GONZALES LAB
MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, & GUIDELINES

DANIEL L. GONZALES, PHD
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"Remember, kid, there's heroes and there's legends. Heroes get remembered, but legends never die. Follow your heart, kid, and you'll never go wrong."

-Babe Ruth in The Sandlot (1993)

MISSION STATEMENT

This is the Gonzales Lab. We work on a wide range of projects in neurotechnology and neuroscience, with an emphasis on understanding neural circuit learning during BCI control. As the PI, I'm passionate about building lab culture. I want to enjoy the people I work with and always be excited about the science we're doing. I aspire to accomplish these main things in my work:

I want to be healthy. I want to be productive. I want to be efficient. I want to have fun.

That's it. I believe these main principles lead to sustainable, impactful science. Remove any one of these aspects and I think we lose the spark and joy of discovery.

What's my long-term scientific vision for the lab? In the best-case scenario, I believe our work could heavily impact multiple tiers of neuroengineering, neuroscience, and human healthcare. I believe we can be *the* lab that links brain-computer interface design with the natural properties of neural circuits. I believe we can leverage the intrinsic dynamics of cortical coding and plasticity for seamless integration of human and machine. Yet, this is all just a dream. It's a well-educated guess on how to carve out a unique spot for the Gonzales Lab among the thousands of other labs out there. It's a direction that I simply hope turns out to be impactful. In 10 years, the lab will likely be in a place I never anticipated and working on projects I never even envisioned. Maybe we're still working on BCI design, maybe not. That's ok too. Because along the way we were healthy, we were productive, we were efficient, and we had fun. Without any doubt, we did awesome science and made some memories along the way.

A healthy, sustainable lab culture is incredibly important to the success of everyone in the lab. This document is an effort to build a culture of excellence, creativity, and integrity with a team of people who love the pursuit of discovery. I want our goals to be synonymous and I want my expectations to be clear. This document is both a guideline for current lab members and also a small window for prospective members to view specific lab philosophies.

This is a living document. It will be updated and revised over time as I settle in to this role as a PI. I will also regularly receive feedback about my mentorship style, lab policies, general workflows, and update this document accordingly. Importantly, YOU have the power to mold this lab into what you want is to be as well. We're in this together.

OUR "BRAND"

What will people say when talking about the Gonzales Lab? Here are some of my goals

- **High-quality research.** I want our work to be viewed as high-quality, trustworthy, and repeatable.
- **Transparency and openness.** I want our lab to be thought of as a hub for open resources of all kinds: data, code, experimental methods, lab administration, grant/fellowship proposals, and advice about academic life.
- **Collaboration and kindness.** To the other labs in our field, I want to be seen as colleagues and collaborators, not as competitors. Within our department and on campus we are viewed as skillful and competent, but also as helpful and collaborative. I want non-faculty (custodial staff, assistants, grant managers, financial administrators, etc.) to know we value their work and will treat them with the utmost respect.
- **Locally supportive.** Within the local education community, specifically at the high-school and intermediate education levels, I want our lab to be known as a lab that will volunteer to educate and inspire the next generation of scientists.
- **A little crazy.** I want people to know our lab is not afraid to take on ambitious projects, do hard experiments, and collaborate broadly outside our immediate scope of expertise.
- **Fun.** I've been having fun since day one and I just can't imagine stopping now.

EQUITY

My approach to equity is to weave it into the fabric of my scientific approach. In academia, we too often segregate our work into bins. There's the scientific bin, where publications are, grants, research goals. Then there's the "DEI" bin, where we put outreach activities, the number of "diverse" people we've trained, and hot take tweets on diversity in academia.

There is no longer such thing to me as my "scientific goals" followed by my "DEI contributions." Rather, these values are inextricably linked. There is only science. But my scientific approach is rooted in equity, mentorship, and building up people.

Practically, what does this look like? What can you expect from me? Here are just a few things.

