidance to newcomers, including course selection and methods training.
- *Graduate Student Responsibilities.* GT will take responsibility for monitoring hers/his/their progress toward graduation, including tasks such as applying for residency and forming committees, as outlined in the graduate student handbook.

Mentee signature & Date _____

Mentor signature & Date _____