Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan

Postdoctoral mentoring activities will be split into two primary categories: 1) current research issues and 2) career preparation.

While most postdoctoral researchers have developed a variety of advanced technical skills, there is typically great variation in their critical thinking and communication skills. In this regard, mentoring relative to current research issues will include regular (weekly or as required) discussions of ongoing research activities and will focus on experimental troubleshooting, hypothesis generation, and effectively planning new research.

Career preparation mentoring will be individually tailored to each postdoctoral researcher, but will generally focus on developing skills relevant to future employment goals. Due to its overriding importance, opportunities to develop communication skills - both written and oral - will be heavily emphasized. Specific activities related to career preparation will be as follows:

- **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** - Under my guidance, each postdoctoral researcher will create an IDP at the beginning of their employment in my lab. The IDP will address their research/career goals and provide the foundation for ongoing self-assessment. Importantly, we will develop a calendar for regular meetings to assess progress towards the research/career goals outlined in the IDP. Using their IDPs, I will actively seek opportunities to help each postdoctoral researcher meet their unique future goals.

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV) Development** - The importance of the CV, as well Research and Teaching Statements where relevant, will be emphasized for each postdoctoral researcher. This will include evaluating each employee’s CV at hiring and discussing how we can work together to strengthen this essential document. CV development, including specific goals for its improvement, will be included in each IDP.

- **Proposal Preparation** - All postdoctoral researchers will be involved in proposal preparation - both for individual and overall lab funding opportunities. In addition to my advice and editing assistance on all postdoctoral writing, OU has recently developed an office for proposal preparation and each postdoctoral researcher will be encouraged to utilize this resource.

- **Data Portfolio** - Postdoctoral researchers will be required to maintain an ongoing data portfolio that we will jointly review on a regular basis (~bi-monthly). The data portfolio is separate from the lab notebook - it is a concise series of 15-20 figures, tables, and short text statements that can be used to quickly communicate the key elements of the researcher’s system and their most important findings to date. Importantly, developing a data portfolio and regularly reviewing it with me becomes a platform for discussing how their data is presented and interpreted - i.e., the development of the data portfolio leads to improved critical thinking and incrementally refines both their communication skills and planning for future research. Further, because it can also be a foundational element for preparing a larger presentation, the data portfolio prepares the postdoctoral researcher to confidently accept speaking opportunities, even on short notice.

- **Travel to Meetings** - Each postdoctoral researcher will have sufficient funds for travel to at least one workshop/conference per year and will be expected to make poster or oral presentations. Funds for this travel are requested in the budget.

- **Supervisory Experience** - All postdoctoral researchers will be expected to supervise junior members of the lab (graduate and undergraduate students) and will receive regular feedback in best practices related to these supervisory roles.