- **I'm open about my privilege.** While my background can be classified as "disadvantaged" in many ways, am also cognizant of my many advantages. It is so simple for me to see the number of factors that were out of my control that contributed to my success. For me, I'm:
  - Male
  - Heterosexual
  - Able-bodied,
  - English-speaking
  - Hispanic by ethnicity, but I am largely viewed by my peers as white

  Some other aspects I've come to realize over the course several years is the power of being raised in a safe, stable household by parents who valued education.

  I've worked hard, but I've also experience so much privilege.

- **I prioritize the recruitment of scientists belonging to groups that are historically excluded in science and engineering.** I want to be very clear with my words here. When *I initiate* a conversation encouraging someone to apply for positions within the lab, I will prioritize targeting groups of people that are historically underrepresented. I hope to build a lab that is hallmarked by diversity. I will also unequivocally state here: anyone that reaches out to me with interest in

joining the lab will receive equal treatment. All candidates are evaluated on the same scale of excellence.

- **I will support any activities regarding outreach and advocacy.** Whether this is a science outreach activity to a nearby high school or a necessary confrontation with leadership and administration, you can expect my support.
- **Equity is an ongoing conversation in the lab.** Are we citing women? Are we inviting Black scientists to our seminars? Who is dominating lab meeting discussions? (it's always the dudes). These conversations are an ongoing part of the lab culture.

MENTORING

The mentor/mentee relationship lies at the heart of what makes a successful lab. It's how PhD students settle in to their identity as scientists and how postdocs become leaders in their field. Let me be extremely clear: ***I want to be the best mentor possible***. I want to empower you scientifically and see you flourish in science. I also want you to feel like you grow as a human being during your time in the lab.

I have this deep desire to be a phenomenal lab leader, but I'm also a realist. I will never be perfect. Here are a few things that I think about constantly:

- I'm mentally and emotionally limited. I'm naturally an introvert. I could be in the lab by myself for days on end and be completely happy. Also, my wife and kids deserve a huge amount of my mental and emotional capacity, and they will always come first. I want to be there for everybody, but some days I might not have the capacity to support lab members to the fullest extent.
- Being a PI is a lot of jobs! Mentoring is one important aspect. But so is grant writing, budgeting, recruiting, administration, teaching, and department service work. If I had it my way, students and postdocs would receive my fullest attention every single day, but unfortunately the reality is that I will often be stretched thin and limited by bandwidth.

Keep these things in mind as we grow as a lab together. What I can assure you of is that I will always give my best.

What you can expect from me:

- I will mold my mentoring style to your needs, and we will assess those needs every 1-2 semesters.
- I will be there for you both scientifically and we'll chat on a weekly basis about your projects.
- I will be there for you personally and we can always make time to meet for non-science things that are happening in life.
- I will support you in your career goals and give my best guidance when you aren't sure what those goals are. We will do our best to mold your experience in the lab to those career goals.
- I will do my best to build a culture in which your scientific identity is rooted in ***effort*** rather than ***performance***. (Effort focuses on the work you put in, the hurdles you overcame to get a project running, how you systematically debugged a difficult experiment, the time you spent crafting a beautiful story in a proposal, etc. Performance focuses the final data set, whether it supports your hopeful claims, whether the proposal was awarded, etc).
- If I don't have a good answer, I'll connect you to someone who does.

- I'll *highly* encourage you to build your own network of mentors. I have only one perspective and one path through my own career. Get a full spectrum of advice by having a lot of people you can talk to.
- I'll push you scientifically: I want you to become a full scientist with creative and outstanding ideas. I'll push you to read broadly, brainstorm often, do the hard experiments, and use all of your unique experience to create new ideas.
- I'll push you as a person: we are all in perpetual need of growth. Beyond projects, your skillset, and career goals, we'll regularly discuss how you feel you've personally grown during your time in the lab.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE/WORK HOURS

There is no right answer to the question "how many hours do I need to work?" My PhD was often grueling. Balancing classes and lab work is a huge time commitment, but very rarely did I feel overworked or burned out. During my postdoc, I largely worked a very regular 8-5 schedule. Could things have gone faster if I worked longer and over weekends? Probably. Do I care? No. For me, the benefits of being with my family, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and mental recovery outweighed the potential career benefits of more time in the lab.

