



Accomplishments Report July - December 2008

The International Society for Computational Biology is an individual membership organization that provides services and benefits to the bioinformatics and computational biology communities. As the final total for 2008 ISCB has counted 2,492 new or renewed members and a high of 2524 members during the year when year 2007 members whose memberships had not yet expired are included. Among ISCB's 2008 membership 52% were Professional Members, 13% were Post Docs and 35% were Students. Additionally, 54% were based in North America, 29% were in Europe, 13% were in Asia/Oceania, 3% were in Africa and 1% were in South America.

The following summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the ISCB through its various committees, elected leadership and staff. All initiatives of the Society are undertaken by volunteer members, which ISCB gratefully acknowledges for these accomplishments and thanks those named and the many more unnamed in this report for their selfless contributions to helping ISCB advance the understanding of living systems through computation worldwide. The initiatives of the member volunteers were supported by the ISCB staff and professional contractors consisting of an Executive Officer, a Conferences Director, an administrative assistant, three database/web programmers, and two on-call graphic designers. With the exception of the Executive Officer, each of these individuals works part time on ISCB projects, and together they provide essential support to the Society's worldwide leadership and global membership.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ISMB 2008 – The 16th Annual International Conference on Intelligent Systems for Molecular Biology was held in Toronto, Canada, in July.

- The conference was preceded by two days of events, including the 4th Student Council Symposium (116 participants), six special interest group meetings (622 participants), one satellite meeting (117 participants), ten tutorials (462 participants) and an ice-breaker orienteering event (246 participants).
- The four-days of the main conference included 154 oral presentations, three workshops, a visual exhibition of 29 artistic images and three videos, plus two special interest group meetings in parallel to the conference (160 attendees).
- 1395 scientists from 47 countries attended the main conference (70% male, 23% female, 7% undeclared).
- Nine sponsoring organizations and 25 exhibiting organizations supported the conference.
- The conference was financially successful.
- Thank you to conference co-chairs Michal Linial, Jill Mesirov and Burkhard Rost who worked with a team of track chairs and support staff to produce this expansive meeting.

New Web Portal Launched – www.iscb.org moved to a new server under a new programming team using a new content management system.

- Kamalakar-Rao Mettani completed his Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree at the University of Applied Science Heidelberg, Department of Computer Science, by writing his thesis on ways to improve the ISCB website.
- A team was assembled under the guidance of Reinhard Schneider, ISCB Vice President, to put Mettani's plan into place.
- The new portal was launched on October 24, 2008, over a year after work on it had begun, and nearly eight months after Mettani had died suddenly. The new portal site was dedicated in memory of Kamalakar-Rao Mettani (www.iscb.org/iscb-news-items/122-kamal).

- With the new functionality of the content management system ISCB will be expanding its member benefits program to include online communities, member-to-member access and iscb email aliases.

Rocky'08 Meeting – The 6th Annual Rocky Mountain Conference on Bioinformatics was held in Snowmass/Aspen, USA in December.

- Three invited keynotes, 3 abstracts elevated to keynote talks, and 55 ten-minute flash presentations filled out the oral program, and a panel workshop on ethics was held as well.
- The three-day conference included 116 attendees from 12 countries.
- The conference was financially successful thanks to an historically high attendance and sponsorships by IBM, 454 Sequencing, Roche and Cycle Computing.
- Thank you to Larry Hunter who has chaired this meeting each of the six years it has been held.

ISCB Software Sharing Statement – The Board of Directors approved a preamble to the Software Sharing Statement that had been approved and publicly released earlier in the year.

- Thanks to public-affairs & policies committee co-chair John Wooley who, together with past committee chair Barbara Bryant, drafted the preamble and presented it to the board for approval. The preamble serves to further clarify the intended purpose of the Society's statement on software sharing.

COMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The committees of ISCB are made up of members volunteering their time and expertise to a particular area of interest or an important function of the Society and the membership-at-large. The following summarizes the accomplishments of ISCB committees during the second half of 2008.

