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## 2009-2010 NBB Faculty Research Mentors

Dear Colleagues:

Since a student has requested that you supervise them as they gain “research” or other academic credit through the NBB Program, I’d like to welcome you aboard and give you some information that will make you an informed advisor, and enrich the experience for you and the student. Some of you may not be familiar with the interdisciplinary NBB Program and the NBB major. NBB majors select their coursework primarily from the Biology, Psychology, and Anthropology Departments, as well as from specially-developed NBB courses. Students are encouraged to seek a research experience that is centered in neuroscience and/or behavioral biology. However, if they desire to work with a non-neuroscience researcher, or a researcher at another institution, they may file a written petition with us to waive that requirement. We have often done so.

There are 3 general research-credit opportunities offered in NBB. The first, [NBB497(WR): Directed reading/writing] can be taken for variable credit hours and is designed for students working with a mentor on some project that doesn’t make them responsible for gathering their own novel laboratory data. It is also appropriate for beginning students not ready for *an independent* laboratory project. The NBB499 (Undergraduate Research, non-honors) and NBB495 (Honors Undergraduate Research) courses are both mainly intended for students that are gathering novel data in the laboratory in pursuit of their “own” hypothesis (es), and the students will also attend a bi-weekly class (1 hr) where they will be required to turn in written research proposals to Dr. Easterling, and make PowerPoint and poster presentations on their work in the classroom, and at our Spring Research Poster Session.

Along with this letter, students seeking Honors should be giving you a complete packet of information and forms outlining the requirements. It is expected that they will be working with mentors for two semesters. Whether or not they have maintained the  $\geq 3.5$  GPA that will allow them to enter the College Honors program their senior year, we encourage them to spend a year doing research under the joint supervision of a mentor of their choice and the NBB undergraduate research coordinator (Dr. Keith Easterling). They must enroll for 2 semesters in research seminar courses (NBB 495A and 495BWR) coordinated by Dr. Easterling. Therefore, “your” NBB undergraduate will “normally” be enrolled in this required course, which meets every-other week while they are working with you. We ask that you make sure they are free to attend at this time and that you return your written (HONORS/495A or 495BWR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION) sheet to Dr. Easterling each semester in plenty of time to help him with the final grade submission process in this course. Further, students are now being required to enroll in a Methods/statistics course prior to completing their work with you, and I hope this will

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better prepare them to meet the challenges of completing a “quality” undergraduate research project.

The College Honors program requires that, in addition to enrolling in the NBB 495A/NBB 495BWR courses, students must take a Graduate-Level NBB-related course their senior year. We encourage students to ask for your input in selecting an appropriate graduate course, which must be taken for a grade. So be aware that your Honors student will be attempting some challenging course work outside the lab. Students may be graduating Fall or Spring semester, but regardless their first semester of the program they will be required to write a detailed research proposal, pick a 3-person committee (with your input), and submit the proposal to that committee. A few weeks into the second semester, they will be required to schedule a 15-minute oral report to the committee, and set a date for a final hour-long defense (20 min student presentation). They are required to give their thesis to the committee at least 2 weeks before the final is due at the College office, allowing time for reading, defense, and corrections. You should be aware that students have been instructed to take your advice on committee-member selection, and graduate course selection, and to obtain your signature on ALL written work originating from your laboratory. You will serve as Thesis Committee Chair, and should return the Committee’s written exam report to NBB.

Along with this letter, you should receive a checklist containing program deadlines and requirements. Also, students who apply to the College may receive travel money for a conference, or money to travel abroad, or even College Grant money to support their work in your laboratory. For the majority of our students, this will be their first “professional” mentored research experience, and they may not know what to expect. **They have been told that they should not submit any work (in-class, poster, or paper) originating from your laboratory without your advance review and signature.** If you have questions about the program at any time, please contact me ([keaster@emory.edu](mailto:keaster@emory.edu)). Again, thank you for participating. I look forward to working with you and your student during the coming year.

**Keith W. Easterling, PhD**

Senior Lecturer, NBB

NBB Director of Undergraduate Studies

NBB Undergraduate Honors Program Coordinator

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