What is expected? A 40 hr work week. Here are my thoughts outside of that number:

- Academia comes in waves. Your base time should be working an *efficient* 40 hr per week, but there may be times where things are slow (i.e. equipment issues) or when things ramp up (i.e. grant and conference deadlines). All I ask is that you're flexible. There will absolutely be times when more hours are required, but operating in a high-capacity state for an extended period leads to burnout.
- *Be efficient*. This is my biggest request and advice. **A healthy work-life balance takes work!** It takes planning and thought. Efficiently use your time. Plan out your week before you show up on Monday. Come into lab every day with a plan that gets you a little close to the project goal.
- In my opinion, the hardest time to find balance is the first two years of a PhD program. You are taking a heavy course load, training in the lab, reading literature, establishing your project. I think you can expect this initial period to be the time when you struggle most to maintain a healthy balance.
- Reading, writing, and analyzing data all count as work, and these don't have to be done in the lab or office. For example, I do some of my best writing on my front porch (I'm here right now) or a cozy coffee shop. Leverage the fun spaces to make work more enjoyable.
- Take time for yourself. Academia, a PhD, a postdoc are all brutal. Learn how to separate work and your personal life to maintain a healthy lifestyle. **People don't realize that work-life balance is a *skill* you have to develop over time.** Start now and find what works for you. You are your best scientist when you enjoy the work, look forward to coming in every day, and as passionate about the science we're doing.

Some practical points:

- Time off can be taken at any time. For any time off lasting longer than a day, please let me know.
- For any time away lasting a week or more, let's discuss at least 1 month in advance.

- ^^^Letting me know about time off is *not* for me to keep tabs on how much you're working. Instead, it's to be sure we have enough staff to take care of animals if needed. In addition, I will often reach out for help regarding grant proposals, so if you will be away near a grant deadline regarding your project, I need to know for my own planning.
- For major holidays when most people will want to be away from lab, we will have to ensure a plan is in place for animal care.
- I will send messages and/or emails at all hours, not just during work hours. Messages outside of normal work hours will not require an immediate response (if something is urgent, I will let you know). Likewise, I am open to receiving messages at any time; however, I will likely not immediately respond during weekends and evenings.
- If you are trained and independent in the lab, you can make your own schedule and work hours that are best for you (within reason).
- Until you are fully comfortable and independent in the lab you should try to work hours that most align with those more senior to you so they can help with any issues that come up.
- Some experimental rigs, such as the two-photon, will need to be used for long stretches and also shared between multiple members. Sometimes, this will mean one person uses the microscope during the day, and another during the evening. For this sharing of major equipment, please be flexible in your scheduling.

WEEKLY GROUP MEETINGS

Group meetings will be a regular time when we all meet together to brainstorm new projects, provide updates, debug each other's experiments, and discuss the state of the lab. We will focus on two core features to make these meetings worthwhile and fruitful:

- **Transparency.** Lab meeting is THE place to be as open and transparent as possible about your project with the group. Voice the technical issues you're struggling with or any concerns you have about your experiments. Show ugly data, show raw data, not just polished final results. Ask for help on a new analysis technique or how to improve an ongoing experiment.
- **Feedback.** Help your fellow team members brainstorm new ways to troubleshoot. I may have the most experience in the lab, but that doesn't mean I always have the best ideas. Everyone should join in the provide feedback and suggestion to their labmate's project.

