

BioSB Members meeting

Date: April 5, 2017 - 13:15 - 14.30, De Werelt in Lunteren

BioSB Activities, Finances, Future

Brief overview activities last year

The BioSB board gave a brief overview of activities of last year.

Conferences:

- BioSB Conference: this year again a growth in the number of participants with 50. We now have 401 participants compared to 351 in 2016.
- ECCB 2016 was co-organised by BioSB from September 3-7, 2016 in The Hague. The conference was a great success.

Courses:

- Intro
- Core
- Specific
- eLearning

HotTopics meetings: the first HotTopics meeting will be held on April 20 in Delft: Oxford Nanopore sequencing. More topics have been defined and there will be more meetings later this year.

Finances

- Income:
 - conference fee
 - membership fees
 - course fees
 - starting capital of NBIC & SB@NL
- Costs:
 - BioSB conference
 - courses
 - BioSB office (mainly salaries of Celia (0.2 fte) and Femke (0.4 fte) and Financial support)
- Finances 2015 and 2016:
 - a. The finances of 2016 are not finalized yet, final data expected soon.
 - b. Deficit last 3 years 2015: -30.863 euro, 2016: -20.268 euro. We will have 2 years left to become sustainable at this rate. In April 2016 we reported -10keuro for 2015, but there were two problems:
 - Unexpected VAT to be paid on Conference income in 2015. Board only found out last week.
 - Memberships that were fully invoiced on 2015, had to be divided over 2015 and 2016 therefore less income than expected in 2015 (but is incorporated in the 2016 figures).

- BioSB personnel: Femke (0,4 fte) a week and Celia (0,2 fte), finances by external office: Maxmo. We would really need at least one day more support, but looking at the current financial situation this is not realistic.

International Review committee reports

The bottom line: presented by Boris Kholodenko

The general impression of the committee was very good. The community feeling seems very strong compared to other/similar organisations elsewhere. The committee found it a unique experience and their overall impression about the research school is very positive. They would definitely support a request for governmental support for the BioSB research school.

Boris walks us through the draft report that was written by Terri Attwood on behalf of the committee (the final report can be found [here](#)). Main comments:

- BioSB seen as a national treasure.
- Courses: coverage is good, but it is impossible to cover everything. The aim should be to increase participation and encourage PhD students/master students to participate. A good addition would be a basic bioinformatics course. Other interesting course could be: microbial and mammalian cell systems.
- The eLearning courses could add some income.
- Vitality of the research school: advise to build further on the international activities/partnerships like ELIXIR, GOBLET en CODATA (Celia is already fully involved in both ELIXIR (training platform leader) as well as GOBLET (member of executive board), but we could capitalize on this more).
- Viability of the research school: there is a financial deficit, just enough to go on for 2 or 3 years max. Suggestions made by the committee: try to encourage PIs to have their PhD students become members. Advice is to reach out to industry, e.g. by tracking alumni PhDs who now work in industry.

Questions by members:

- Hans Westerhoff: we should try to entice companies like Unilever, DSM more. How can we stimulate them to join. Boris Kholodenko: BioSB could ask the industry to support the community, because their support could also be beneficial to them: more publicity/visibility among participants and within the community..
- Matthias Heinemann: the comments by the review committee are all very positive but are there things that could be improved? Boris Kholodenko: increase PR would be a good idea/sell yourself more towards the community.

BioSB memberships

Concerning the BioSB membership the conclusion is that the number of expected members (as was formulated as ambition in 2015) has not been reached. The question posed is what we should do with this fact, what is the cause.

- Maybe limited funding possibilities within science (leading PIs sending PhD students to fewer courses) - JaapH.
- If we look at the pool of possible members, this should not be a problem. There are 400 conference participants, why only limited number are members? -LodewykW
- Suggestion to have a questionnaire amongst all PIs why they do not join? Find out what should be done so they will join? Alexander S.

- We did do surveys in 2013 and 2014 amongst the NBIC and SB@NL PIs. The vast majority supported the school and indicated they would a) make their PhDs member and b) contribute actively to the BioSB activities. It might be good to revisit now and see if there are new insights - CeliavG
- Maybe we could try make an effort to see who exactly we miss in our members group. - BarbaraB
- Many people are interested to come to the conference, but may not want to be a BioSB member - DickdR

Possible future plans

Conclusion of the review and discussions is that the research school needs 30K more to break even. The review committee thinks BioSB is very valuable, but is it valuable enough to keep alive? Could embedding in DTL work? DTL is a network organisation with partnerships with almost all universities and umcs and is home to ELIXIR-NL and has a learning programme. BioSB might be the vehicle of the learning programme?

