

Global Invertebrate Genomics Alliance Constitution (or By-Laws)

Article 1, NAME AND OBJECT. This society shall be called the “Global Invertebrate Genomics Alliance (or GIGA)”, which is an international community of scientists (COS). GIGA will have the primary goals of promoting scientific genomics research on invertebrate species and supporting educational opportunities in relation to this and related fields at a global scale.

Article 2, MEMBERSHIP. Any person interested in the study of invertebrate genomics and related disciplines (e.g. taxonomy, systematics, ecology, development, evolution, bioinformatics) is eligible for membership. Persons can apply for membership by filling out a membership application form (<https://tinyurl.com/yxkvcrno>) on the GIGA website (<http://giga-cos.org/>). The Governing Board (GB) reviews all memberships annually. Membership is contingent on good professional conduct and can be revoked via a simple majority vote of the Governing Board.

Article 3, GOVERNANCE

GIGA administrative affairs will be managed by a Governing Board (GB) of the following officers elected by all members in good standing.

Because of the international basis of this GIGA community of scientists and our dedication to promotion of diversity in the field, we will make every effort possible to have a diverse Governing Board in terms of gender, ethnicity, and country of origin. Any individual holding at least a MSc. will be eligible to serve on the governing board with the exception of the student representative (see below).

OFFICERS. The eight active officers of GIGA Governing board shall be a President, a President-elect, three Executive Vice-Presidents (one VP for Conferences, one VP for Early Career Development/Scholarships, and one VP for Development and Fund raising ~~and Awards~~), a Treasurer, Secretary and a Communications Director, elected from a pool of nominated academics. The President and VPs will serve for two-year terms. The President-elect shall be elected by all members of GIGA bi-annually, and shall automatically become the President for the following year. The Vice-Presidents shall also be elected biennially and are eligible for the same office one year after expiration of their previous term. The Retiring President may also be active on the board until he/she fully inactivates.

The Treasurer, Secretary and a Communications Director (CD) shall be elected for terms of three years and may be re-elected. The Vice presidents will be elected for two-year terms. A student representative, elected by student members, will also serve and have a vote on the governing board.

ELECTIONS. The President, and at least two Vice Presidents and Student Representative shall appoint a Nominating Committee not less than six months before the election by all members. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least five members. The committee shall be chaired by the senior member. It shall be the duty of the Committee, after receiving by email from the membership, proposals for nominations for each office (including vacancies on the Council), to nominate at least two candidates for each open office. The candidate who receives the majority of the membership vote shall be elected. A minimum of 60% of actively enrolled members in the current year will need to vote for the election to be valid.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS. The President will have the authority to negotiate collaborations, and agreements, and then report back to the Governing Board and the COS for full consensus. The President can sign formal agreements and contracts approved by the GB and/or COS. Regular GIGA conferences will likely be led by local organizing committees, but the President can assist in planning the regular GIGA conference, along with the Retiring President and Conference Vice-President.

The Executive Vice-President for conferences, in consultation with the President, shall be responsible for the administration, fundraising for and operation of the Community of scientists in accordance with the existing constitution, bylaws and policies.

The Executive Vice-President for Early Career Development shall develop and establish educational opportunities to train students and early career scientists, relevant to the mission of GIGA.

The Executive Vice-President for Development and Fundraising will make efforts to raise funds for the GIGA mission, and direct donations to the GIGA donor account.

The President Elect

The President Elect will serve with the President in an understudy capacity, interacting with the GB as needed, until his/her tenure is activated after the current President's term. During this prerequisite period, the President Elect will not be able to cast a vote, except as a proxy by a request from an absent GB member and mostly to break any ties.

The Secretary shall keep detailed records of the GIGA community of scientists. These will include the membership roll, minutes of official GB meetings, signed agreements, collaborations and contracts. These will be archived in conjunction with assistance from the Communications Director.

The Communications Director (CD) will work to maintain all major routes of external communication – e.g. official website, email listserves, regular print and social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). The CD will assist in conveying major announcements and information of GIGA in conjunction with the other members of the governing board to the GIGA COS and the lay public when necessary.

The Treasurer will open and maintain an official GIGA bank account and submit taxes and any legal fees annually. Revenue, expenditures and activities will be shared with GB regularly or upon request.

The student representative will serve as a liaison to the student communities related to GIGA.

Article 4, ACTIVITIES

1. Official GIGA conference – The Governing Board will initiate and assist in convening an official GIGA meeting approximately every three years (starting from the last group meeting on October 19–21, 2018). The conference will be conducted under an explicit code of ethical conduct to be published on the GIGA website.

2. Educational scholarships and vouchers – One of the primary activities of GIGA will be to obtain and disseminate financial support to qualified students and trainees (undergraduate,

graduate, and postdoctoral).– Support may cover the full or partial travel and attendance costs for these trainees to participate in the sanctioned GIGA meeting. To the maximum extent possible, financial support will be used to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in GIGA. This activity serves as rationale for the non-profit status of GIGA.

3.– GIGA will serve as a partner for other genome initiatives to coordinate activities and develop policies. For example, GIGA is already a charter partner with the concurrent Earth Biogenome Project (EBP). Although GIGA remains independent of EBP, a previous letter of support sent to EBP pledged general support and consistency of the EBP mission with GIGA goals.

Article 5, AMENDMENTS. Amendments to these By-Laws may be proposed in writing by any GIGA member to the Secretary, who shall submit them to the Governing Board for consideration and vote at least 6 weeks before an official GIGA meeting. Such proposed amendments as have been approved by a majority (4) members of the GB shall be submitted to the members for– sanctioned GIGA online voting and may be adopted by a favorable vote of the majority of the members voting. Bylaws may be amended by the GB by majority vote during each official GIGA meeting.

Article 6, FISCAL YEAR. The Treasurer shall handle all revenue for GIGA, maintain accounting books and disperse funds when needed in conjunction with the GB, on an annual basis, from 1 - January to 31 December. Banking records will be made available to legal agencies for audits, e.g. to maintain non-profit status when requested. Transfer of Treasurer duties (bank account information) will be tracked by at least two current and incoming GB officers. The Bank to be used will be recognized internationally and easily accessible for online business.

Article 7 Policy on harassment, discrimination and liability

GIGA Meeting organizers are dedicated to providing a safe, hospitable, and productive environment for all members and attendees. Accordingly, GIGA prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment. Behavior that undermines the integrity of intellectual discourse and fair interactions will not be tolerated. This applies to all meetings, conference participants, social media, including staff, volunteers, and attendees. If a participant engages in harassing or discriminatory behavior, the GIGA organizers reserve the right to take action ranging from a simple warning to the offender to expulsion from the event and community. Any question or concern about this policy or a need to report an incident involving yourself or another person, should be conducted by contacting any member of the Local Organizing Committee or the Governing Board.

GIGA takes such issues seriously and will maintain confidentiality (unless legally compelled otherwise). Neither GIGA nor the GIGA Meeting organizers shall be responsible for any defamatory, offensive, or illegal conduct of Meeting participants, and shall not be held liable for personal injury, property damage, theft or damage of any kind suffered by the participants at or in connection with the GIGA Meeting.

Footnotes

- Misconduct can constitute cases of scientific fraud, racial discrimination and inappropriate sexual behavior, misbehavior at GIGA conferences.–
- B- Lewin et al 2018 - <http://www.pnas.org/content/115/17/4325>