

Intern Exit Interview Summary

Comments are from 11 first year interns interviewed for 30 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 SoCal BSI interns in 2006. (Questions #4-10 were added in 2006.)

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

7 Internship – off campus research sites; “great” that actually involved data analysis and interpretation versus just a programming project; more freedom than I thought that I would have

4 Didactic training – learned biology; diversity of topics; gained more knowledge than expected

3 Living with and getting to know other students – “learned a lot from them”; contact before program very useful

3 Research Mentor – easily available and helpful

2 Didactic Faculty/PIs – “cared about learning”; interaction in didactic phase

2 Overall Program and its Organization – general exposure to how bioinformatics is actually used

1 Friday Professional Development Sessions – speaker lunches

1 Housing

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.

10 Friday professional development sessions – sessions long and tedious (n=4)
[maybe stagger people every other week (n=4), use alternate Fridays for formal didactic training/practice in some aspect of presentation skills, i.e. M+M’s, Intro, Results, etc. (n=2)]; **redundant to present each week (n=5)**
[maybe stagger people every other week (n=4), “excessive to give same talk over and over”, “waste of my time”, maybe write progress reports instead and then give final presentation (n=2), everyone would present on the final day – 10-noon, lunch break, then afternoon session]; **comment cards often had “humorous” versus useful critiques; flip charts not useful; critiques are**

informal but expectations are very formal; NWP should be at more sessions – need more CS input (n=2); input should be “useful” versus “just critical” (n=5) [focus on style, better to correct grammar “behind the scenes” (n=3)]; forced to miss weekly lab meetings to attend; Friday room “not appropriate” [informal, while for final presentations room was formal]; lunches, seminars and dinners should not all occur in one day; could miss a couple sessions with “no ill effect” [could have used time for research project]

6 Didactic training – repeat of former coursework; have a more advanced training opportunity; more depth needed in didactic phase so perhaps tie all topics to a single overarching topic (disease) - then lectures/workshops would mirror research experience; too fast; sequence alignment coverage is too extensive for what is currently required in research phase and UCSC genome browser should be covered; hard to get instructors who clearly know both biology and CS; instructors other than CS did not clearly relate topics to bioinformatics; software in classrooms is outdated; more CS work needed; Python programming frustrating (problems with translating from pseudo code to Python and debugging in time allotted); “brutal”, “grueling”, and “mentally exhausting”

6 Internship project – should be longer (n=1); expected more wet lab work; no physical spot in research lab; “less than organized” and would have liked more direction; not partnered well (n=2) [partner was “loaner” and project did not “come together”, partner “useless”, “did no work on project at all”, “didn’t care about project”, “played video games”, “actually took a nap once”, “didn’t have qualifications for project” – perhaps do individual projects]; projects were “small” and parts of larger projects

5 Housing – no Internet access (n=4) [should be arranged by Program in advance or students informed that it will be their responsibility to establish, safety issue with going to housing office at night to access]; access to amenities (gym, library, etc.)

2 Research mentor – could have had goals and deadlines; not aware of how program works

2 Overall program – disjointed because focused on research; make sure that it is clear that lunches are not provided on a daily basis by the program

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

0 NO

4 YES

7 **YES WITH RESERVATIONS**, housing (n=1); if interested in bioinformatics (n=1); if significant programming experience (n=3); if no prior experience with material in didactic phase (n=1); if thinking of Ph.D. (n=1)

4) **What would you suggest would be a valuable second year experience for returning So Cal BSI students?**

9 **Current format OK**

3 **Continue 1st year project**

3 **Have 2nd year students host a non-academic event/live with 1st years**

3 **TAing responsibilities not useful**

1 **More advanced didactic phase**

5) **Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the usefulness of the didactic phase of the institute, with 1 being essential to your success in the research phase and 10 being completely unimportant to your success in the research phase of the institute.**

Mean = 5.1 (3-8) (n=1, already had information in prior coursework, n=4, did not use material in research project)

6) **Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the usefulness of the professional development phase of the institute, with 1 being essential to your success in the overall institute's program and 10 being completely unimportant to your success in the overall institute's program.**

Mean = 5.5 (3-9) (n=3, would have liked more speakers/lunches)

7) Why were you attracted to a program offering you a summer bioinformatics internship?

- 5 Wants to combine knowledge of CS and Biology**
- 3 Wanted to decide about appropriateness of research career**
- 3 Wanted a research experience in biology/bioinformatics**
- 2 Wanted to learn about biotechnology/bioinformatics**
- 1 Professional in field suggested it**
- 1 Wanted to see other campuses**
- 1 Wanted a program to bridge undergraduate and graduate programs**

8) Why did you choose the So Cal BSI program versus other summer bioinformatics programs?

- 7 Location**
- 5 Wide range of internships** – knew available sites; wide range of sites – but industrial sites “dried up” (n=2)
- 2 Accepted to this program**
- 1 Professor/Mentor recommended**
- 1 Only one aware of**
- 1 Pay**
- 1 Information available about program** – longest history; website
- 1 Timing of program**
- 1 Did not want Bioengineering**

9) Overall, do you feel that you achieved your goals as related to this Institute?

8 Yes

2 Partially (n=1, would have liked to work more on programming skills)

1 No (less direction than in previous internships)

10) Did you enjoy the dinners formally organized and attended by the institute PIs?

10 YES

1 NO

(n=5) “sometimes awkward”, (n=2) Friday is bad

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

- wishes that JM taught more
- let students know that they will need to supply their own transportation
- “its been fun”
- People would be motivated to join institute for pay, but not want to learn bioinformatics
- Order of final presentations should be available earlier
- “we all wish we had a couple more weeks”
- “some projects were more manageable than others”