

Lab members:

Over the past several months, it has become clear to me that if there is no drastic change in the lab, Poo lab will soon cease to be a productive, first-rate lab that you chose to join in the first place. Lab progress reports over the past six months have clearly shown the lack of progress in most projects. One year ago, when we first moved to Berkeley, I expressed clearly to everyone my expectation from each one in the lab.

The most important thing is what I consider to be sufficient amount of time and effort in the lab work. I mentioned that about 60 hr working time per week is what I consider the minimal time an average successful young scientist in these days has to put into the lab work. There may be a few rare lucky fellows like Florian, who had two Nature papers in his sleeve already, can enjoy life for a while and still get a job offer from Harvard. No one else in the lab has Florian's luxury to play around. Thus I am imposing strict rules in the lab from now on:

1. Everyone works at least 50 hr a week in the lab (e.g., 8+ hr a day, six days a week). This is by far lower than what I am doing every day and throughout most of my career. You may be smarter or do not want to be successful, but I am not asking you to match my time in the lab.
2. By working, I mean real bench work. This does not include surfing on the computer and sending and receiving e-mails for non-scientific matters unrelated to your work (you can do this after work in the lab or at home, and excessive chatting on nonscientific matters. No long lunch break except special occasions. I suggest that everyone puts in at least 6 hr concentrated bench work and 2+ hr reading and other research-related activity each day. Reading papers and books should be done mostly after work. More time can be spent on reading, literature search and writing during working hours when you are ready for writing a paper.
3. I must be informed in person by e-mail (even in my absence from the lab) when you are absent from the lab for a whole day or more. Inform me early your vacation plan. Taking more than 20 working days out of one year is the maximum to me. In fact, none of you are reporting any vacation and sick leave on your time sheet (against the university rule, although I have been signing the sheets)), but you know roughly how many days you were not here. On the whole, I understand and accept the fact that you may not fulfill the above requirements all the time, due to health reasons, occasional personal business. But if you do not like to follow the rules because it is simply a matter of choice of life style, I respect your choice but suggest you start making plans immediately and leave the lab by the end of January 31. I will do my best to help you to locate a lab to transfer or to find a job. If you do accept the conditions I describe above, I am happy to continue to provide my best support to your work, hopefully more than I have done in the past. I will review the progress of everyone in the lab by the end of June of 2002. I expect everyone to have made sufficient progress in the research so that a good paper is in sight

(at least to the level of J.Neuroscience. If you cannot meet this goal at that time, I will have to ask you to prepare to leave my lab by the end of August.

4. As a scientist, you must dedicate everything to this business
5. Working time: 8-hour is unpractical. There is NO way for a scientist or a Ph.D student to work only 8 hours a day! ("NO way")
6. Go to your mother's house for afternoon naps and never come back!
7. Vacation: 5 weeks per year (Chinese New Year, the May Day and the National Day breaks are included)
8. Start your morning work not later than 8:30 am and afternoon work no later than 1 pm
9. Surf over the Internet for non-scientific purposes should be less than 30 min a day
10. Reading newspapers should be limited less than 30 min a day
11. Novels or other non-scientific journals/magazines are not permitted in the lab and office
12. If you are absent from the lab more than one hour, get permission first.
13. Everyone has personal business, but the lab business always has priority unless in emergency
14. In this business, an "average" student who works seven days a week is definitely more productive than a "genius" who works five days a week
15. If you are able to make any major progresses by working 8 hours a day and 5 days a week, every fortunate in this world must be on your side!