

Minutes BioSB members' meeting

April 2, 2019

Jaap Heringa opens the meeting and presents the agenda of the meeting.

Board. Jaap Heringa provides an update from the BioSB board on the activities in the past year (2018-2019) and plans for the next year (2019-2020). The past year the board followed up on recommendations by the international review panel. In particular, a new BioSB membership model was implemented, where a high annual membership fee is abolished. Membership is now offered at registration for the BioSB conference at a symbolic rate of 25 euro, and immediately compensated as the conference fee is reduced by 25 euro for members. In consequence, BioSB courses do not have special course fees for members anymore. Course fees are currently set at 400, 600 and 900 euros (exclusive of 21% VAT) for a five-day course for PhD students (and MSc students), academics (senior researchers and postdocs) and industrial attendees, respectively. Plans for the next year include further development of the education portfolio (together with the education committee), improving positioning BioSB in the complex landscape of national and international funding agencies (together with the science committee), and reinvigorating the Hot Topics meetings (together with the science committee and DTL).

Finances. Patrick Kemmeren provides an overview of running expenses and income. The annual account for 2017 showed a negative result of 16.9 keuro with reserves at the end of 2017 of approximately 60.8 keuro. In 2018 there was an operational loss of 6.2 keuro, mostly due to less income generated by the courses. 9.9 keuro of outstanding course and membership fees were collected. All remaining outstanding course and membership fees of previous years amounting to 19.2 keuro (+7.5 keuro reserved as part of the budget for 2018) were written off due to the fact that debtors were either missing or unresponsive. The annual account for 2018 therefore showed a negative result of approximately 24.5 keuro with reserves at the end of 2018 of approximately 36.3 keuro. In the 2019 budget only a very modest amount of income generated by the courses is included, and with no more outstanding fees we expect to break even in 2019.

Election Ilja Arts. Jaap Heringa announces that Barbara Bakker steps down as a board member and thanks Barbara for the excellent work she did in the transition from NBIC/NCSB to BioSB and as a member of the BioSB board over the past years. The board nominates Ilja Arts as a new member of the BioSB board. Ilja briefly introduces herself and in her absence, Ilja is elected to the board by the members.

Education committee. Dick de Ridder gives an update on the activities of the Education Committee. In 2018 three courses were organized (Managing & Integrating Information in the Life Sciences, Optimisation Techniques, Algorithms for Biological Networks), each with ~15 students. Also several DTL Learning/ELIXIR-NL courses were brought to the BioSB community. Philip Lijnzaad and Ahmed Mahfouz represented ELIXIR-NL and BioSB at a workshop on capacity building in single cell transcriptomics (Uppsala, Sweden, 29--30 November 2018). This resulted in their involvement in an ELIXIR course on Single cell RNA-seq data analysis with R (Espoo, Finland, 27-29 May 2019). All materials will be

prepared under ELIXIR Training guidelines and will be available for reuse. Ahmed and Philip will bring the expertise and materials back to NL/BioSB for future courses.

The Education Committee has worked to renew and extend the BioSB course programme. This has resulted in the setup of two new courses called “Fundamentals”, on Machine Learning and on Modeling and Optimization, which will be organized every year. Also a number of new advanced courses were developed that build on the fundamental courses, including “Statistics for Omics Data Analysis”, “Algorithms for Genomics” and “Constraint-based Modeling”. Advanced courses will be organized every two years. Plans for next year are to (re)start a number of advanced courses, to reboot e-courses with help of UBC and to actively advertise the new course set-up through local networks of BioSB members.

Science committee. Bas Teusink gives an update on the activities of the Science Committee. These include organization of the Life Science meets Industry workshop, 19-23 November 2018 (next edition: 11-15 November 2019), input for the BioSB2019 conference, and organization of the Systems Biology advanced course (Innsbruck, 7-13 March 2019). The organization of Hot Topics meetings will be reinvigorated (in collaboration with DTL focus meetings), as well as the organization of more regular Science Committee meetings.

YoungCB. Nila Servaas (YoungCB chair) updates members on the Young Computational Biologists (YoungCB) network. Currently there are four board members (next to Nila, these are Joanna van den Berg, David Lao Martil and Alexandra Danyi). In the past year, the YoungCB organized a workshop on ‘Efficient Supervision’ in collaboration with the education committee (Dick de Ridder). This led to concrete feedback on the BioSB course portfolio. YoungCB also organized the annual PhD retreat, preceding the BioSB conference. The retreat was well attended and this year’s theme was ‘Translational Bioinformatics’. Plans for next year include the organization of a 1-day symposium on the ‘Past, Present and Future of Bioinformatics’ (29 May 2019, Utrecht) and the organization of regular BioCafés linked to upcoming BioSB courses. The YoungCB is actively looking for two new board members.

The meeting is adjourned by Jaap Heringa.