

## **Mallott Lab expectations**

*While the general philosophy behind this document will remain unchanged, the specific expectations will be updated or amended as needed.*

Welcome to the Mallott Lab! We strive to have an inclusive, diverse, compassionate, and supportive community. We feel strongly that science is creative, fun, and collaborative. We also believe that rigorous science is not always fast or flashy.

### *Community*

We practice a team-based approach to scientific research – multiple, diverse voices and viewpoints enrich what questions we ask and how we ask them. Open and respectful communication between lab mates is essential to Community extends beyond the lab community. Our collaborators are integral to our team-based science approach. Even more importantly, the communities where and with whom we work are essential, equal partners in our work. Community members are experts who bring important knowledge and experience to the table.

### *Creativity*

Good science is creative science. Finding new questions to ask, new ways to test hypotheses, and effectively sharing research insights with the world all require creativity. Sometimes you need to leave the lab or office and/or talk to non-scientists to find inspiration or increase productivity.

### *Care*

We work with people, many of whom are from marginalized communities, who have entrusted us with their personal information and pieces of their bodies. We owe them careful attention to detail and reproducible methods in our work to ensure we are treating their contributions with respect. We also must take care when reporting results that we do not harm the individuals and communities with whom we work.

## **Participation**

### *Individual Mentoring Plans*

Every lab member will regularly complete an Individual Development Plans (IMP) in collaboration with Liz. This process will allow you to define big picture plans, more immediate goals, and create deadlines to help support your productivity over a several month time period. IMPs are an essential part of making sure we celebrate areas where you are excelling and create plans for areas that need more development. No two IMPs will look alike, as they are specific to an individual's career stage, goals, and projects. Undergraduates should plan on completing an IMP at the beginning of each semester. All other lab members should plan on completing an IMP quarterly.

### *Lab communication*

Most intra-lab communication happens through Slack and email. Slack is great for quick questions, sharing images/files/new papers, and discussions that need to happen in real time.

However, our lab has a free Slack account, so there is no permanent record of conversations on Slack. Email should be used for anything where you might want to access the conversation later and for communications that include folks from outside of the lab. Some examples of the Slack/email divide:

Did my package arrive? = Slack

Where is the sample tracking log again? = Slack

What is the author order going to be on this paper? = email

I'm going to be on vacation on X dates. = email

In addition to Slack and email, please use the lab wiki to pass along lab and institutional knowledge. Did you figure out how to navigate or avoid some terrible university bureaucratic process? Put it on the wiki! Is there something you wish you had known about life in the lab or at WashU within your first month? Put it on the wiki! Did you follow instructions on the wiki only to be horribly disappointed that they no longer work? Update the wiki!

### *Lab meetings*

All lab members are expected to attend and participate in lab meetings. They are important for building a cohesive lab community, sharing research ideas and giving feedback, and learning how to effectively communicate science. The first part of lab meeting will focus on brief research updates and announcements, followed by a lab member-led activity for the rest of the meeting.

Everyone is expected to lead lab meeting at least once a semester (the specific frequency will change as lab composition changes). Lab meetings can focus on presenting your research, discussing a paper, giving a tutorial on a neat research-related skill, workshopping your paper or a grant, or team-building activities.

Please remember that discussions during lab meetings should be productive, particularly (but not only!) when discussing a lab member's work. Disagree or criticize the science, not the person, and criticism should be constructive.

I will endeavor to schedule lab meetings during a time everyone can make. However, I may not always be able to accommodate all undergraduate class schedules.

### *Seminars*

Seminar attendance is crucial for your development as a scientist. Attending seminars outside of your core interests can spur fun new directions in your research. Postdocs and grad students are expected to attend the following seminars:

Biology department seminars (Mondays at 4pm) – *Everyone*

Living Earth Collaborative seminars (Thursdays at 4pm) – *Grad students in EEB, LEC postdocs, and EEB-minded postdocs*

Plant and microbial biosciences seminars (varies, currently Fridays at 9am) – *Grad students in PMB and microbially-minded postdocs*

Attendance at additional applicable seminars is encouraged. However! At an institution the size of WashU it is possible to do nothing but attend seminars, so choose wisely.

