

**Graduate Program in Genetics
Executive Committee Meeting
October 15, 2015**

MINUTES

- The meeting convened at 3:45 with all members and the Program Administrator, Kate Bell, in attendance. Members are:
 - Martha Furie (Pathology; Program Director)
 - Howard Sirotkin (Neurobiology and Behavior)
 - Tom White (Physiology and Biophysics)
 - Paul Freimuth (BNL)
 - Gholson Lyon (CSHL)
 - Meng Lin (SBU student representative)
 - Nitin Shirole (CSHL student representative)Thanks were extended to new members Meng and Nitin.

- Martha presented a summary of the Program's activities over the past year. The following are some highlights of the report:
 - Twelve students graduated over the past year.
 - Five new students were admitted in Fall 2015, including a Turner Fellow and an IMSD-MERGE Fellow.
 - Seven students passed the qualifying examination, which now requires writing of an NIH-style grant application and oral defense of the proposal.
 - Ten students passed their proposal examinations.
 - Three new faculty (Jun Chung, Brian Sheridan, and Adam Siepel) have joined the Program.
 - Formal approval was received for the following changes to Program requirements:
 - Elimination of MCB 520 Biochemistry as a requirement and substitution of 3 credits of electives
 - Students must receive a B or better in the three required courses and an average of at least B in their electives.
 - To graduate, students must have submitted a first-authored manuscript to a suitable peer-reviewed journal, and it must have been deemed of sufficient quality to be sent for external review.
 - Martha met with Dr. Sacha Kopp (Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences) to discuss the challenges faced by interdepartmental graduate programs in terms of funding. Although Dr. Kopp acknowledged the problem and expressed willingness to help, there has to date been no action on his part.
 - The Program has a new web site (www.stonybrook.edu/gradgenetics).
 - This year, all students received a written evaluation of progress, including goals for the coming year. In nearly all cases, mentors provided comments to be incorporated into the evaluation. Students were given the opportunity to respond, and all were required to sign and return their evaluation. These evaluations bring the Program into compliance with regulations of the Graduate School.
 - A request was submitted to the Graduate School's Communications and Outreach Initiative to fund a retreat/recruiting event in February 2016. [On 10/16, the Program

was notified that it was awarded \$5,000. The date of the event will be Friday, February 12, 2016.]

- Changes were discussed to revise the Program's By-Laws, which date from 1985.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will incorporate all of the suggested changes and circulate them to the Executive Committee for final approval. The changes will then be put to a vote by the Program Faculty.

- The Committee voted to approve addition of BGE 693 Research Proposal Preparation (1 credit) as a required course.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will petition the Graduate Council for approval of this change.

- The need to make certain that all Program faculty members are involved and participatory, particularly if a training grant application is to be submitted, was considered.

ACTION ITEM: Faculty without a recent record of contributing to the Program will be asked whether they wish to remain a member and, if so, to indicate Program activities in which they would be willing to participate.

- Currently, the Program supplements the TA stipends of first-year students during the academic year so that trainees receive the same amount in each paycheck throughout the calendar year. In contrast, the Program in Molecular and Cellular Biology does not supplement the TA stipends; instead, students receive a greater proportion of their calendar-year pay in the summer, once they have joined a laboratory. The possibility was discussed of adopting a modified version of the MCB strategy, in which the Program would supplement stipends to a lesser degree during the academic year. The consensus was that such a strategy will probably be necessary to keep the Program robust. The need for providing transparency in letters of offer was stressed.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will provide a detailed proposal to the Executive Committee later in the academic year, when the Program's budget for 2016-2017 is known.

- The 'co-app' admissions process with Cold Spring Harbor was discussed. In this program, applicants to CSHL may apply simultaneously to SBU programs, including Genetics, by checking a box. This system makes it difficult to know which applicants have a true interest in our Program. It was suggested that, pending 'buy in' from other participating SBU programs, interested CSHL applicants be required to apply directly to our Program.

ACTION ITEM: Martha will contact the directors of other participating programs, with the aim of making a change for Fall 2017 admissions.

- Martha reported her intention to submit an application for a Genetics training grant in the spring of 2016.
- The need for reforming the Program's curriculum was discussed.

ACTION ITEM: A Curriculum Committee, with both faculty and student members, will be formed to discuss curricular issues in detail.

- At 5:00, the student representatives left the room, and the faculty representatives discussed the progress of individual trainees.
- The meeting was adjourned at 5:15.