We will typically hold two types of group meetings, the Weekly Update and the Supergroup meeting

Weekly Update Meeting

These will typically be held at 9-10 am every Monday, but will be adjusted depending on classes and schedules. Everyone in lab is expected to attend (undergraduates should do their best to attend but it is not required).

Here's what you can expect from me:

- Updates on upcoming grants or other deadlines
- My general level of availability for the week to help with experiments or one-on-one meetings
- General comments of about lab administration (ordering, etc)
- Feedback on your latest data or future plans

Here's what I expect weekly from graduate students and postdocs:

- A quick ~5-10 min update on what you accomplished the week before and what your plans are for the upcoming week
- Most weeks, have a small slide deck prepared to show to the group your latest data, results, pictures from the cleanroom, or images of the experimental setup you're working on. The better you communicate and visualize your project, the easier it is to provide feedback!
- Comments on general lab administration, such as items that need to be ordered, issues with equipment, animal care problems, areas of lab that need maintenance, etc.

Undergraduates are free to show their updates at this meeting as well, but it is only expected every 2-3 weeks.

Supergroup Meeting

These will be bi-weekly meetings typically held on Fridays (12-1pm) and it's encouraged to bring your own lunch. I'll occasionally provide pizza or other food. The purpose of this meeting is for a single member to give a seminar-style update to the group. Everyone is required to give these presentations ~2 times a year. These meetings are a safe space to practice your presentation skills, craft the story of your project, and work on data visualization. We will often use this time as a journal club as well.

What is expected from the presenter:

- A 30-45 min seminar-style presentation. Pretend like you're presenting to a new, broad audience, not the lab that sees you every day.
- Alternately, this is an excellent venue to practice for an upcoming conference or symposium. Feel free to present a short talk or poster that you need feedback on.
- Clearly motivate and introduce your work! Just don't tell me what you're working on, but tell me why you're working on it. The first ~5-10 slides should be understandable to a broad BME audience.
- Do your best to prepare conference-quality figures. It's ok to have a few raw matlab plots, but minimize these and practice making polished slides.
- ***Improvement over time***. Your first few talks may suck and that's ok! Over time you will find your own style for presenting and shape your story.

What is expected from the group:

- Positive feedback on the aspects that were well done.
- Critical, constructive feedback. Be open about what was confusing and how to improve it.
- Questions. Ask questions about the details of an experiment, or what a reviewers may potentially ask.

STATE OF THE LAB ADDRESS

At the end of the Fall semester, our final lab meeting of the year before a holiday hiatus will be a State of the Lab Meeting. In this presentation, I will give an overview of the past year. I will highlight lab accomplishments, the progress we've made, and individual achievements from lab members. We will also each prepare a short list growth we're proud of from the previous year, plus goals for the upcoming year.

I will also give an overview of lab funding and proposals I've submitted. This is a great time to ask questions about how funding and budgeting works, how institutions like the NIH, NSF, and DoD differ, and how student stipends operate. The purpose here is not to burden the lab with the stress of

funding, but to be transparent and demystify how lab budgets are structured. I want you to be educated and knowledgeable about the system in place, because one day it will be in your hands to change it.

PROGRESS TRACKING MEETINGS

We will meet one-on-one every 1-2 semesters for ~1 hr to evaluate your progress in the lab. We will do so using an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that I've customized based on IDPs proposed by the NIH and Vanderbilt. We will discuss your short- and long-term goals, stress status, lab workflows, and anything you need from me as a mentor. Prior to these meetings, you will fill out a short, confidential questionnaire and we will use your answers to guide the meeting. We will track your answers over the years to monitor both your scientific and personal growth during your time in the lab.

ADDITIONAL ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

Additional one-on-one meetings can be scheduled anytime and for pretty much any reason. Also, during critical periods, such as before a fellowship deadline, we will likely ramp up the number of times we meet to stay on the same page.

