

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) comprised of Drs. Chris Aiken, Mariana Byndloss, Jim Cassat, Borden Lacy and Eric Skaar and we would like to thank you for training a new graduate student through the Microbe-Host Interactions Graduate Program. This letter is to provide you with some information with regards to upcoming events and to provide you with critical resources that we hope will enhance and guide your mentoring strategy.

Logistics: All your new students will have a welcome/orientation day on May 9, 2022 at 10am at Light Hall (LH) 306AB. During this meeting, we will review important aspects of our program such as course requirements, qualifying exams, choosing your dissertation committee, staying up to date with deadlines and ensuring that mentor-student expectations are clearly communicated and set. The students will receive a copy of the MHI handbook, have an opportunity to sign up to present at the MHI journal club and meet the GSA representatives.

Resources:

I have attached a copy of the MHI mentoring statement/compact which lays out the program's expectations of you as a mentor. Please take time to review this brief document. I have also attached a copy of a document put together by the AAMC which discusses good mentorship and provides helpful tips on managing different scenarios that may arise during the course of mentoring a student.

It is a requirement of all Biomedical Research Programs that a Student Placement and Responsibility Agreement be signed and submitted before a student official is part of a graduate program. A copy of the form for the PMI programs (MPI and MHI) is attached. If you have not yet submitted this form, please do so ASAP and return to (liz.roelofsz@Vanderbilt.edu).

Among the items I will stress during my introductory meeting with students is the necessity for students to have frequent and open discussion with their mentors and early on establish expectations. To help facilitate discussion between your student and you early in the process, we require that you discuss the content of the attached Compact Between MPI Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors and return a copy signed by you and your student to Liz Roelofsz (liz.roelofsz@Vanderbilt.edu). Documentation of this type of discussion is required for most training grants and is becoming a requirement of many R01s. Thus we are being proactive in making sure we can document compliance for all of our students.

During your discussion with your student, keep in mind that many of our students have never held a full-time job and have been "in school" for most of their lives. The position they are currently in sits at the intersection of full-time lab work combined with coursework that may require new ways of thinking and living for the student. Talking with each of your new students about matters such as lab attendance, etiquette, vacation policy, punctuality, record keeping, authorship, presentations, time management, professionalism, use of social media in lab, and career development will help them get to know you and your expectations and may assure them that you are on their side while informing them on how to fulfill their side of the mentor-mentee relationship. If you have any questions regarding the MHI program, please do not hesitate to contact me

Sincerely

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