Twitter Sourced Suggestions to ask Undergrad Lab Applicants
Compiled by Aleeza Gerstein (@acgerstein)

Insight into personality:
@BallouLab: "Tell me about a mistake you've made" or "tell me about a problem you've had to find a creative solution to"

@IowaMonarchs: "Can you tell me about a time you made a mistake and how you resolved it?" is very useful. Ideally, I am looking for them to OWN the mistake so I have some confidence about their sense of accountability.

@Buckout_Bull: How do you know when you don't know something?

@Rubenstein_Lab: How do you handle failure?

@moietymouse: What type of management style do you prefer?

@AwesomeBioTA: What are your hobbies? What do you do for fun? [with qualifiers from @SuperScienceGrl, @DerAnneCarpenter, @luispeedrocoelho: that some students are given advice not to talk about what they do outside of school, that job interviews should not probe into personal information, that some students have small children and should not have to reveal this.

@SoniaHall: Ask them about the adversity they have faced in the life. I'd also ask them how their values are reflected in the decisions they've made. But you know me so likely that was obvious - lol

@kmrose224: Ask questions that let you know if they have read your research (passion >> high grades)

@jasonaholliday: Look at the amount of time they have spent working s**t jobs. Look for a decent GPA.`

@ReesKassen: Ask them "what keeps you up at night?"

Insight into skills:
@moietymouse: Ask for a writing sample (e.g., assignment from class)

Insight into career goals:
@moietymouse: Do you know want you want to do after graduating (note: not what do you want to do after graduating)

@science_punx: I usually ask about what they are thinking they would like to do in the future and why working in a lab will help them

@AdrianaBankston, @Kalrany_J: What do you hope to learn from the experience of working in my lab? How will that help you reach your career goals/what are your future plans?

@ArmaniLab: Why are you interested in research? How will research experience help you with your post-grad goals?

@Rubenstein_Lab: What is your motivation for pursuing research?

@KaneLabGSU: like to give priority to students who haven't had opportunities before but if I'm looking for several, I also like to get some who have had experience with fish.

Schedules
@wormwelcome: If hiring multiples, makes sure they can be on the same schedule for their first semester so I could train them together.

@R_ulbricht: Schedule seems to trump all else for me. If they are brilliant but don't have time or no one is available to train them, it's not going to work.

@moietymouse, @gulianusslab: Ask for class schedules

@rssatterwhite: Weekly (regular) time commitment

@Dr_TPerez: Do they actually have time to be in the lab?

Give them small tests/tasks to do

@lauraburrack: After meeting with prospective undergraduate students, I give them a related review article, tell them to read it and then come back to me with questions. When they come back, I give them one more article. If they come back the second time with questions, I take them.

@compbiologist: For computational labs, give give them a bunch of free online materials to learn coding, little of stats, etc., & ask for regular updates/Qs as they go thru the material. If they keep coming back, I take them.

@DrTMoore: quiz on lab math (e.g., dilutions and concentrations)

@mcdaniellab: "Undergrads are a lot of work for a new PI, and may stay only a semester. I tell them the work is terrible, it will make their eyes bleed, look for work anywhere else and only come back if they can't find anything better. If they come back, generally it's good"

@gqmartinez: Give them an "assignment" like commenting on a paper with specific instructions (including the option to say "I don't know"). If they don't follow directions, then I'd be worried about their ability to follow protocols.

@Rubenstein_Lab: Meet to discuss your research. Then ask them to write brief essay describing your research (Let them ask Qs while writing- it's not to test memory but assess baseline comprehension, communication, task completion)

@TULuisMartinez: "I have 3 rounds of meetings. In the first I speak generally of our research and encourage them to seek others in the Department and see what they do. If I'm one of their top choices I ask then for a follow up meeting. The second mtg is longer, specific description of what their project might be, more questions about what they want out of their experience, career/life goals. If there's a mutual match, I ask them to talk with my group (w/o me). if they ask for a 3rd meeting after chatting with group, then I know they are persistent and have a sense for group culture and our research. They're in at this point."

Additional Resources (@alon_goren, @Buckout_Bull)

Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty, Second Edition: https://www.hhmi.org/developing-scientists/making-right-moves
goren-lab.github.io/resources.html
Student self assessment: https://bullpennblog.wordpress.com/own-best-mentor-resources/

Ed. Note: I'm happy to share the final questions I came up with.
Email: aleeza.gerstein@umanitoba.ca