GRANTS, GRANT WRITING, FELLOWSHIPS

Regardless of your goals post-PhD or postdoc, clear, persuasive writing is a critical life skill. Everyone in the lab will be expected to apply for fellowships. Some examples for graduate students are the NSF GRFP, NDSEG, D-SPAN, or HHMI Gilliam. For postdocs, the NIH F32 or K99, HHMI Hanna Gray, or Burroughs PDEP and CASI. Obviously, these awards boost your CV, but they also ease lab funding constraints and give you direct experience in writing research proposals. If you ever receive an award that provides travel or research expenses, that money is fully yours to use, but purchases or conferences you attend need to be run by me first.

All eligible graduate students should plan to apply for the NDSEG in years 1-3 of your PhD and NSF GRFP in year 2.

In addition to fellowships, I will directly ask for your help in my own grants. I will ask for your help writing various sections, and I will absolutely be asking for figures (see Figure section below). For senior postdocs planning for tenure-track R1 positions, you can be given a bigger role in grants for the lab if desired such as constructing the Specifics Aims page and writing the main sections of the Approach. In addition, I encourage writing your own, full grant proposals. Early investigator grants like the BBRF NARSAD are an excellent starting point. For your faculty applications, I can then reference this writing experience directly in my reference letters.

What you can expect from me

- Detailed, critical feedback on your fellowship applications
- One-on-one meetings to craft the story of your research proposals
- Letting you know ~1 month in advance about my own grant deadlines related to your project. This means you can expect requests for figures or short write-ups in the weeks leading up to the deadline.

- I apologize in advance but sometimes these requests will need a very quick turnaround time as deadlines approach.
- I'll let you know when your main day-to-day work should take a backseat to a specific grant proposal.

What I expect from you

- After we decide on the main outline for your fellowship, the first draft of the research proposal is yours to write (which I will then likely tear apart…but it's a good exercise!)
- The first draft of your proposal sent to me 2 months before the deadline (this is more flexible for more senior, established members)
    - o For PhD students applying for fellowships in their first semester, this first draft can be given to me 1 month prior to the deadline
- Let me know everything you want to apply for
- Minimize last-minute requests for edits or letters of rec

PREPRINT POLICY

Before submission to a journal, all papers will first be posted as a preprint.

PUBLISHING

From the beginning of a project, we will outline a general path to publication. We will identify the novelties, the added engineering advances, and hypothesize what we will add to our knowledge of neural circuits. However, the story of a project morphs and changes across years. It's both a beautiful and brutal process that we must come to love.

In our lab, we will publish high-quality advances in both engineering and neuroscience. To me, "high-quality" does *not* mean high-impact journals. Instead, I believe high-quality means solid science, elegant engineering, convincing data, and repeatable experiments. Regardless of journal name, I want people to read our papers and think "wow this is really nice work." For some of our projects we will absolutely aim for the flagship journals. However, by no means do I only take on projects geared towards "high impact" publications.

What you can expect from me:

- One-on-one guidance through the process of constructing the story of a manuscript, choosing the journal to submit to, creating figures, and writing the paper
- Critical feedback and suggestions regarding data visualization and writing
- Requests to review raw data
- Guidance through the review and revision process

What I expect from you:

- Perseverance! This process is both exciting and difficult. Sometimes 90% of a paper is complete and the final 10% is the toughest. Keep pushing.
- Own your manuscript. Don't rely on only me to draw the main story and conclusions. In your first drafts and in the revisions, highlight what you believe are the main findings, data that support the claims, and the study significance.

- Be transparent with me regarding experimental data. If you have concerns about the results of an experiment, think we're misinterpreting results, or have an idea for an important control experiment, let me know.
- Organize your data and code in a way that is easy to recreate figures. We're going to make, remake, and make again each figure. I strongly suggest "hard coding" each figure panel. This means you run one script that re-plots the entire raw panel.
- Leading up to submission, organize the data and code in an acceptable way for a public repository.

