

BioSys Scientific Advisory Board 2016 Report

The BioSys Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) members met on 10.01.2017 with most of the students from the 4 editions of BioSys. This meeting followed a 1-minute presentation plus poster viewing from each PhD student. As a result of this direct and informative interaction, we wish to convey to BioSys doctoral program director the following remarks and recommendations:

- The SAB members gladly noticed that the projects are more diverse, although the computational biology component of most of them is not very strong and in many cases limited to high throughput screens. The students themselves worry that the systems biology component of their education, perceived as one key asset of the BioSys PhD Program, is very much reduced or neglected.
- Overall organization still needs to be improved and changes in the teaching schedule communicated in a timely manner to the students.
- Regarding the Thesis Advisory Committees, not all the students know the evaluation criteria and the relative weight of each criterion. Also, some students were informed of their score, while others were not.
- One minute for the oral presentations is far too short to reflect one year of work and for the SAB to get acquainted with the progress of the students; should consider 5 minutes, at least, plus time to an effective poster viewing. We are aware that this would extend the duration of the meeting, but one day does not seem excessive.
- Transferrable skills courses should be fully implemented, as initially planned.
- A very low number of students are taking advantage of the mixed fellowships to spend time in foreign labs.
- There should be more opportunities for the students to get together, apart from the annual meeting and the retreat (a monthly more informal meeting should be considered); regarding this point, the students noted that the retreat was very useful for them and that they enjoyed the opportunity of presenting their work and interacting with each other's without the presence of their supervisors.
- For the students working at INSA, the communication with FCUL seems to be a problem. Also, there are issues with network access, through VPN that should be addressed.

Lisbon, February 1st 2017



Manuel Santos



Duarte Barral



Juan Valcarcel