

## **ISCB Student Council Newsletter #3, June 2006**

Dear Student Council members and friends,

I'd like to take the opportunity to greet you again in this second Student Council newsletter of the year. While the current efforts to organize the Student Council Symposium at ISMB 2006 are going well, we are constantly thinking about new opportunities to shape the future for students and young researchers in the bioinformatics community. For instance, a proposal to establish local Student Council groups is nearing its final approval by the ISCB Board of Directors. However, such ventures demand a strong work force to bring our goals into reality and we plan to achieve this by significantly enlarging the group of Student Council leaders by the end of 2006. We are already planning for the Student Council events in 2007 and we welcome your ideas too. You can make a difference by joining the Student Council leadership.

Let's join hands to develop the next generation of leaders in our scientific community!

Best Regards,  
Vijaya Parthiban  
Chair, ISCB Student Council

Please send comments and questions about this newsletter to [newsletter@iscbsc.org](mailto:newsletter@iscbsc.org).  
Thank you!

### **News from the Student Council Leadership**

#### **Regional Groups to Become Official**

In an initiative proposed by the Student Council, the ISCB Board of Directors (BoD) has voted in a straw poll to give in-principle agreement on the matter of Student Council Regional Groups (short: Regional Groups). The ISCB President, the BoD, and the Affiliates/SIGs committee are to work with the Student Council to produce a final version and the Affiliates/SIGs recommendation for final approval during the Board of Directors meeting at ISMB 2006.

The proposed Regional Groups will be formed by ISCB and Student Council members with a vision to start a local branch in their region to promote specific initiatives for scientific events, business relations and career-development opportunities for young researchers and companies with sizable interests.

Regional Groups will be issued a startup advice package by the Student Council containing the procedure for formation, the application procedure, and budgeting guidelines. In addition, the Student Council will grant the president or chair of the Regional Group a position in its leadership board. Further, each Regional Group will be provided with web space within the Student Council domain for presentation and administration purposes. For members of Regional Groups the Student Council will act as a platform to apply organizational skills in an environment that motivates and challenges students and young researchers to grow and progress in their career.

The appropriate ISCB committee will coordinate the necessary oversight of the Student Council in its administration of the Regional Groups to ensure the highest standards of probity, integrity, equity, accountability and fair-play, especially where funding is involved. Interim Regional Groups Coordinator Manuel Corpas (manuel.corpas@gmail.com) is currently accepting informal applications from interested groups or individuals. [Contributed by Manuel Corpas.]

### **Planned Career-Development Activities**

Career and networking resources are critical for job seekers. In view of helping our members to find better jobs, we are planning to provide the resources necessary for a successful job hunt. We hope to update the students on the latest happenings in the computational biology field, in terms of available courses and job prospects in several areas of interest. With these resources, students at the beginning of their career will be able to plan their course of study, according to the expected demands in the market when they graduate. Senior students will be able to get some direction with respect to currently available jobs and the industry's expectations. We also hope to have information pertaining to regional job markets.

Of course, all this is possible only through the cooperation of existing ISCB and Student Council members. There will be a facility on our webpage where senior members can share their experiences and knowledge for the benefit of all other members who are still at the beginning of their career.

These are some of the questions we hope to answer:

- What am I worth now?
- What job is right for me?
- What opportunities do I have?
- How well does my resume reflect my capabilities?
- What is the expected skill set for a computational biologist in my area of interest?

Networking is one of the most important activities that a job seeker needs to master to be successful in a job hunt. It is a well known fact that the majority of jobs are not advertised and knowing people in the right place at the right time will often be rewarded, if you have the right qualifications. We are hoping to create a computational biology networking hub on our website, with the generous help of all our existing and future members. [Contributed by Saraswathi Sundararajan.]

### **Candidates for Upcoming Student Council Leadership Elections**

The official Student Council Leadership candidates, running for one year term beginning January 21, 2007:

- Student Council Chair  
Manuel Corpas
- Student Council Vice Chair  
Sarath Chandra Janga  
Victor Weigman

- Student Council Secretary  
Milana Frenkel-Morgenstern  
Nils Gehlenborg
- Student Council Representative to the ISCB Board of Directors  
Vijaya Parthiban

Candidate statements will be available for review on the ISCB website and the Student Council website no later than August 1st and the actual election will take place online from September 22nd until October 6th. You must be an ISCB member to participate in the elections process, so please be sure to activate your membership now at <http://www.iscb.org/membership> if you have not already done so.