Affiliates & SIGs Committee - Tan Tin Wee, Chair

- The committee structure was changed during the July ISCB board of directors meeting in Toronto, to now include one representative from each affiliated group.
- A revision to the Affiliation guidelines was approved by the board of directors in December to expand the program in order to include national and regional institutes, centers and networks.
- Applications for affiliation are now processed through a task force rather than the committee of affiliates.

Awards Committee - Søren Brunak, Chair

- Trey Ideker (Univ of California, San Diego) was selected for the ISCB 2009 Overton Prize.
- Webb Miller (University of Pennsylvania) was selected for the ISCB 2009 Accomplishment by a Sr. Scientist Award.
- Both award presentations will be made at ISMB/ECCB 2009 in Stockholm, Sweden.

Conferences Committee - Janet Kelso, Chair

- Proceeds from ISMB 2008 contributed ~300,000 USD in seed funds for ISMB/ECCB 2009 as well as toward the operational funds of the Society.
- Proceeds from Rocky '08 contributed ~12,000 USD to ISCB to help fund the operation of the Society and provide seed funds for future Rocky conferences.
- A repeat of the C-SHALS meeting was approved for February 2009 in Cambridge, USA.
- The first ever ISCB meeting to be held in Africa, a joint conference with the African Society for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, was approved for November/December 2009 in Mali.
- The first ever ISCB regional meeting for Latin America was approved for March 2010 in Uruguay.
- Three officially affiliated conferences to ISCB were held as follows:
 - EMBnet 20th Anniversary Meeting, September 2008, Martina Franca, Italy
 - ECCB, September 2008, Sardinia, Italy
 - InCoB, October, Taipei, Taiwan

Education Committee – Bruno Gaeta, Chair; Fran Lewitter, Co-chair

- After two years in the position, Kevin Karplus stepped down as Chair of this committee in June 2008, enabling his vice chair to rise to the position of committee chair.
- Renewed the MentorNet E-Mentoring Network Membership for a 3rd Year.

Finance Committee – Reinhard Schneider, Chair

- A change in leadership of this committee took place during the board of directors meeting in Toronto; thank you to Jean-Francois Tomb for his service the two years as chair of this committee.
- A proposal to enable multi-year and lifetime memberships was approved by the board of directors in December, and programming for these membership options is now underway.

Governance Committee – Reinhard Schneider, Chair

- A series of new governance policies were approved by the board of directors to ensure compliance with US IRS expectations, including:
 - Revised Code of Conducts for leaders, staff and reps with fiduciary responsibilities
 - Determination of executive compensation
 - Document retention and destruction
 - Joint venture
 - Whistleblower

Nominations Committee - Dietlind Gerloff, Chair

- Conducted elections of three new board members, plus the reelection of two board members, whose terms will end in 2012.
- Conducted elections of two new vice presidents, one reelected vice president and one new treasurer, whose terms will end in 2011.

Public Affairs & Policies Committee – David States, Chair; John Wooley, Co-chair

- Gained approval from the Board of Directors of a preamble to the ISCB Statement on Software Sharing that was approved earlier in the year.
- Several activities involving ISCB membership in FASEB included:
 - Jean-Francois Tomb serves on the FASEB Finance Committee as ISCB's representative.
 - Scott Markel serves on the FASEB Publications & Communications Committee as ISCB's representative.
 - BJ Morrison McKay serves on the Executive Officers Advisory Committee (EOAC); BJ attends the monthly EOAC teleconferences, the monthly board teleconferences and semi-annual board meetings.
 - John Wooley serves as the ISCB representative to the FASEB Board of Directors; John attends the monthly teleconferences and semi-annual board meetings.
 - Barbara Bryant serves as the ISCB advisory representative to the FASEB Board of Directors; Barbara attends the monthly teleconferences and semi-annual board meetings

Publications Committee – Scott Markel, Jill Mesirov and David Rocke, Co-Chairs

- Negotiations with Oxford University Press to reinstate “official journal” status to *Bioinformatics* journal led to a three year agreement starting in January 2009.
- Negotiations with PLoS to renew *PLoS Computational Biology* as an official journal were started in late 2008 in preparation for the current agreement's expiration at the end of 2009.

