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Advising Statement

My ultimate goal as an advisor is to encourage my students' development as independent learners and researchers. For both undergraduate and graduate students, the time they spend in my lab or at the university is only temporary. It is a means to starting their careers, ideally with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need for a career that suits their interests and strengths. For me, advising therefore starts with and centers on conversation, building on the belief that I can most effectively enable students' progress by listening to what motivates them, by treating them as collaborators with a voice in what we do, and by giving them space to make mistakes they can learn from. My goal is to facilitate their development of the skills they need for their future careers, whether in academia or not, and to help them gain the confidence to use those skills. My approach to advising was recently recognized by the College of Arts and Sciences, with the *Robert A. and Donna B. Paul Award for Excellence in Advising*.

In my six years at Cornell I have advised one postdoctoral collaborator, served as the special committee chair for four graduate students, and worked with several other graduate students on research projects (in Psychology and in Human Development). I have also served in an advising capacity for the dozens of graduate student teaching assistants that I have worked with during that time. I have advised these students on their interactions with undergraduates, including grading, and invited them to give guest lectures to give them opportunities to prepare and deliver a lecture, while learning which aspects of those lectures students are likely to remember. I have given academic and career advice to students in my classes as well as undergraduate psychology majors and minors. Some of the most rewarding interactions with undergraduates, however, have come from working with students in my lab and in the honors program (which I co-Directed for four years), who are there to learn about how to conduct research.

I view the students in my lab first as collaborators, and then as individuals who will learn the skills and techniques they need to pursue their interests. My advising in the lab therefore starts with the assumption that graduate and undergraduate students' unique perspectives and questions are an opportunity to engage them in cognitive science while pushing me and others in the lab to think about our own ideas a little bit differently. From the outset, the graduate students I work with have the opportunity to develop their own research questions and experimental ideas. This has worked well for some students, who have come to the lab with a specific question in mind. For other students, I have had to provide more guidance after giving them some time to explore their interests (for example, I may give a student a draft of a grant and ask them to look through it either for inspiration or to choose an experiment from it that they'd like to run). Throughout this process I make myself available to graduate students to address questions about design, analyses, writing, and presentation. I meet with all of my graduate students on a weekly basis, but also make myself available through online messaging after-hours and during weekends, and encourage them to drop by my office as needed. These meetings are not just about research, however. I believe it is important to make sure graduate students are aware of and well prepared for the parts of a job in academia that are not often discussed, or feel free to explore other options if they choose. To encourage my graduate students' development and preparation for their careers, I share my experiences from graduate school, my time as a post-doc, and even my experiences as a junior faculty member. My goal is to ensure that students understand that they are not the only ones learning through trial and error.

My lab attracts undergraduate students from all over campus. In fact, most of the students in my lab are not psychology majors. During the most recent semester, there were two engineering

students, four biological sciences, and two psych majors in my lab. Though many of the undergraduates in my lab join because of their interests in attention and cognitive neuroscience, I ensure that they gain exposure to diverse topics in cognitive science and learn about relevant new findings in the literature. One way I do this is by asking students to dig through the table of contents of recently published journals in our area, and then to ‘pitch’ a paper for the group to read for one of the lab meetings. The group then votes on the paper we’ll read next. This approach helps me better understand the students’ interests, gives them something to contribute at the meeting, empowers the students to influence what we discuss in our lab meeting and, potentially, for future research. At the beginning of the year I meet with undergraduates in my lab to gauge their interests and sort out which project they will work on. I then try to find something that best fits their interests and then the needs of the lab, often pairing them with a graduate student. These mentoring relationships give graduate students an opportunity to learn how to manage their projects as well as advise and mentor other students. By ensuring that I meet with each undergraduate outside of lab meetings at least two times during the semester, I also give them an opportunity to let me know how things are going for them, and to discuss their interests with me directly. Undergraduates who have spent some time in the lab also have the freedom to explore their own ideas and to start their own projects, which have turned into honors theses (with the expectation that these projects are related to the questions we address in the lab), or literature reviews that relate their interests to the work we are doing in the lab.

I have worked with four undergraduate psychology students on research projects that led to honors degrees. These projects have ranged from being wholly driven by the student’s interests and ideas, to a student taking advantage of an opportunity to learn more about methodological and data analytical approaches while contributing to a larger project. In all cases, I regularly met with the students to talk about their goals and research interests, often treating these students as I would an early career graduate student. Many of these discussions include advice about how to apply to graduate school, what to write about in personal and research statements, and what the interviewing process is like. I am very proud of the work that these students did in my lab, and have included two of them on several poster presentations at academic conferences. One of these students also contributed to a paper we published in *Cognition* last year, and I am preparing another paper with my most recent honors student as a co-author. All of these students are now in research positions, including one student who is now a graduate student at Brown University.

For many of the undergraduate students I advise I have found that it helps to frankly talk about my own experiences as an undergraduate student. This often means sharing how I explored my interests as a young adult, when my career interests jumped from anthropology, to law, to cognitive neuropsychology, to computer programming, and finally landed in cognitive neuroscience. When students come to me with goals and milestones set for the next 20 years, or afraid that they have not yet done this, I draw on my experiences to try to reassure them that they don’t need to have everything worked out just yet, and that even if they do have a plan in place, a few missteps or missed milestones will likely be okay. In all of this, my goal is to demystify the process so students feel freer to explore their interests and recognize that their lives are not set in stone at graduation.