**Student Mentor Groups: September 21, 2017**

**Topic: Rotation Expectations – The Write-up**

**Check-In**

* Inquire about rotations and how students are doing.
* Ask students about the core course. Are there any issues?

**Clear Project/Presentation Goals:**

* 6 week rotation is ~ 5 weeks of lab work.
* Define clear goals for reasonable experiments to be completed.
* From the beginning, have an idea of what will be discussed in your report/presentation.
* If these haven't been brought up to you, request to sit down & talk with your rotation mentor.

**Stay Calm and don't feel discouraged**

* You're learning new techniques and things will not always work.
* Dealing with these issues helps define you as a graduate student.
* If you get stuck, ask for help.
* Optimization of a particular technique is a worthy end itself, and may take many repetitions.

**Review the Literature:**

* Ask for relevant literature toward your project & the field.
* Look through your professor’s publication record. This is a good way to determine whether the lab is a good fit for you (if you don’t like your lab’s papers, you won’t like writing them).
* You can start writing the introduction of your rotation report as soon as you start reading.

**Rotation Report:**

* The rotation report can greatly assist in preparing your presentation (start early!)
* If you stay organized, it can come together easily. Reading literature will guide how to format your paper & the methods section can be written as you learn the techniques.
* Forget about grades (it's pass/fail.) The report allows potential mentors to evaluate your critical thinking and writing. Do your best and it will pay off.

**Time Management:**

* You may have unusual available hours due to class, but your schedule is known in advance and you should be able to plan experiments around this.
* Most mentors are aware that you have obligations outside of the rotations. Throughout grad school you are expected to move your projects forward independently. Do not abuse this freedom, strengthen it instead.