Mentor-Mentee Contract for Undergraduate Researchers in the SEACR Lab

This contract is intended to serve as a guideline to facilitate communications between an undergraduate trainee (mentee) and Dr. Tanner. It also serves to set up expectations each party may have of each other and provide an avenue for conflict resolution, if it so arises. The contract should be reviewed and completed individually before a joint discussion between mentor and mentee. Revisions should be done if necessary to reflect the agreed-upon answers after discussion, and the contract should be signed and dated when it reflects the most current agreement. The mentee is responsible for reviewing and updating this contract as necessary, at least on an annual basis.

The broad goals of our research program

As part of my duties as a professor, I am expected to bring in grants and conduct research that serves not only the Chapman community, but also science and society at large. Undergraduate researchers in the SEACR Lab will help to carry out this research and, in some circumstances, develop these research questions. In this research environment, we uphold the values of scientific integrity, ethical responsibility to our served community, and a commitment to uplifting voices traditionally silenced. We have ever-evolving values and responsibilities, guided by all of our members and discussed regularly (documented at https://www.seacrlab.com/lab-culture). We also share a commitment to disseminating our knowledge in peer-reviewed journals and in the affected communities through non-academic means. These two forms of communication are equally important, which is not standard for an academic lab. Undergraduate researchers are expected to participate in this dissemination through a form of outreach as a core component of our lab mission.

What I expect from you

Professors have a duty to train and advise students in ways that serve not only the research program, but also for the professional development of undergraduate researchers. While the mentor can assist in setting goals, the bulk of the work rests on the mentee in executing their own progress. In general, here are some expectations that will facilitate mentee growth in the SEACR Lab:

- Treat others (people, animals, and plants) and our resources with respect
- Be willing to learn, ethical, and enthusiastic
- Learn how to plan, design, and conduct high quality scientific research
- Learn how to present and document scientific findings
- Communicate your needs, successes, and failures
- Take advantage of professional development opportunities
- Make progress towards your degree
- Persevere!

<u>Take ownership of your educational experience</u>:

Undergraduate research is a core component of a well-rounded undergraduate educational experience, but it is also a privilege to participate in independent studies. Make sure that research does not get in the way of coursework, and exercise mature reasoning when deciding

if research needs to take a back seat temporarily. It is the mentee's responsibility to provide the mentor with regular updates on the progress and results of research studies. The mentee should also take advantage of any professional development opportunities offered by local organizations, our collaborators, or the college. Finally, keep on top of university deadlines for funding awards, 291/491 credit enrollment deadlines, and requirements for degree progress.

Be a team player

Attend and actively participate in all group meetings, whether they are within our lab or with external collaborators. Be a good collaborator by communicating effectively and expressing shared trust, respect, and goals. Acknowledge and seek out collaborations outside of the SEACR Lab, especially with local community organizations. Be willing to help out on projects outside of your expertise if a lab mate needs extra hands. Conversely, do not be afraid to ask for help from anyone in the lab. Strive to be a good lab citizen by cleaning up after experiments, replacing materials, notifying everyone if something needs to be replaced or fixed, maintaining good lab notes, and practicing efficient data management on shared devices and cloud storage.

Develop strong scientific research skills

Acknowledge the privilege it is to have access to the resources and ideas associated with being affiliated with a research lab. Strive to both learn and teach new skills regularly to build the skill set of the lab. Keep up with the literature by reading at least one new article per week in your topic, and cataloging your readings on the shared Google Drive so others can benefit as well. Rise to the challenge of presenting and/or publishing your work early and often, even if this is at Chapman undergraduate research showcases or in local scientific bulletins (e.g., Southern California Academy of Sciences).

Communicate clearly and often

Remember that everyone has different background knowledge and it is the responsibility of the communicator to establish common ground. Remember that everyone is at a different place in their research journey and still learning, including the mentor. Communicate about preferences for meeting schedules and styles before research begins, and communicate if needs change. The number of hours dedicated to research by the mentee will be agreed upon before each semester and revisited at each term, including summer. Mentees engaged in research regarding live animals or time-sensitive human subjects research may be asked to conduct activities over holidays, but only when absolutely necessary. We do not work on weekends unless absolutely necessary. Be prompt in answering Slack messages from lab mates and mentors (within 2 business days). Notify Dr. Tanner if there is a planned or unplanned absence as soon as possible if there are experiments actively running.

What you can expect from me

I will be available for regular meetings and informal conversations about professional and personal concerns within my reasonable schedule. I will be your advocate in any academic or career choice you make. The successes of mentees directly translate to the success of the SEACR Lab. I will not take credit for the work done by the lab, we are a collective. I will continue to mentor you past your time in the lab, to see you along your journey as long as I can serve

you. I will provide letters of evaluation when you request them, no matter how long it has been. However, I will be honest if I cannot provide a strong letter and reserve the right to refuse a recommendation request if it is in your best interest. I will lead by example to demonstrate the diverse skill set required of scientists, including written and oral communication skills (scientific papers and professional meetings), mentorship, grant writing, and lab management. Lastly, I will strive to be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful. I commit to always learning how to do better, and I will try my best to understand your unique situation and mentorship needs.

Yearly evaluation of joint goals *(to be filled out)*

Each year we will discuss progress and goals. Remember to bring up difficult topics if you are unhappy with any aspect of your experience. Remember that I am your advocate and your mentor. I will help you with any problems you may have with other students, professors, or staff. You should also feel safe to discuss any concerns with respect to my role in your academic journey. If you do not feel comfortable doing so, you may also reach out to *REDACTED*. This yearly check in is a good opportunity to take care of issues before they become major problems.

1. What kind of assistance does the mentee want from the mentor in achieving their academic goals over the next year?

2. How often does the mentee want to meet, for how long, and where?

3. Who will be responsible for scheduling the meetings?

4. What will the meeting topics include?

5. What are the ground rules for meeting discussions (one-on-one)? (e.g., confidentiality, openness, candor, truthfulness, etc.)

6. How will we know the mentoring relationship has served its purpose and needs to be terminated?

7. Any concerns the mentee wants to discuss and resolve?

8. Any concerns the mentor wants to discuss and resolve?

9. We have agreed our focus for the initial meetings this year will be:
    a. (1)
    b. (2)
    c. (3)

_____ _____

Mentee Signature Date

_____ _____

Mentor Signature Date

Sources for this contract:

Hook, Edward W III and Audrey Wrenn. *UAB Center for Clinical and Translational Science Mentoring Contract. (http://www.uab.edu/ccts/TrainingAndEduc/Documents/Mentor%20Contract%20-%203%20pages.pdf)*

Pfund, C., House, S., Asquith, P., Spencer, K., Silet, K., & Sorkness, C. (2012). *Sample Compact from Laboratory of Dr. Trina McMahon for Graduate Students, University of WIsconsin-Madison.* Mentor training for clinical and translational researchers. *Entering Mentoring Series. New York, NY: WH Freeman and Co*, 1-121. *(https://d1uqjtzsuwlnsf.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/163/2016/11/McMahon_UW_Compact_Example.pdf)*