**Graduate Student Expectations-Guenthner Lab group**

Because of the importance of the graduate student-advisor relationship, I thought it would serve both of us well to lay out some clear guidelines and expectations for working in my lab group. My desire here is not to create a set of rules on stone tablets, but instead create a document that can serve as the beginning conversation in what will hopefully be a long and fruitful dialogue for both of us.

First and foremost, I see my main role as an advisor as three-fold:

1) *Provide direction and advice on your thesis topic*. I view my role here as one of guidance, in that I will help shape the overall project and steer you towards questions or topics that are interesting and worth pursuing. But a key difference between graduate school and under-graduate work is that the science is yours and I want you to have a strong sense of project ownership. I know this may sound daunting at first, but we’ll get there together.

2) *Demonstrate to you how good science is done*. Whether in the field, or in the laboratory, I want to help you develop the tools you need to do science and do it well. I believe that a scientific project is not truly done until you sit down and write about it in a way that can be communicated to the broader community. To that end, I view it as my most important job to help you produce a thesis that is worthy of publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

3) *Prepare you for a career beyond graduate school*. My aim here is to help you develop all of those skills that constitute a professional earth scientist. These skills include, but are not limited to, writing ability, speaking ability, network building, CV building, applying for postdocs, and applying for jobs (academic, government, private sector).

Let me emphatically underline the point that I am invested in your success and want to see you do productive and good work, enjoy your time here, graduate, and do well in your chosen career beyond graduate school. Below are some more specific expectations that you should keep in mind throughout your matriculation at UIUC.

**Time**

The time commitment to research tends to be one of the most important issues for graduate students and mentors. The greatest thing about graduate school, and what separates it from other post-college pursuits, is that your time is (mostly) your own and you can (mostly) do what you want with it. The most dangerous thing about graduate school is that your time is (mostly) your own and you can (mostly) do what you want with it. In order to deal with this dichotomy, success in graduate school is really all about setting goals, and meeting them in a timely fashion. As long as I can see progress towards your goals at a reasonable pace, I will not pay much attention to how you spend your time on a day-to-day basis. At the beginning of each semester, we will sit down together and identify achievable goals to be completed by the end of the semester. We will write these down and revisit them in weekly or biweekly meetings throughout the semester.

I expect you to regard graduate school as a full time job with room for both vacations and overtime. We all need time off here and there to recharge and return to work reinvigorated (there’s a reason the labor movement fought long and hard for the weekend). But graduate school is not a regular 9-5 job and sometimes deadlines have to be met and goals achieved. This may sometimes require working into the evening and coming in on weekends. I don’t expect you to be working 80 (or even 60) hours a week. That’s crazy. But I also expect that some weeks will require you to work beyond the typical 40 hours and that you will adjust your schedule accordingly. *Approach your work seriously and with a sense of pride and ownership and the time issue will take care of itself.*

A note on managing classwork, TA work, and research: The most important thing you can do as a graduate student is to maintain steady and consistent progress on your research. I fully recognize that you will be more pressed for time when you are supported on a TAship as opposed to an RAship, and rest assured that I am working hard to come up with resources to support you as an RA as much as possible. But I expect that you will continue to make progress on research even if you are TAing. Again, this is why setting *reasonable* goals at the beginning of the semester is important. In terms of course work, this is not undergrad, and you are not here primarily to take courses. Courses are required for your degree and can be useful for exploring new avenues in your research, but they are NOT more important than your research. When setting goals for a given semester, you should never prioritize classes over research. We will try and structure your time here so that you can get the bulk of the coursework finished early in your degree so that you can focus on finishing your thesis in later semesters.

**Lab**

I don’t expect that you will be perfect when completing lab work. Everyone makes mistakes, including me at numerous times. But what I do expect is that you treat all equipment and supplies with care and keep detailed notes of ALL of your lab activities in the designated lab books. If something goes wrong that results from your mistake, or an instrument breaks down due to standard wear-and-tear, don’t hesitate to tell me ASAP. I won’t be upset if it’s an honest mistake, but I will expect you to help out with solving and fixing the problem. Again, lab notes are super important! It’s the single best way to diagnose and devise a fix for the problem.

Our lab contains some materials and equipment that are hazardous and dangerous. The risk of a serious situation is extremely small provided that you treat all equipment and materials with respect, and are mindful of what you’re doing in the lab at all times. Detailed procedures are available for all activities and I expect you to follow them. I also expect that you will stay up-to-date on all laboratory training required by the University, and follow all of the University’s laboratory safety guidelines. Ask me if you have questions about these.

**Professionalism**

During your time here, I hope that you will develop as a professional scientist. This means:

-Always treating others and their ideas with respect and tolerance (even if you disagree)

-Taking responsibility for your own actions and duties (particularly in the lab)

-Willingness to ask questions when you don’t know the answer

-Helping other students when they ask you for help (particularly in the lab)

-Criticism is a crucial part of science, but can be tough sometimes. I will always try my best to give you *constructive* criticism, and I expect that you will provide me and your fellow students the same.

*Last edit: Feb. 2016*