NEW TASK FORCES TARGETED TOWARD KEY NEED AREAS

In early 2008 the executive committee identified eight areas of need for ISCB and several members of the board of directors have agreed to lead task forces to establish strategies and action plans for addressing them. Additional task forces have been formed throughout the second half of 2008, and Terry Gaasterland and BJ Morrison McKay have been working with the leaders to help refine and implement those strategies and action plans. Following are progress reports on two of the task forces

Task Force Areas and Leaders:

- Defining an ISCB Fellows program fellowship - Mona Singh
 - A Fellows Program proposal drafted by Mona will be considered by the board of directors at their February 2009 meeting.
- Recruiting affiliates - Fran Lewitter and Bruno Gaeta

- A revised affiliates' guidelines document was presented to and approved by the board of directors for implementation at the end of 2008.

MEMBER BENEFITS OFFERED IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2008

Each year ISCB leaders and staff work on behalf of all members to ensure an array of relevant and tangible benefits are offered. In addition to the discounted journal subscription benefits that have been in place for several years, the following additional benefits were also offered during the second half of 2008:

Conference Registration Discounts Secured Exclusively for ISCB Members

- Up to 250€ discount to attend EMBnet 20th Anniversary Meeting in Martina Franca, Taranto, Italy, September 2008
- 100€ discount to attend ECCB-European Conference on Computational Biology in Cagliari, Sardinia-Italy
- Up to 110 USD discount to attend Rocky '08-Rocky Mountain Bioinformatics Conference in Snowmass/Aspen, USA, December 2008

Travel Fellowships from ISCB Funds Awarded to ISCB Student and Post Doc Members

- ISMB 2008 in Toronto, Canada, July 2008
 - 81,000 USD of US government grant funding distributed to 114 paper and/or poster presenters
 - 3,500 USD of FASEB MARC fellowship funding distributed among two poster presenters
- EMBnet 20th Anniversary Meeting in Martina Franca, Taranto, Italy, September 2008
 - 3,000 USD distributed among paper and/or poster presenters
- ECCB-European Conference on Computational Biology in Cagliari, Sardinia-Italy, September 2008
 - 5,000 USD distributed among paper and/or poster presenters
- InCoB-International Conference on Computational Biology (the APBioNet annual conference) in Taipei, Taiwan, October 2008
 - 1,920 USD distributed among paper and/or poster presenters
- Rocky '08-Rocky Mountain Bioinformatics Conference in Snowmass/Aspen, USA, December 2008
 - 1,750 USD of FASEB MARC fellowship funding distributed to one flash presenter

SOCIETY MARKETING & PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

ISCB leaders and staff members participate at varying levels in several affiliated and co-sponsored bioinformatics-related conferences throughout the year in order to show support of these conferences and promote ISCB membership to prospective attendees. Additionally, e-mailings throughout the year provide news and information to ISCB members and prospects about these conferences and other matters of interest to our community. Below is a list of conferences where ISCB had a specific presence, as well as our direct mail/email marketing activities during the second half of 2008.

ISCB presentations and conference exhibition presence

- ISMB 2008 in Toronto, Canada, July 2008
 - Burkhard Rost, ISCB President, held an open members meeting where he reported on the leadership and membership structure, 2008 activities to-date, upcoming conferences and financial status of ISCB.
 - Michal Linial, ECCB Steering Committee Chair, delivered a promotional presentation on ISMB/ECCB 2009.
 - Suzi Smith, ISCB Administrative Assistant, represented the Society with an ISCB booth in the exhibition hall.
 - Society brochures and conference information were inserted in the delegate bags.
- ECCB-European Conference on Computational Biology in Cagliari, Sardinia-Italy, September 2008
 - Burkhard Rost made an presentation on the leadership and membership structure, 2008 activities-to-date, upcoming conferences and financial status of ISCB