OPEN SCIENCE AND LAB RESOURCE BLOG

I would like for our lab to be known for being open and transparent with our knowledge, data, and experimental procedures. Of course, there is always the fear of being "scooped." As a new lab, we should be mindful of this. But generally, I will always lean towards openness about our work rather than siloing ourselves.

Upon preprinting our work, all of our data will be posted publicly. Code is encouraged to be posted as well, but I understand that this is sometimes a heavy burden to curate and clean up for public use.

I am generally very open about sharing my proposals with anyone who requests, in addition to other helpful documents such as faculty application materials. I encourage the students and postdocs in my lab to do the same with their fellowships or other items that may benefit the community.

I am also a proponent of alternative methods of disseminating our work and knowledge openly. As we build the lab, you will come up with all sorts of neat experimental rigs, analysis pipelines, and cleanroom tricks. Some of these may not necessarily be the type of work we conventionally think of as "publication" worthy, but these bits of knowledge can be extremely helpful to the broader community. One our lab website, we will share these resources in short, blog-style updates. Each student and postdoc is expected to contribute at least one of these blogs during their time in the lab. Have fun with this little project. Make it your own.

LAB TRAINING AND PROTOCOLS

As I said above, I think a key ingredient to success is becoming independent in the lab as quickly as possible. How do we facilitate this process in an experimental lab? I am a firm believer that one way is to standardize lab training and have every lab procedure written down.

We will all have access to a Gonzales_Lab_Protocols Microsoft OneNote notebook that is a critical knowledge base for the entire lab. Everyone is expected to use the notebook and add to its protocols. This will be the place where we merge our collective knowledge into a central hub. It is the responsibility of each lab member to include their expertise about protocols and procedures into this notebook. Think of it as the wisdom you pass down to future generations! Here are examples of protocols that could be included:

- Full cleanroom process for fabricating flexible probes
- Headplating and cranial window surgeries
- Behavioral training guide
- Two photon microscope SOP
- Calcium imaging analysis pipeline

- Making publication-quality figures
- How to organize your lab notebook
- How to structure and store your data

Please include visuals, makes notes of steps that are particularly difficult, and comment on the steps that could still use some optimization.

When you train someone in the lab, **use the protocol!** Walk through the document step by step. If you come across a step that's confusing or missing, modify it on the spot.

I believe that standardizing lab training in this way will dramatically reduce the number of times a new lab member has to shadow a senior lab member, speed up the time to independence, and reduce the likelihood of misusing lab equipment.

ONBOARDING OF NEW MEMBERS

There is an official onboarding workflow for all new members in the lab protocols onenote book. This workflow will facilitate your integration into the lab throughout your first semester and ensure you are on track with trainings, animal certifications, cleanroom access, fellowship preparation, and other critical aspects of becoming a fully functional team member.

LAB NOTEBOOKS

In addition to this centralized notebook for protocols. Everyone will keep a Microsoft OneNote lab notebook that can be accessed across multiple devices for easier note taking. You are also free to keep a hand written notebook, but I personally find online notebooks easier to use and update with pictures and visuals. In addition, these notebooks are easily CTRL+F searchable across years of notes.

OFFICE SPACE

Our ESB floor provides cubicle-like desk space for each graduate student. Shared, closed-door office space will be available for the lab's first postdocs and research scientists (~3 people in one office). In addition to the kitchenette on our floor, this postdoc office space will also have a coffee and snack station for everyone in the lab to share.

COMPUTING AND DATA STORAGE

I will provide a desktop and midrange GPU at everyone's desk. I also realize that laptops are essential for day-to-day work and if yours ever needs replacing then I will do my best to purchase one with lab funds. In the lab, we will maintain designated workstations with more powerful GPUs for analyses requiring more computing power. These can be accessed in-person or via remote access.

We will generate a ton of data. Your office desktop will have multiple terabytes of hard drive space and you will be provided with a multi-terabyte external hard drive as well. Either on a server within the lab or on Vanderbilts existing servers, we will have shared access to critical lab storage.