Discussion:

Embedding in DTL

- HansW: ISBE is in building phase and is searching for consolidated funding. ISBE might also come under the umbrella of DTL, so embedding BioSB in DTL could be logical step.
- CeliavG: Contacts with ISBE training people have already been established, both on the national as well as ELIXIR-Europe level.
- Embedding would mean that we should give more transparency about the relation of BioSB membership fees (individual memberships) and DTL partnership fees (organisational membership).
 - Jeroen de Ridder: if the university pays, I will not become a member/stay a member.
- Chris Evelo: it would be good to look into the construction with DTL but it would only benefit a subgroup of the researchers. He indicates that ISMB has a membership structure and is doing very well.
- Barbara: DTL is more infrastructure. From the outside it should be clear what the difference is between BioSB, DTL and ELIXIR. It all is a bit fuzzy. You would have to set your borders clearly.
- Ruben Kok: DTL concerns fields of enabling technologies. In BioSB has a clear research approach versus the more infrastructure & service approach in DTL and ELIXIR. But both are born from the same community. I see no problems to have both sides in DTL. There is a large need for data scientists within the data science and the BioSB community should stand for this development of big approach to data science and could provide the data scientists that are needed.

Involve Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO)

- Kees Rodenburg (Avans) indicates he has a possible candidate to join the education committee (Miaomiao Zhou), who is a teacher at Avans.
- Celia: Agreed and is good plan. There is already collaboration going on between HBO en DTL and between HBO and BioSB. DTL is already in contact with DAS (umbrella organization of Life Science HBOs) and Celia is board member of LOBIN, the organisation of HBOs offering a bioinformatics BSc programme in NL, which was founded by NBIC and already exists > 10 years.

Other types of memberships

- Ruben Kok: see if there are alternative kinds of memberships, maybe institutional memberships, industrial memberships.

Bridge to infrastructure initiatives

- Ruben Kok: try and follow up the suggestion to bridge to infrastructure initiatives. I can help with connecting to managements of universities.

Find out why people are not interested to become member

- Matthias Heinemann explains that he is not a member because he doesn't like memberships in general. Maybe more people have this problem. He also indicates that maybe the membership doesn't give enough in return for what is paid for. Is the value for money good enough?

Spend less money

- Dick de Ridder: maybe BioSB should spend less money and lower the ambitions?
- Lodewyk Wessels answers that someone will have to do the work ('hidden costs').
- Dick de Ridder: other people could be more involved for example in the preparations of the conference? Go for more in kind contributions.

Stop with BioSB activities

- Bas van Breukelen: another point of view: why not stop with the research school but keep the conference? What would be lost if we stopped with the courses?
- Peter-Bram 't Hoen: I would regret if we lose the research school and think we should invest more in the office because this would probably help getting more funding.
- Hans Westerhoff: you have not yet spent all the money, the situation is not yet very dramatic, there is still time to explore for example funding possibilities with for example NWO.

Do a survey

- Patrick Kemmeren: we should do a survey and ask what people value most to get a good view. It would be good to see a few scenarios and come back in a few months and explore further possibilities.
- Matthias Heinemann: we should also look into what other communities do.
- Lodewyk Wessels: I have made some simulation models to present to the review committee. But there could be more ideas and we have to get around the table with a small group and discuss them: Dick de Ridder, Jeroen de Ridder offer to join.
- Data science and computer science pass who would like to thing with us about this: Huub Hoefsloot, Marcel Reinders, Alexander Schonhuth.

Elections board and committees

BioSB board:

Patrick Kemmeren has indicated that he would like to be part of the BioSB board. The current board members should also be re-elected. From the 17 members present in the room all are in favor of the current board to remain (Barbara Bakker, Lodewyk Wessels and Jaap Heringa). All members, except one abstention, voted in favor of Patrick Kemmeren to join the BioSB board.

Scientific committee:

- 20 members present in the room
- 2 new committee members: Ilja Arts (UM), Alexander Schoenhuth (CWI)
- Leaving committee: Roeland Merks (CWI)
- All vote in favor of the new members of the scientific committee.

- Both should become a BioSB member.

Education committee:

- 18 members present in the room
- All in favor of the whole committee to stay in place
- Peter Bram 't Hoen indicates that someone in his group is interested in joining the education committee.
- Huub Hoefsloot asks if the courses are also interesting for teachers. Kees Rodenburg (Avans) says yes.
- There should still be an Industrial member added to the committee

AOB

Next year's BioSB conference

- There are offers from both Leiden University/UMC as Amsterdam/VU to organise the 2018 edition of the conference.
- Chris Evelo: we should follow up on that the quality of this conference is not what was expected.

BBC conference:

Chris Evelo - do we want to have an BBC conference in the Netherlands? Find out who to contact.