2022 MU VRSP mentor profile form

Mentor	**Aaron Ericsson**
Departmental bio web page.	**http://vpbio.missouri.edu/faculty/Aaron_Ericsson.html**
Other relevant web pages, as applicable. E.g., lab group/personal web page, Google Scholar/ORCiD profiles, others	**https://mumc.missouri.edu/**
Research interests.	**Microbiomes, gut/brain axis, fetal programming of behavior and metabolism, neurodevelopment**
Active projects.	**Attempting to determine the features of the maternal gut microbiome during pregnancy that influence epigenetic programming and subsequent expression of genes involved in neurodevelopment**
Research team. E.g., graduate students, post docs, technicians, other scholars	**Currently three PhD students in the lab (one is post-DVM lab animal resident), a couple student workers (an undergrad and a past VRSP recipient, Tamara Ford), and two full-time lab technicians**
About you… Education/training Personal information, as interested—e.g., hobbies, etc.	**I'm a DVM/PhD who performed a residency in lab animal medicine here in the Comparative Medicine Program. My PhD work focused on mucosal responses to certain gut pathobiont species, in mouse models of IBD and colon cancer. Since then, my focus shifted to the microbial communities inducing those mucosal immune responses, and how the gut microbiome in particular influences host phenotypes, including developmental phenotypes with lifelong consequences.** **I'm married and have an 11 year-old son. Love trail-hiking, making chain maille armor and art, reading, playing music, playing with Legos**

Mentor Profile
I am available to mentor students in career and life decisions, even if they do not choose research. Very Untrue 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 Very True
My students are/can be involved in the creation/development of their projects. Very Untrue 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 Very True
I expect students to contribute to manuscripts/publications. Very Untrue 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 Very True **(I want them to, and encourage them to)**
Students have the option to continue to work on this project. Very Untrue 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 Very True **(depends on certain unknown outcomes)**
My students often work closely with a research team, e.g., lab tech or other students. Very Untrue 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 Very True

I frequently touch base with my research team—e.g., students, technicians, etc. Very Untrue 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 Very True **(I certainly try to, weekly at a bare minimum)**	
My mentoring style is very hands off. Very Untrue 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 Very True	
Current/active project profile & timeline, including clinical vs. basic science.	**I have several projects related to the gut brain axis, including studies examining mouse models of anxiety-related behavior, autism spectrum disorders, and voluntary activity. Other projects are fundamental examinations of the developmental trajectory of the host microbiome, integrating the early neonatal period and multiple tissue sites (GI, respiratory, and other mucosal sites).**
Lab structure, if applicable.	**We have two outstanding research lab technicians who are there to provide guidance with any of the lab work associated with VRSP projects. Most VRSP students in our lab are also paired with one of my PhD students as an additional resource during the VRSP.**
What does a typical day of research look like for VRSP scholars?	**Depending on the project, time is spent in the lab processing samples; or at the desk performing literature search and reading, analyzing data, and working on the VRSP poster. There will also be multiple group or individual meetings, as needed, to provide all of the necessary instruction on data analysis. As I'm involved in the CMP, I also encourage students to participate in any exciting or interesting lab animal activities.**
What does engagement look like for your lab/project?	**Being excited about the project, and eager to see each new set of data; being curious enough about the project to be excited about a literature search; being excited and eager to contribute in some way to a manuscript.**