

G O B A R S G I N V E R T E B R A T E
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Dear GIGA Members,

We are happy to send out this first newsletter of our GIGA “community of scientists”. In the future we will try to send out updates more regularly, or at least biannually.

GIGA Elections completed

As many of you know, we held our first election last October 2019, and I had previously sent to many of you the complete list of elected officers (or Governing Board, GB):

- Secretary – Kevin Kocot, PhD
- Treasurer – Gonzalo Giribet, PhD
- Education/Scholarships Director – Heather Bracken-Grissom, PhD
- Communications Director - Fabrizio Ghiselli, PhD
- Conference Director - Jean-François Flot, PhD
- Development/Fund raising Director – Monica Medina, PhD
- Student Representatives - Nadege Guiglielmoni, Ksenia Juravel Geller
- GIGA Webmaster – Jeffrey Robinson PhD

(Thanks to Dr. Jake Warner for assisting with the running the election). I am honored to serve the next 3 years as your first GIGA president with these distinguished people. Even with this structure, we hope to keep GIGA mostly a “bottoms up” grassroots community, which welcomes input and suggestions from all corners without discrimination. Please see the GB as facilitators to advance GIGA’s primary goals in genomics.

For example, having the GIGA GB set up, has allowed us to apply for non-profit status through the State of Florida, which has now been finalized legally and should be recognized internationally. The records for this are now being maintained by Kevin Kocot. In turn this status also allows us to open an official GIGA bank account for savings and interest revenue. This will be run by our Treasurer, Gonzalo Giribet. For now, we are not yet a “tax-exempt” corporation because the 501(c)3 status requires larger fees. However, we are official and can now claim ourselves as “non-profit” and its privileges. Again, for now our primary goal is to promote genomics education, student travel to meetings etc. If we want to expand to support larger projects, we can put this up for discussion but will require greater revenues and fundraising. All ideas are welcome.

The official GIGA “Constitution” or bylaws are still a work in progress. The GB will try to work on a new draft over the coming months which can be presented to the full membership for ratification in the future.

If you are not an official GIGA member, you can always join us here - https://universityofalabama.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5bDVMSph5sPFhOZ

Meetings, and next GIGA Conference

GIGA will have a presence and poster at the upcoming SMBE.org meeting Quebec, **June 28- July 3, 2020**.

Another development is that the GB has agreed upon a location in Asia for the next GIGA (IV) meeting – the Philippine Genomics Center in Manila -<https://pgc.up.edu.ph/>. The likely conference timeframe will be around **March 27-31, 2021**, so please mark your calendars. Our energetic GIGA conference director, Jean-François Flot (jflot@ulb.ac.be) will lead the planning, and of course we will welcome any GIGA members to help volunteer and assist with logistics.

The meeting is only about a year away, and the time will go by quickly, with much to do. We know that the Philippines is a long distance for many, but the higher plane fares will be slightly offset by generally less expensive food and hotel accommodations in the Philippines. This venue is also part of our rotation to various places around the world, and to live up to our international outreach.

In the near future, please stay tuned for an upcoming GIGA IV meeting website. We will soon start planning the agenda, workshop goals and also raising funds for student travel support and guest speakers etc. This will be another exciting meeting with opportunities to network, and field excursions near the Coral Triangle.

Cooperation with the Earth BioGenome Project (EBP)

I am still on monthly working group calls with the EBP to coordinate and compliment their efforts to sequence 1.5 million eukaryotic species in 10 years. Their next joint EBP meeting with associated genomics consortia is being planned to run **Oct 5 – 9, 2020** at the Sanger Center in Hinxton/Sanger, UK. When they have set up a meeting website up, we will post this. For now, info on the Darwin Tree of Life project to sequence 60,000 eukaryotes from the British Isles can be found here -

<https://www.sanger.ac.uk/science/programmes/tree-of-life>

Spreading GIGA news

For the content of this newsletter in the future, we also welcome new ideas for highlighting GIGA, short progress reports, links and overall research progress regarding invertebrate comparative genomics from the community. As always, we have several avenues of getting our messages out to ourselves and the public at large. Below are our current media portals -

GIGA Homepage
<http://GIGA-cos.org>

Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1554768864811769/members/>

Twitter
https://twitter.com/GIGA_COS

Please visit and disseminate at your convenience. We also welcome moderators. And please tell us about your latest publications and results. Please contact Fabrizio (fabrizio.ghiselli@unibo.it), and Jeff (jeff.robinson.evol@gmail.com) to offer any assistance on media, or post announcements on these platforms.

Sincerely,

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