

Behavioral Neuroscience Laboratory
Dr. Cammack

Welcome to my laboratory! I see our work together as a great opportunity to think collaboratively, critically, and carefully about your research topic. Research can be a labor of love – it requires creativity, deep thinking, perseverance, and an ability to embrace a path that is not always straightforward – this is the nature of scientific discovery. It is also a commitment of time and energy, and the more that you invest in the process, the more valuable your experience and your outcomes (papers, conference presentations, etc). I will work to ensure that you are engaging with a topic/project that interests you and guide you in your research project; I ask for commitment, earnest work, positivity, and open dialogue in return.

Learning goals/objectives for each of my research students:

Understanding of the research process
Understanding how scientists work on problems
Understanding how knowledge is constructed
Reading primary literature with a critical eye
Cultivating tolerance for obstacles and ability to work through challenges
Learning to work independently and as a team
Interpreting data/results (ours and other labs')
Organizing/analyzing data
Developing skills in science communication (oral, written)
Cultivating a collaborative, positive, and open-minded spirit and support of fellow labmates
Inspiring an interest in the larger scientific community
Clarifying potential career interests/paths
Gaining self-confidence

As you can see, this is a learning experience, not just something to put on your resume/CV. Reach deep to make sure you're here for the right reasons.

Lab Structure & Expectations

My lab meets regularly as a group, which allows us to share our progress, collaborate and troubleshoot together, and support each other – meaningful progress often comes when multiple minds are tackling an issue or involved in discussion. I also meet individually with each of my lab students, to discuss your progress on your project, discuss challenges and troubleshoot solutions, and spend time on any issues specific to your project/experience. *Please prioritize these meetings* – everyone's time is valuable, and sticking to a schedule, as best we can, will enable us to make consistent and meaningful progress.

For our group lab meetings (everyone):

I will do my best to contribute:

- Resources/strategies for professional development and career preparation
- Guidance on major ideas/content related to our research interests/projects
- Strategies for developing skills, and time/space to cultivate those skills
- Discussion of research ethics
- Space for support/troubleshooting

I expect/encourage everyone to:

- Practice summarizing your research project (5-10min):
 - Your general topic/project (2-3 sentences)
 - One of your goals/aims for the week
 - How well you were able to meet that goal/aim, and why
 - A challenge/setback that you experienced, and what you did
- Think collaboratively about your labmates' projects and offer constructive feedback on their ideas and projects (writing, posters, etc)

- Share ideas about/reactions to assigned readings on lab-related topics and/or professional development
- Reflect on your experience in the research processes that you've been engaged with. What have you enjoyed? What struggles/challenges have you faced? What has resonated with you, and why?

If you are currently working on a research/lab project with me, we may also have one-on-one meetings:

I will do my best to contribute:

- Preparation/design of a realistic, feasible and valuable project that you are invested and interested in
- Thinking, resources, and technical training to support your work on your project
- Dedicated time to focus on issues/questions that you have about your project (data, papers, writing, etc)
- Problem-solving strategies and troubleshooting
- A set of activities and tasks that build content knowledge and/or translatable skills
- Advice on aspects of professional development and/or career preparation

I encourage/expect you to:

- Come prepared with relevant issues/questions to discuss (data, papers, writing, etc)
- Make consistent, *bona fide* progress on a weekly basis on your goals/aims
- Structure your time in ways that allow you to invest meaningfully in your project (*don't leave things until the last minute!*)
- Reflect on what strategies/approaches are helping you to meet your goals, what challenges you're facing, and ideas for how to tackle/address that challenge
- Let me know what resources/strategies might facilitate your work or enhance your investment

If you are not currently working on a research/lab project with me (i.e., you're trying things out):

- This is an opportunity to learn! You'll gain a sense of the types of research projects that students work on in my lab, and you'll build knowledge and skills that will translate to my (or other) research environments.
- Please contribute positively and proactively to our lab conversations/work. Join in! The more minds working together, the better. You have valuable perspectives to add.
- If you decide this isn't for you, that's OK. Learning what you don't like is as important as learning what you like, and sometimes you need to try it out to know. No hard feelings – you need to do you ☺
- If you decide this is something you'd like to get more involved with, I'd be happy to chat about how things are going and potential paths forward (e.g., getting you involved with a project!).

Meetings will be scheduled using Google Calendar. If you need to get in touch with me, I check my email regularly (kmcammack@sewanee.edu) and prefer that you try me there first. If there is a lab emergency (e.g., water leak, sick mouse), please text/call me on my cell (number on lab info sheet).

Finally, check out some STEM-related professional societies and networks. Some have membership fees, some do not; I can offer some thoughts on whether/when it's worth paying for. It's good to know they're out there:

- Professional societies & initiatives: Association for Women in Science, Women of Color Research Network, Women in Neuroscience, Society for Neuroscience (including diversity initiatives), Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science, Latinos in Science & Engineering, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), American Indian Science & Engineering Society, American Psychological Association (click "Divisions" for subject-specific groups), Society of STEM Women of Color, American Society for Cell Biology, Society of Asian Scientists & Engineers, and many others
- Online communities: #VanguardSTEM, #BlackandSTEM, #LGBTQinSTEM, #LatinxandSTEM, Black in Neuro, 500WomenScientists, 500QueerScientists, and many others

I'm excited that we have the opportunity to work together, and look forward to a productive and enjoyable research experience!

Dr. Cammack