

Dr. Tania Rozario

Mentoring Philosophy

The overarching philosophy of my lab is to engage in curiosity-based research with an unbending commitment to rigor and reproducibility in a safe and inclusive environment.

Do good science.

Every week, I alternate lab meetings and journal clubs where continuous attention is given to best scientific practices including but not limited to rigorous statistical analysis, unbiased experimental design, ethical imaging practices, and fair reporting. I believe that the best way to inculcate a culture of scientific rigor is to give it prominent and continuous attention throughout the whole training period rather than relegate such discussions to periods when manuscripts are being put together. I have an open-door policy and I encourage the free flow of ideas and open, creative discussion with me and with the rest of the lab.

We are a team.

Collaborative spirit and mutual respect are guiding principles to a happy work environment. All lab members are expected to respect personal and professional boundaries. All lab members are expected to help each other to get technically proficient and generate common resources. I promote these ideals through one-on-one conversations and explicitly in the lab's mentor-mentee compact. When inter-personnel conflicts do arise and are not resolved by the affected parties, I will mediate a resolution. I pledge to treat all parties with respect, empathy, and transparency, while being mindful of confidentiality needs.

To foster a feeling of togetherness, I organize at least one non-compulsory social gathering every semester. I also encourage mentees to give back to our community through volunteering. In the spirit of paying-it-forward, trainees will be given the opportunity to become mentors themselves, when the time is appropriate. I will make sure to structure support for peer mentor-mentee relationships so that my input and guidance is always available.

All are welcome.

I am committed to diversity and inclusion at UGA and in my lab. No prospective mentees will be turned away because of who they are. I am devoted to equitable treatment of all mentees. My experience has taught me that different trainees will need different degrees of guidance, encouragement, and direction. My goal will be to tailor my mentoring toward my trainees' strengths and to find creative ways of overcoming any shortcomings. Thus, I always encourage mentees to compare their progress to previous benchmarks, instead of to each other. I am mindful to highlight achievements and dish out praise just as I am mindful to provide constructive criticism and course corrections.

I will be your advocate.

Though I will be thrilled to train scientists with bright careers in academia, I believe passionately that we need our best scientists in all careers including industry, medicine, education, technology development, government, non-profits, advocacy, journalism and more. Thus, I will support and help guide my trainees to pursue their own individual career aspirations in a reasonable timeframe. I will be mindful about introducing my mentees to my own networks and encourage them to apply for career development opportunities, awards, and fellowships.

Mentorship Plan

My lab is welcome to people of all ethnicities, races, ages, sexual and gender orientations, socioeconomic backgrounds, and religious affiliations. At present the lab has members from underrepresented groups in STEM including women, people of color, and first-generation college students. To be an effective mentor to all, I will lay out my mentorship plan for FFIRE scholars.

I have biweekly one-on-one meetings with my trainees though the frequency of these meetings can be adjusted based on career stage and needs. These meetings are dedicated to discussing scientific progress, providing feedback, and identifying any support needed from me. I also take the opportunity to engage and advise on matters of scientific rigor as we review data and experimental plans.

Twice a year, we will have MyIDP meetings to discuss career progress/goals and make pragmatic adjustments where necessary. In addition to long-term goals, I encourage my trainees to set short-term goals such as mastering a new technique, presenting at a conference, pursuing a collaboration/internship and more. At these meetings (and at other times), I will encourage my trainees to apply for awards, fellowships, or grants. I will support their applications by guiding and editing written materials, bandying ideas, and writing letters of recommendation. As a trainer for the Center for Tropical and Emerging Global Diseases T32 Postdoctoral Training Grant, my trainees will have the opportunity to seek support through that mechanism, in addition to other university, governmental, and private initiatives.

Good communication in science is an absolute necessity and I will support my trainees to become the best writers and presenters they can. Every week, trainees are encouraged to set aside a minimum of two hours devoted to structured scientific writing and reading, either in the lab or during work-from-home hours. I will also expect trainees to present their research in posters or talks at local meetings or at conferences. Attendance at local, national, and international conferences can be inspiring experiences and play instrumental roles in trainee career progress. I will support my trainees to benefit from conference attendance.

FFIRE scholars will also be able to build their own mentorship skills by supervising junior researchers. I am a trainer for two undergraduate research programs that cater to underrepresented minorities- the UGA PREP program and the Genetics SUNFIG program. In addition, I often accept undergraduate researchers from the UGA community directly. I will make sure to provide guidance and support for these mentor-mentee arrangements.

Finally, I am supportive of career and professional development pursuits by my mentees, even if this means some time in the lab will be lost. I encourage trainees to seek out experiences including participating in teaching, volunteering, advocacy, non-lab training activities, and more. I want to support the wholistic development of trainees so they can pursue enriching careers and help make our world a little better for all.