

Dr. Tullia Bruno's Mentoring Philosophy

Mentoring is an important commitment and honor as a principal investigator. Thus, it is the aspect of my career that is constantly evolving so that I can give trainees that join my research group a competitive toolkit before moving onto future positions. My mentoring philosophy entails three aspects: scientific mentoring, career mentoring, and work-life balance mentoring. To be successful, a trainee must receive scientific training that reflects excellent rigor, reproducibility, and ethics. Initially, trainees gain scientific training by one-on-one discussions with me and hands on training from their lab mates. They learn how to plan and execute experiments successfully, but more importantly, how to analyze their results with all the appropriate scientific controls. They also learn how to reflect upon their initial hypotheses and form alternative hypotheses when their experimental results are unexpected. This also encourages creativity within the scientific workspace, which is also very important as trainees develop. The goal of my lab mentorship is to mold my trainees into independent thinkers, so they are fully prepared for the next steps of their scientific journey. In addition to rigorous lab training, trainees also receive career mentoring from me. This includes (but is not limited to) scientific writing and presentations, networking, and overcoming imposter syndrome. We work together on all these important aspects so that scientific communication and subsequent feedback is maximal. Trainees receive feedback from smaller venues such as lab meeting but are also encouraged to attend at least one scientific meeting a year to learn how to network and discuss science in a larger forum. Further, career mentoring also entails discussing overall career goals with my trainees so that they are amply prepared to move on to a position of their choosing i.e., academia, industry, teaching, etc. Finally, while work-life balance can be elusive, I absolutely encourage my trainees to make time for themselves outside of lab. In this realm, I lead by example but also work with them to create reasonable and clear expectations for productivity. The "work smarter" approach is central to our lab theme to help ensure that trainees are also taking the necessary breaks for emotional wellness. Finally, the entire lab cultivates a collegial environment through lab outings and celebrations. These events also help me to understand my trainees better, so I know what motivates them to work toward their goals in and out of lab.