I believe that standardizing how data is labeled and stored is critical for long-term sustainability. Your hard drive should be organized similar to this:

DATA ANALYSIS AND PIPELINES

I would like everyone in the lab to use the same analysis programs to synchronize analysis methods across projects. We will rely primarily on Matlab. However, I am open to Python. I simply do not have the experience with Python to be much help. The main goal is for everyone to be learn and be experts with the same program to share code. Will we have a GitHub repository for the lab.

Preferred pipelines to offline data analysis. All of these are suggested starting points and students and postdocs are welcome to find the solution that they believe works best. Again, my only request is that everyone uses the same thing for consistency

- Spike sorting – Kilosort 2.0 and Phy Gui
- Behavior – Deep Lab Cut
- Calcium analysis – Caiman

After the first year or two of the lab, I will modify this section to the final decisions the lab has made.

LAB CALENDARS, SCHEDULING, & AVAILABILITY

Everyone will have access to view my own personal calendar. I will do my best to add in my teaching times, my designated times for writing, travel dates, etc. Each semester I'll do my best to keep a semi-regular schedule of when I'm available for scheduled meetings, drop-in meetings, or time to be in the lab to help troubleshooting.

I would also like each student to share their semesterly class schedule with me for planning regular meeting times.

For shared resources such as the surgery suite, electrophysiology/imaging rigs, we will reserve time using a shared calendar. This is an excellent way to plan out your week as well. For the time being, this will be a first-come, first-serve basis. As the lab grows, there may be scheduling conflicts and increased use of different rigs, in which case we will move to a more standardized system.

Please also add important events such as seminars, conferences, and abstract deadlines to the general lab calendar. Also add fun things! Include your birthday so we don't miss it and any holidays that are special to your culture that you'd like the lab to be aware of. We'll do our best to celebrate.

LAB CLEANLINESS

Our policy: Clean up after yourself.

I'm quite passionate about keeping a well-organized and clean lab. I think it increases efficiency and productivity. If I think you are leaving lab spaces and rigs in inadequate condition, I will let you know. However, things will inevitably get cluttered. We will have two lab-wide cleanups a year. Each person will be given a section of the lab that they are responsible for deep cleaning and organizing. These cleanings will take place bi-annually the first week of September and the first week of February.

CONFERENCES

I will update this section depending on the funding landscape, but generally my hope is for each student and postdoc to attend 2-3 major conferences. You will be allowed one attendance at an early stage without presenting, and all following travel will come with the requirement of presenting a mature project. Generally, people should expect to room together and we will do our best to organize this within everyone's comfort zone.

SfN and BMES will be our primary conference outlets every year. Some other meetings to keep an eye out for, depending on where our projects take us:

- BCI Society
- GRC Bioelectronics
- GRC Neuroelectronics
- GRC Dendrites
- CSHL Neuronal Circuits
- Barrels
- MRS
- ACNP
- [Continue this list]

Conferences to look into for URM students and postdocs

- SACNAS
- ABRCMS

It will be my priority to reduce the financial burden of travel as much as possible. I will update this section as I learn more about the policies of the department and institution, but my hope is that all major up-front costs such as registration, flights, hotels, etc. can be put on a travel card. Daily conference expenses will then be up to each student and postdoc and reimbursed upon return. Similar to a lab protocol, we will have a specific OneNote page in the shared lab notebook containing a step-by-step outline for departmental travel policies, business office contacts, setting up Concur expenses, and attaining reimbursement as quickly as possible.

Those will travel awards or fellowship funds should still aim to travel with the lab to the same conferences but will generally be given more leniency to travel to new venues, attend more conferences, stay in their own hotel room, etc.

LEAVING THE LAB

I cannot even wrap my head around people graduating and leaving the lab yet. So I will return to this section eventually!