

Quantitative Biology Initiative

Executive Committee Meeting Notes

September 2, 2008

Attendees: Bob Hausinger, Peter Bates, David Arnosti, Robin Buell, Kris Chan, Shelagh Ferguson-Miller, Wenjiang Fu, Helen Geiger, Leslie Kuhn, Claire Vieille, David Weliky.

Guest: Shin-Han Shiu

Unable to attend: Robert Cukier, Marianne Huebner, Bill Wedemeyer, and Maria Zavodszky.

Agenda:

1. Comings, goings, thanks, and announcements (Bob Hausinger)

- We welcome back Peter Bates from his sabbatical, and thank Claire Vieille for her wonderful job filling in as QBI Co-Director in Peter's absence.
- We thank Wolfgang Bauer for his service on the QBI EC, and welcome new EC member Robin Buell.
- We sadly note the loss of Marianne Huebner and Maria Zavodszky to other institutions, and thank them for their efforts in getting QBI off to a great start.
- A summary of the year's accomplishments and plans for QBI was prepared for MAES and also sent to CNS and the EC. This summary is posted on the QBI web site.
- QB 826 was taught by Claire Vieille and Maria Zavodszky for the second time in Sept. 2008, and the diverse class viewed the course as being very good (75%) or good (25%).
- The initial offering of QB 827 is now underway with Bob Hausinger coordinating a wide assortment of faculty.

2. Committee Chairs and EC members (Bob Hausinger)

- The new chair of the Public Relations Committee will be Robin Buell, with assistance by Shin-Han Shiu and working with Helen (thanks, Robin, Shin-Han and Helen!) Ideas and suggestions for the web site should be provided to Robin.
- Other committee chairs will remain the same.
- The EC will work with 10 members this year, rather than trying to fill in the losses of Drs. Huebner and Zavodszky. Marianne Huebner was scheduled to be replaced in 2009 and we will also do so for Maria Zavodszky, with Claire Vieille switching from a 2 year term ending in 2009 to a 3 year term ending in 2010.

3. Committee Reports:

Grad Recruiting (Wenjiang Fu)

- 10 new students enrolled in the QB program this fall, joining one previously enrolled student.
- At least two additional student files are now being completed by potential QB students.
- A "QB Night" was found to be a good mechanism to inform current MSU students about this program.
- A QB-sponsored poster session was held during orientation week and Bob Hausinger made a presentation to the BMB/CMB/GEN/PSL/MMG/PHM group.

Grad Fellowship (Wenjiang Fu and Claire Vieille)

- The ten new QB students each received a \$2K sign-in bonus for joining QB. These funds can be used for travel to meetings or purchase of books, laptop, etc.

- In addition, five QB students were awarded \$14K recruiting fellowships and one was awarded a \$10K QBI research fellowship.
- There were 2 \$12K QBI research fellowships and 2 \$5K QBI research fellowships awarded.

Conference (David Arnosti and Shin-Han Shiu)

- The 2008 Summer Symposium on Transcriptional Regulation and Systems Biology, partially supported by QBI and run by David Arnosti with Helen's great assistance, was very successful.
- With the encouragement of Laurie Kaguni (ASBMB committee chair), David Arnosti is exploring the possibility of holding another transcription meeting as an ASBMB small meeting in connection with Kevin White at the University of Chicago, to be held in Chicago in summer of 2010.
- QBI plans to help support and foster the development of a conference on Bioinformatics in summer of 2009. Shin-Han Shiu will spearhead the initial organization, which may include a meeting this fall of folks within MSU to enhance coordination of campus-wide bioinformatics efforts. The summer meeting would include faculty from around the state, including 4-year colleges, along with postdocs, graduate students, and undergrads (with the participation of the Undergraduate Biology and Mathematics program). Additional keynote speakers would likely be invited. Shin-Han will work with David Arnosti and Helen to get the process underway.
- A possible conference topic for 2011 is Drug Discovery, related to the structure biology group, with leadership by Leslie Kuhn and Charlie Brooks (U. Mich.).

Grad Curriculum (Bob Hausinger for Bill Wedemeyer)

- The committee recommended that the requirement for QB 828 or QB 829 be expanded to include a third option: a upper-level graduate course in a field relevant to the goals of the QB program and complementary to the student's own research (requires approval of the QB program director). Bob Hausinger and Helen Geiger initiated the process for university approval.
- The committee recommended the creation of QB 830, a Special Topics in QB course that would allow more in-depth treatment of selected topics. Bob Hausinger and Helen Geiger initiated the process for university approval.

Seminar (David Weliky)

- The *Science at the Edge* Seminar program is underway with eleven speakers divided between QBI and GEDD. Some open times in the Spring schedule will be filled by Chemical Engineering and Physics.

Development (Kris Chan)

- A preproposal is being prepared by Kris Chan for an NIGMS Program Project in the general area of Biophysics with an emphasis on fatty acid interactions with proteins.

Infrastructure (Bob Cukier)

- Nothing to report

Public Relations (Maria Zavodszky)

- Many updates have been made to the QBI web pages, but this is an ongoing effort. Please alert Robin Buell and/or Helen Geiger to changes that are needed.

4. Training grant updates (David Arnosti and Bob Hausinger)

- The T32 training grant proposal in the area of Gene Expression was not subjected to full review. Dave Arnosti was able to obtain extensive feedback that will be useful in a future submission. In particular, the Cell and Molecular Biology program requested

that the focus be broader to include more faculty, perhaps including groups such as those working on the mitochondria-related mechanisms of disease or breast cancer.

- The T32 training grant proposal on Molecular Biophysics will be reviewed on Nov. 12, 2008

5. QBI Symposium on Oct. 8, 9-11 am (Bob Hausinger)

- Notices about the Symposium have been distributed to VPRGS, Deans, Assoc. Deans, Director of MAES, Chairs of QB-associated departments, and the QBI faculty. Helen will inquire about which upper-level administrators are likely to attend and will have names for display.
- The purposes are to inform the administration, current QBI faculty, and potential QBI faculty of the accomplishments and plans of QBI, the QB graduate program, and the four areas of research emphasis.

6. Instructors for QB 828

- Staffing of this course (Biology for the Interdisciplinary Scientist) is an issue because Guowei Wei will be on sabbatical and his postdocs have conflicts so they cannot teach at the time of the classes. Lisa Lapidus will lead most lectures, but is looking for help in areas such as Systems Biology, Bioinformatics, Molecular Dynamics, and some other methods. All QBI faculty are asked to please consider whether you can help. Robin Buell generously volunteered to help.

7. External Advisory Board

- EC members should consider individuals they know from meetings or otherwise who might be effective members of an external advisory board. Prior to the next meeting, the EC will be asked for names/affiliations of these individuals. At the next meeting we will discuss these and the prior EAB.

8. Drew Lab preproposal

- Jerry Coldwell of the Drew lab (focused on enhancing minority student participation in the STEM disciplines) has asked Claire Vieille to serve as co-PI on a preproposal to NSF in the area of Quantitative Biology. A second preproposal is being developed in the area of bioenergy. Claire will be sure this activity is well integrated with the UBM program.