

Isbell Biodiversity Lab
Productive Interactions with Graduate Students and Postdocs

To facilitate open communication and optimize professional interactions, this document outlines my expectations and what graduate students and postdocs can expect from me. It was inspired by a similar document created by Sarah Hobbie, developed in consultation with my lab during Fall 2015, and updated in consultation with my lab members during Fall 2018. This document is open to revision as the identities and needs of lab members change over time.

My expectations for graduate students and postdocs

I expect that as a graduate student or postdoc in my lab, you will:

1. Develop short-term (one-year), long-term (multi-year), and professional and career goals. Communicate these goals to me, such as in an Individualized Development Plan.
2. Demonstrate independence and initiative in developing a research program, including writing research proposals and estimating research project budgets.
3. Start writing manuscripts during your first year. Graduate students or postdocs should respectively aim to publish approximately one or two papers per year. Include me as a co-author in most, but not necessarily all, cases. Graduate students should publish dissertation chapters, though some will likely be published after degree completion.
4. Communicate with me regularly about your progress, in weekly one-on-one meetings and via email. Plan times for me to visit your field projects.
5. Acquire teaching or mentoring experiences and skills.
6. Apply for funding, including fellowships and research funds.
7. Contribute to lab meetings and to other university (e.g., EEB, IonE, CBS, UMN) and research (e.g., CCSR, LTER) communities. For example, seek support from and provide support to other EEB graduate students and postdocs.
8. Keep a detailed lab notebook, preferably in both written and electronic formats. Show this content to me periodically and submit this content to me before degree completion.
9. Formally archive and make publicly available all data and metadata.
10. Request letters of recommendation or other feedback on writing from me at least 2 weeks before a deadline and remind me again 2 days before a deadline.
11. PhD students should complete the degree program in 5 years to ensure support.

What can be expected of me as a mentor and advisor

As a mentor and advisor, I will:

1. Participate in weekly one-on-one meetings and lab meetings, communicating travel conflicts in advance.
2. Offer constructive feedback on project development.
3. Provide resources to the best of my ability, including financial resources and professional contacts, connections, and opportunities.
4. Provide constructive feedback on writing, such as manuscripts, proposals, and budgets, within 2 to 3 weeks, except in rare circumstances when this is impossible.
5. Maintain professional boundaries. Lab members should feel free to initiate any discussions of personal issues.
6. Promote a welcoming, safe, and constructive environment in the lab that is free from discrimination and harassment.
7. Respond to emails from lab members in a timely manner.
8. Submit letters of recommendation on time.
9. Discuss and support the professional and career goals of lab members.
10. Visit field sites where lab members are conducting research.
11. Learn from members of the lab.