



X-meeting - 1st International Conference of the AB³C

Caxambu, MG, Brazil, October 4-7, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Biology has always been associated with test tubes, microscopes, Petri dishes, and fruit flies, but this conventional view has significantly changed in the last ten years. A typical biology laboratory today has computers, robots and other fancy equipment that together churn out a huge amount of data. A significant part of biology involves information management. Those who can extract knowledge from databases are more prepared to face the mysteries of Nature. That is why bioinformatics and computational biology are everywhere in biomedical sciences nowadays.

This session of Genetics and Molecular Research (GMR) is dedicated to the X-meeting, the 1st International Meeting of the AB³C (Brazilian Association for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology - <http://www.ab3c.org>). Following the success of two previous meetings, the Icobicobi 2003 and 2004, the community decided to launch the AB³C, as a way to fill an important gap in representation for the field in the country. The AB³C has today more than 200 members with significant representation from students. It is affiliated with the most important international society in the field, the International Society of Computational Biology (ISCB). The X-meeting, organized by Prof. Miguel Ortega (UFMG) and Dr. Paula Kuser (Embrapa), was a huge success with an excellent scientific program (see <http://www.x-meeting.com>).

The X-meeting was held in Caxambu from October 4 to 7. The conference had more than 250 participants with substantial representation by students. In total, 35 full papers were submitted, and those published here were accepted after an evaluation system based on peer-review. These papers cover a broad range of topics from genomics to structural bioinformatics.

This session also represents one more step in a very fruitful collaboration between GMR and the AB³C. Last year, a session of GMR was dedicated to Icobicobi 2004 (<http://www.funpecrp.com.br/gmr/year2004/vol4-3/>). We are confident that this interaction will continue to grow in the near future.

The success of the X-meeting is an indication of the maturity of the community. The same community will host, next year in Fortaleza, the ISMB 2006 (<http://ismb2006.cbi.cnptia.embrapa.br/>), the largest bioinformatics and computational biology meeting in the

world. As a satellite event, there will be a celebration of the 20th anniversary of SwissProt (<http://www.swissprot20.org/>). We are all looking forward to 12 days of sun, beautiful beaches and excellent bioinformatics and computational biology.

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