More information regarding the election procedure can be found at <http://www.iscb.org/nominations.shtml>

### **Preview of Upcoming Activities**

2nd ISCB Student Council Symposium at ISMB 2006 The organizing committee for the 2nd Student Council Symposium has invested a lot of time and effort during the last 3 months to make this upcoming event a success. Planning is still underway but intermediate results are already quite exciting.

Philip E. Bourne, Reinhard Schneider and Julio Collado-Vides have been confirmed as keynote speakers and current ISCB president Michael Gribskov will deliver the closing remarks.

Major journals BMC Bioinformatics and Bioinformatics have agreed to sponsor a 'Best Poster Award' and a 'Best Paper Award' from among those submitted to the Student Council Symposium. The awards are worth 100 GBP and 200 GBP, respectively.

Over 30 abstracts have been received so far and the organizing committee will decide on the final list of abstracts for oral presentation this week. Poster abstracts can be submitted through July 10th. More than 50 students and young researchers have already signed up for the event. This number is expected to increase further and even now this is a great success for the Student Council, given the strong competition by the ISMB tutorial sessions and the high travel costs to Brazil.

The organizing committee is still raising money to publish a selection of the best abstracts in BMC Bioinformatics. The Institute for Systems Biology supports this effort with 500 USD and chances are good that additional sponsors will be found to make publication possible. If you would like to sponsor publication then please get in touch: [symposium@iscbsc.org](mailto:symposium@iscbsc.org).

The latest information about the symposium can be found at <http://www.iscb.org/scs2.htm>. The organization committee can be contacted by email at [symposium@iscbsc.org](mailto:symposium@iscbsc.org).

## **BioSysBio 2007**

Preparations are underway for the next BioSysBio conference to be held in Manchester in 2007 (Thu, Jan 11th - Sat, Jan 13th). The conference, aimed at students, post-docs and junior faculty working in biotechnology will include sessions in computational systems biology, bioinformatics and synthetic biology. Several members of the Student Council leadership are on the program and organizing committees and the Student Council helps to promote this event.

The partial speakers list was announced recently and includes Roland Eils, Douglas Kell, Randy Rettberg, Herbert Sauro, Sarah Teichmann and Chris Voigt. More speakers are expected to be added later in the year and registration and the call for abstracts will begin soon.

More information and links to the speakers can be found at <http://www.biosysbio.com>, to subscribe to the 2007 mailing list please e-mail [subscribe@biosysbio.com](mailto:subscribe@biosysbio.com). [Contributed by John Cumbers.]

## **Review of Past Activities**

### **Inaugural BioMeet a Success**

On April 13th, the Student Council successfully held the inaugural BioMeet at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA (please see: <http://www.iscbsc.org/business/BioMeetRTP2006>). This one day event held 84 participants from the region, which included graduate students, post-docs, and industry reps from the area.

After a kickoff breakfast held the keynote of David Searls (Senior Vice President of Worldwide Bioinformatics at GlaxoSmithKline) who gave a great talk about the systems of bioinformatics. Following this discussion was a series of "overview talks" given by the heads of large research initiatives at Duke University, NC State University, and the University of North Carolina to address how the culmination of different bioinformatics projects has allowed us to address large biological problems previously untouched.

The remainder of the day was broken into specialty segments (protein informatics, sequence analysis, systems biology, etc) given by selected young scientists. Over 15 young scientists spoke in 4 categories. All of the presentations are available for viewing online and the web casts will be uploaded soon. The day was concluded by a wine and cheese 'meet and greet' where students and industry were able to discuss with each other topics of relevance and potential internship and collaborations.