In addition, if you are given the opportunity to meet with a speaker, please do! It is great practice in talking to new people and people outside of your direct research area about your interests.

#### *Conferences and other work-related travel*

When lab funding permits, grad students and postdocs will have registration fees, travel, and housing for one academic conference per year covered. Undergrads who have reached the stage where they have data to present will also receive funding for one academic conference per year.

Funding for workshops, short courses, and other training opportunities may be available – please check in with Liz if you feel something like this would be beneficial to your career development.

#### *Social events*

Participation in social events outside of the lab is encouraged, but not required. These events help build camaraderie and trust in the lab. Every effort will be made to ensure that lab social events are accessible to all current lab members.

#### **Presence in the lab**

Lab members are trusted to develop and manage schedules that work best for their own productivity and goals. However, maintaining a regular presence in the lab does allow for spontaneous interactions that are beneficial, so you are encouraged to spend >2 days per week in the lab. Undergraduates should coordinate their schedules with their direct mentor. If you are planning wet lab or dry lab work that will be completed in a group, please be respectful of all involved lab members' time and schedule constraints.

In general, you do not need to tell Liz when you are going to be working in the lab vs. at home vs. in outer space. If something comes up that will require you to miss a meeting or rearrange lab work, that should be communicated to the other lab members involved. If you have an emergency situation, however, everyone will understand if you miss something without notice.

Your physical and mental wellbeing are important than your research. Take days off/out of the lab in order to recover from or manage illnesses. Please do not come to the lab if you think you have a disease that is contagious in the context of normal workplace interactions. If wellness-related absences will cause a change in your normal productivity, you are encouraged to talk to Liz to modify your short-term goals and IMP accordingly and/or to develop a plan to support your productivity while maintaining your health. You do not need to share any details beyond what accommodations are needed. If applicable, you are encouraged to reach out to Disability Resources to obtain accommodations for coursework and campus access.

Having a child enter your life or any other shift in family caregiving responsibilities will necessitate time away from the lab. The university has policies in place for various categories of students and staff. However, these policies may not meet the needs of your specific situation. Please talk to Liz to discuss alternative or modified work schedules and productivity expectations.

Vacations/holidays are times for you to relax and recharge. You are not expected to respond to emails, Slack messages, carrier pigeons, etc. while on vacation. To make sure vacations stay workfree, please 1. Confirm with Liz that your planned time off does not conflict with any lab duties (preferably >2 weeks in advance) and/or to come up with a plan to cover any lab duties; and 2. Add the days you will be away to the shared Google calendar.

### **Safety**

We work with dangerous biological samples and chemicals daily. Many of us have a tendency to become complacent when working with familiar samples and reagents, and folks who are newer to the lab might not know the dangers associated with various situations. However, the safety of all lab members is contingent on everyone following proper safety precautions. In addition, we are responsible for making our space and shared spaces in our building as safe as possible any university support staff and other students/staff/faculty. All lab members are expected to:

1. Know the dangers associated with all samples and chemicals you are handling. Any new protocols should include a list of chemical/biological/physical hazards associated with the work.
2. Wear appropriate PPE at all times in the lab AND remove that PPE prior to leaving the lab.
3. Dispose of all biological materials and chemicals appropriately.
4. Never bring food or drink into the wet lab.
5. Perform particularly dangerous tasks when others are in the building (protocols involving open flames, liquid nitrogen, and/or highly corrosive chemicals).
6. Hold both yourself and your lab mates accountable when it comes to lab safety. If you see something unsafe, say something in a kind manner (e.g., “Hey, Dr. Banner, gamma radiation is pretty dangerous, and you seem to be wearing street clothes. Can I help you find the appropriate PPE?”).

In addition, computational work can lead to eye strain and repetitive stress injuries. If you are experiencing discomfort while doing computer work, talk to Liz sooner rather than later to come up with solutions to make ergonomic changes to your workspace.