The Weitzlab Survival Guide

Group meeting

9/14/10
Group character

• We have a large group
• There is someone in the group who can answer almost any question
• We work in Boston – the richest scientific community in the world
• There is someone in Boston who can answer any question
• Take advantage of this!
Group character

• Completely open group
• We share all our data as we collect it
• We share all our equipment
• We like visitors, interactions
Group interactions

• We compete with people outside our group
• We do NOT compete with people in our group
• We interact and collaborate with everyone in the group
  – We will not be successful if we don’t do this
• We share credit, authorship
• We err on the side of inclusiveness in the group
Group interactions

• We seek out collaborations with other groups
• If I am the only faculty member you talk to, you waste a great opportunity
Local resources

• We do not have all equipment necessary
• It probably can be found somewhere in the region
• Use other’s equipment judiciously
• CNS and central facility equipment is expensive
• Use it judiciously
• But use it when you need it
Group meetings

• Everyone must attend
• No excuses not to attend
• Please tell me if you can’t attend
• If you don’t come to the group meetings, you are not part of the group
• Group meetings are for current results
  – You should not understand everything
• Everyone should participate
Mini-group meetings

- Most valuable meetings of the group
- New science discussed
- Get help from others
- Everyone must attend at least one each week
- No excuses not to attend
Other meetings

• Many other meetings in the local area
• Take advantage of these!
• Kavli meetings on Thursdays – P306
  – Meet theorists who will help us
• New England Complex Fluids Meetings
• Very important forum for local interactions
• Attend! Put in a sound bite!
• This benefits you!
• You will appreciate this only after you leave
Group travel

• Travel is very important to each person
• Everyone can attend one conference a year
• You MUST present a paper to go to a conference
• PLEASE travel as cheaply as possible
  – There is no budget for travel
  – One meeting ~1k$; 50 meetings, ~50k$!
  – Cheaper travel → more meetings
Purchasing

• Our budget is very lean
• Salaries are our major expense
• Research does require funds
  – Nothing does not get done because of lack of money
• Please buy judiciously
• Purchase only what is needed
• Do not buy from local stockrooms (chem, bio)
  – They are much more expensive
Purchasing

• Get my permission for items greater than $500
• Often we can use a tag
Safety

• We must be absolutely safe
• There is no room for error
• Wear safety glasses, gloves, lab coats
• Speak out to remind others
Lab etiquette

• Part of safety
• Large group → shared equipment, space
• Everyone is responsible for cleaning up
• Everyone is responsible for maintaining equipment
• If you see something in need of repair, fix it!
• Safety problems caused by one → shut the whole lab down!
Lab cleanup

- Part of safety
- Organized by someone in each lab
- Everyone is responsible for cleaning up
- Everyone must attend the cleanup
- Cleanup problems caused by one → shut the whole lab down!
Lab jobs

• Our group has no administrators
• Everyone must help
• Everyone should have a lab responsibility
• Group only functions if everyone helps
Scientific integrity

- Data are KING
- Data never lie
- Data are not always understood
- Watch for data you don’t understand
- Never believe a hypothesis, believe only its proof by data
- I am happy to be wrong → I learn something new
Papers

• Papers are essential
• Work is never completed until paper is published
• Papers take a lot of work to get out
  – Especially in our group
  – I am the hold up
How to publish a paper

• Read the guide to writing papers
• Determine what the paper is about
  – 2 sentence summary
• Get figures together
• Write outline
• See me at each step of the way
• How to see me → harass me for appointment
• Short appointments work much better
Papers ➔ Students

- I won’t read a thesis
- I will only read a paper
- A thesis is a stapled together set of papers
- Get a paper out early in your career
  - Learn how difficult it is
  - Learn how to accomplish this
Papers → Postdocs
Postdocs: Standard route to success

• Join Weitzlab
• Work hard in a great environment
• Do some really cool work
• Get some really cool results
• Make a great story
• Get a great job
• Leave without writing ANY papers
• Papers do NOT get written after you leave
Postdocs: Future route to success

• Any letter of recommendation from me will clearly describe progress on papers
• I will be honest about the number of papers written
• Good recommendation will depend on having papers submitted
• I will give recommendations for people who have not written papers
  – Means you are better off elsewhere
How to see me

• Make an appointment
• Harass me until I answer you
• Bring me new data
• Get help early, get help often with papers
• Let me know of any concerns you have
  – Scientific or personal
Leadership

• Good scientists are leaders
• Leaders of science
• Leaders of people
Leadership: Postdocs

• Serve as a role model for other postdocs
• Provide leadership for students
• Leadership demands humility
  – Many graduate students are smarter than you
  – Honor, respect and encourage their contributions
• Leadership requires you to set an example
  – Do really good work to show how it is done
• Discuss this with me
Leadership: graduate students

- Serve as a role model for other graduate students
- Senior students should help new students
- Graduate students should help undergrads, REUs
- Leadership demands humility
  - Other graduate students are smarter than you
  - Honor, respect and encourage their contributions
- Leadership requires you to set an example
  - Do really good work to show how it is done
- Discuss this with me
Leadership: visitors

• Serve as a role model for other group members
• You are part of our group
  – You take space
  – You take resources
• Please help others in the group
• Leadership demands humility
  – Post docs, graduate students and undergrads are good
  – Honor, respect and encourage their contributions
Web responsibilities

• Make sure every paper you publish is posted on the web

• Contribute content for research page
  – Everyone must do this
  – If you are member of the group, you must do it

• Due end of the month, latest

• Send to Vasily
  – Copy to me
Leaving the group

• Make sure you clean up all your samples
• Make sure you empty your desk, lab space
New members

- Take all safety courses
- Learn safe practices for Weitzlab
- Learn lab etiquette
- Get your name on the webpage
- Get in line for a desk
- Come and meet me
- Define project
How big will the group be?

• Who will volunteer to leave?
• I am not good enough to tell people NO
• New criteria for joining group
  – Self funded
  – Specific need from grant
  – Specific project