We are proud to announce that four such arrangements were made and we will be following up to see how they are going! Of all of the surveys completed for the BioMeet, we are also proud to say that we had a 100% agreement that participants would enjoy attending another BioMeet. Those registered 56% agreed that they would like to continue meeting, on a regular basis to discuss bioinformatics topics with academia and industry. This is a big step for the Student Council and Business Relations Committee!

We are going to be holding these events in other locations across the world and are welcome to collaborate with similar organizations that wish to bring together industry

and academia. If you are interested in collaboration or would like to host such an event, please check out the details of the BioMeet Initiative (<http://www.iscb.org/business/biomeets.htm>) or send an email to Victor Weigman ([victor@med.unc.edu](mailto:victor@med.unc.edu)). [Contributed by Victor Weigman.]

## **Student Council Calendar**

### **July 2006**

- 10th: Deadline for poster submissions to the 2nd ISCB Student Council Symposium. <http://www.iscb.org/ismb06/scs2posters.php>

### **August 2006**

- 6th: 2nd ISCB Student Council Symposium in Fortaleza, Brazil <http://www.iscb.org/scs2.htm>
- 7th - 10th: ISMB 2006 in Fortaleza, Brazil

### **September 2006**

- 22nd: Election period for Student Council leaders begins.

### **October 2006**

- 6th: Election period for Student Council leaders ends.

### **January 2007**

- 11th - 13th: BioSysBio in Manchester, UK
- 21st: Elected Student Council leaders take office.

## **Resources**

Free Mentoring Opportunities Available Earlier this year the ISCB Board of Directors has approved funds to join MentorNet after a proposal that had been brought forward by the ISCB Education Committee. The organizational membership allows any member of the ISCB to sign up for free either as a protege or as a mentor.

The programs provided by MentorNet are suited for all types of students (undergraduate and graduate), as well as for post-docs and young faculty members. In these internet-based programs a student, post-doc or young faculty protege gets matched with a professional in industry, higher education or government.

MentorNet has won awards for its work by the United States government and received funding from major international corporations such as IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Google. For more information please visit the ISCB's web page on this program: <http://www.iscb.org/mentornet.htm>.

## **Mailing List for Non-Members**

One of the goals that the Student Council has set itself is to keep young scientists up-to-date about interesting opportunities within the field. Until recently we sent only important announcements and the quarterly newsletters to members of the ISCB Student Council.

We realized however that the student membership of ISCB tends to fluctuate during

the year and that it is desirable to reach a larger audience. At the same time we want to avoid sending out unwanted emails.

We opted to create the so-called 'Student Council Friends' mailing list, to which anyone can subscribe. The mailing list will be used for important announcements and also for this newsletter. This will allow us to make many more students aware of Student Council and ISCB activities and benefits. Hopefully it will also encourage students to join the student council and become active members (see [http://openwetware.org/wiki/ISCB-SC:New\\_Projects](http://openwetware.org/wiki/ISCB-SC:New_Projects)).

If you think any of your fellow students or colleagues might be interested, please forward the information below:

The ISCB Student Council has set up a free mailing list to keep you up-to-date about opportunities for young researchers within the field of computational biology. You can sign up at: [http://iscbsc.org/mailman/listinfo/scfriends\\_iscbsc.org](http://iscbsc.org/mailman/listinfo/scfriends_iscbsc.org). The list is being used only for important announcements and low in traffic. It is possible to cancel your registration with the list at any time. [Contributed by Sanne Abeln.]

### **ISCB Student Council Website**

Check our website often for updates on our activities.

- <http://www.iscb.org>

### **BioSysBio Website**

- <http://www.biosysbio.com>

### **ISMB 2006 Website**

- <http://www.iscb.org/ismb06>

### **OpenWetWare Wiki and Student Council Forum**

- <http://openwetware.org/wiki/ISCB-SC> (wiki)
- <http://www.iscb.org/scforum> (forum)

### **About the Newsletter**

#### **Newsletter Editor**

- Nils Gehlenborg (Institute for Systems Biology, USA)

#### **Contributing Writers**

- Sanne Abeln (Oxford University, UK)
- Manuel Corpas (The University of Manchester, UK)
- Saraswathi Sundararajan (Amrita University, India)
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#### **Contact**

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