- BJ Morrison McKay, ISCB Executive Officer, represented the Society with a booth in the exhibition area.
- ISCB brochures were inserted in the delegate bags.
- EMBnet 20th Anniversary Meeting in Martina Franca, Taranto, Italy, September 2008
 - Reinhard Schneider, ISCB Vice President, made an presentation on the leadership and membership structure, 2008 activities-to-date, upcoming conferences and affiliation opportunities.
 - BJ Morrison McKay, ISCB Executive Officer, represented the Society with a booth.
 - ISCB brochures were inserted in the delegate packets.
- InCoB-International Conference on Computational Biology (the APBioNet annual conference) in Taipei, Taiwan, October
 - Terry Gaasterland, ISCB Vice President, made an presentation on the leadership and membership structure, 2008 activities-to-date, upcoming conferences and affiliation opportunities.
 - ISCB brochures were inserted in the delegate bags.
- ABRCMS-Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in Orlando, USA, November 2008
 - Marco Punta, ISMB Posters Committee Chair, attended the conference to review posters for possible invitations to ISMB.
 - BJ Morrison McKay represented the Society with a booth in the exhibition area.
- Rocky '08-Rocky Mountain Bioinformatics Conference in Snowmass/Aspen, USA, December 2008
 - BJ Morrison McKay represented the Society with a display in the exhibition area and presence from the registration table.
 - ISCB brochure and ISMB 2008 poster were included on the literature table.

Mailings to Members and Colleagues between July and December 2008

- 11 separate ISCB announcements and conference updates distributed to over 12,000 scientists on ISCB mailing lists via email campaigns.
- Three separate e-newsletters announcing Society news and conference updates distributed to over 11,000 scientists on ISCB mailing lists.

ELECTED LEADERSHIP

ISCB is governed by the leadership of 27 Board Members, including five Officers elected by the membership and who serve on the Executive Committee. The Board and Executive Committee activities during the second half the 2008 were as follows.

- Board of Directors Membership throughout 2008 was as follows:
 - Patricia Babbitt, University of California, San Francisco, USA
 - Nir Ben-Tal, Tel Aviv University, Israel
 - Rita Casadio, University of Bologna, Italy
 - Manuel Corpas, Student Council Representative to the Board, EBI, UK
 - Sandro de Souza, Ludwig Center for Cancer Research, Brazil
 - Terry Gaasterland, University of California-San Diego, USA
 - Bruno Gaeta, University of New South Wales, New Zealand
 - Dietlind Gerloff, University of California-Santa Cruz, USA
 - Kevin Karplus, University of California-Santa Cruz, USA
 - Janet Kelso, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Germany
 - Thomas Lengauer, Max Planck Institute for Informatics, Germany
 - Fran Lewitter, Whitehead Institute, USA
 - Michal Linial, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
 - Scott Markel, Accelrys, USA
 - Jill Mesirov, The Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT, USA
 - David Rocke, University of California-Davis, USA
 - Burkhard Rost, Columbia University, USA
 - Reinhard Schneider, European Molecular Biology Laboratory, Germany
 - Mona Singh, Princeton University, USA

- Tan Tin Wee, National University of Singapore, Singapore
- Jean-Francois Tomb, DuPont, USA
- Anna Tramontano, University of Rome, Italy
- Olga Troyanskaya, Princeton University, USA
- Alfonso Valencia, Spanish National Cancer Research Center, Spain
- Harel Weinstein, Cornell University, USA
- John Wooley, University of California-San Diego, USA
- Hannah Xue, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, Hong Kong
- During the second half of 2008 the Board met ISMB in Toronto in July for the annual in-person board meeting, and two additional times by teleconference in October and December.

Executive Committee

- The Executive Committee members for 2008 were:
 - Burkhard Rost, President
 - Terry Gaasterland, Vice President
 - Reinhard Schneider, Vice President
 - David Rocke, Treasurer
 - Janet Kelso, Secretary
 - BJ Morrison McKay, Executive Officer (non-voting staff appointment)
- The Executive Committee met 17 times by teleconference between July and December 2008