

Intern Exit Interview Summary SoCal BSI 2005

Comments are from 14 first year interns interviewed for 20 minutes each during the last week of the program. Numbers before each issue indicate the number of interns who identified the issue indicated in bold (Specific comments, paraphrased or direct quotations, follow each issue.) Red indicates domains indicated by previous SoCal BSI interns.

1) **What part of the SoCal BSI Program met or exceeded your expectations? Please explain why or how.**

7 **Didactic training** – great overview of biological sections and basic intro to programming, exposure to new discipline, probability and statistics and microarray workshops, variety of experts teach each workshop, broad coverage, but could have used more time on probability and statistics, gives good idea about breath of required knowledge

7 **Internship** – real research project, several people at one site helps build network, met great people, real project – like in grad school, helpful for career – confirmed bioinformatics is an appropriate career path

4 **Overall program and its organization** – learned more than thought would, “people were really nice” – Jennifer and PIs did a great job, personal attention, everyone helpful

3 **Didactic faculty/PIs** – friendly and helpful, interest in interns, extremely helpful and caring

3 **Focus on Presentation skills** – saw peers improve substantially

3 **Interns** – got exposure to other work sites through other interns

2 **Research mentors** – very positive relationship with mentor

2 **Development of friends/professional network**

2 **Friday Professional Development Sessions**

1 **“Real world experience”**

1 **Choice of internship site**

1 **Mentor presentations** – ability to talk with research mentors at their presentations/other events

- 1 **Evaluation of Program** – nice to see previous evaluations on website
- 1 **Overall experience at internship site** – clear expectations from mentors
- 1 **program intensity** – helps improve on weaknesses
- 1 **car pools to internship site**
- 2) **What part of the SoCal BSI Program disappointed you? Please explain your response and/or suggest ways to improve the program with respect to the issue that you have identified.**
- 9 **Friday professional development sessions** – harsh criticism, critiques largely negative – please add some positive comments, disorganized and often ran long, intense and took away from internship, harsh instead of constructive and almost always ran long, overly critical generally, but particularly toward women, need computational faculty there to provide appropriate feedback
- 8 **Didactic training** – short time to understand complex concepts, redundant if intern has prior bioinformatics background and programming section could be extended, programming phase not general enough, split into 2 sessions based on previous background, assignments should be more challenging, more statistics, better step-by-step directions, need more database training, long days and sometimes workshops need info from later in didactic phase
- 7 **Internship project** – descriptions misleading, extent of prior programming experience, some mentors did not offer help but waited for requests from intern, availability of mentors
- 5 **Housing** – last minute changes, expensive, no Internet access
- 2 **Commute to internship site** – ½ day at worksite versus CSLA a problem
- 2 **Favoritism by program PIs**
- 2 **Interns** – poor work ethic/attitude
- 1 **disorganized schedule** – often last minute changes
- 1 **orientation of program** – advertised as CS, but really biology

3) Would you recommend the SoCal BSI Program to a friend? Please answer either NO, YES, or YES WITH RESERVATIONS. Please explain your response.

- 1 NO, perceives problems for women
- 6 YES, practical aspects of program, good program and helped me to decide not to go into bioinformatics as a career, can use various aspects of program on resume, paid internship is a plus, good general intro to field
- 7 YES WITH RESERVATIONS, good for people with prior programming experience, will receive general versus specific background, do not count on getting desired internship, good for basic bioinformatics background

4) Do you have any other comments about the SoCal BSI Program that you would like to make at this time?

- be more understanding about unplanned events that impact attendance
- issues with transcripts
- interns need sheet with contact information/required documents prior to beginning of institute
- program should ease certain issues at worksites
- found out that bioinformatics is not for them
- "I had a really good time."
- some expenses not reimbursed
- "Really great program."
- transportation an issue
- some projects seemed like straight CS versus bioinformatics/research projects
- "great experience and obviously helped me"
- now plan to make a career of bioinformatics
- networking was good
- need better organization and communication with CSLA facilities
- "I think the program is really cool."
- maybe more social events needed to help interns make personal contacts
- do not use computer room if computers are not needed for workshops