

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

I hope everyone is doing fine, and keeping as safe and healthy as possible during these trying times of the covid-19 pandemic. If you are like me, I know many of you are probably busier than ever with trying to figure out course curricula, openings and closings, and keeping family and friends safe.

GIGA does continue to progress even under the coronavirus induced lockdown. This is a brief update:

1. The final edits to the GIGA bylaws are being made by your Governing Board. We hope to have these submitted and posted to our website by Fall.
2. We would also like to ask members to think of ways to promote our non-profit society, and solicit donations to our mission. Please remember that at this stage of GIGA's development, our main goal is to support training and higher education of students interested in conducting genomics research. In the past GIGA has supported travel vouchers to our meetings, and we wish to continue. The GB is now considering to establish a modest competitive monetary award for students and early researchers. Details will be announced at later date, but to provide this award to students or postdocs, the GIGA Community of Scientists will need further revenues. Currently our costs go to maintaining our website and legal fees.

Therefore, to assist with fundraising, please pass on our donation page to those in your immediate circles and who may be willing to help us out (small donations are welcome) –

<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme2/GIGAIII>

3. There is some news from the Earth BioGenome Project (EBP):
 - EBP would like to take a survey of members from other communities affiliated to EBP. If you have minute, please fill out this document
- <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYPw0MBfX9-ZozQXHmfrZCzcNvoq0lxizUY-U5ydgr-ljuPQ/viewform>
 - (If your institution does not appear, please use the “other” designation)
 - Please also visit their Facebook and Twitter pages –

<https://www.facebook.com/earthbiogenome>

- EBP has set up subcommittees to establish guidelines under the following topics:

Sample Collection and Processing

SubCommittee: Sequencing and Assembly

Annotation

Data Analysis

IT and Informatics

Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues Committee (ELSI)

Communications and Public Affairs Committee

Over the past few months, EBP has been hard at work trying to develop rigorous standards for genomes that can be counted and applied towards EBP goals. See -

<https://www.earthbiogenome.org/subcommittee-sample-collection-processing>

This has been a thought-provoking exercise. As I've sat on the Data Analysis panel, it has been educational to view the development of these standards. If anyone is interested in joining these committees, we would welcome your time, and you can reach out to EBP.

Also, I would posit that GIGA can also establish our own standards and protocols.

For example, GIGA Secretary Kevin Kocot has begun to collate various protocols on the best SOP and protocols for collecting and preserving invertebrate tissue from various taxonomic groups. If you would like to contribute, please check out his request on the GIGA Slack channel "General". Please take a look when you can. Recommendations for genomics and sequencing standards are also welcome.

- The Biodiversity Genomics 2020 meeting from Hixton UK will move forward as planned on October 5-9, 2020 as an online conference. A formal announcement is in the works on the EBP website - <https://www.earthbiogenome.org/>. For now and from Mark Blaxter's email questionnaire, there were 22 respondents with 150 potential participants representing GIGA. Thanks for all your responses.

This promises to be another stimulating meeting, with over 1000 online attendees. Registration fees are still TBD, but will likely be minimal or free. There are still many details to be worked on the actual number of breakout sessions. For example, a virtual poster session is being considered. Each day will consist of 3 hour sessions to accommodate the most people from around world and their different time zones (e.g. sessions will run 10AM – 1 PM, New York time, which will also be 4 – 7 pm Greenwich time etc).

Similar to last year, the sessions will likely cover all EBP member groups such as GIGA, 10,000

plants, i5K, VGP, 1000 bat genomes, Catalan Genome project. Each group will be asked to host an inspiring roster of dynamic speakers. More information on the session list will be made available soon.

For now, Mark and the Biodiversity Genomics conference are looking for at least one VOLUNTEER from our GIGA COS, to be our representative on the overall conference committee (which will be choosing the plenary speakers, and will also have responsibility for some breakouts), and to propose plenary speakers - possibly in the area of conservation genomics or ecosystem genomics. It is possible this volunteer will also work with our GIGA Conference VP, Jean-François Flot. This can be coordinated later.

Subject areas we would like to highlight in the meeting, and where GIGA should have opinions and input, are

- Diversity and inclusion: evolutionary genomics has a particularly poor record in inclusion and diversity and we should face this
- Climate emergency: how do we engage and deliver to this existential threat
- Building biodiversity genomics in lower and middle income countries: supporting people in engaging society, building infrastructure and training scientists

Secondly this GIGA rep could lead or form a small committee to search for 2-3 speakers focused GIGA's invertebrate purview. The sessions can be themed/invited and/or open and up to the committee chair. GIGA GB members can assist or consult with the selection process if necessary.

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 welcome any news members would like to share on 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 new 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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cc: GIGA Governing Board