

**Summary of Responses to Final Questions posed to NIH-NSF Southern California Bioinformatics Summer Institute (held at California State University, Los Angeles) Mentors in Summers 2003-2005. There were 28 mentors of record over the 3-year period. The comments below reflect input over this period from 22 mentors of record or functional mentors to the institute interns (5 in 2003, 4 in 2004, and 13 in 2005). Items are listed in rank order for the complete 3-year time period. The number of mentors who identified each item is indicated to the left of the item. The years that an item was identified and the rank (average for ties) for the item that year are indicated in parentheses following the items. Totals may exceed 22 if some mentors entered several responses to a question. Interesting direct quotes or paraphrased comments are included following each item.**

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

**12 Quality/enthusiasm of students** (2003/1, 2004/1, 2005/1) – “better than expected”; 2 X “quality of students exceeded expectations”; “not impressed by student files, yet very impressed by final student presentations”; “abilities soon carried them into more complex participation”; intern made major contribution to the company; “Interns were bright and willing to do what was asked.”; “great, well prepared students”; accomplished “a lot of work”; impressed by intern’s “work ethic and maturity”

**3 well organized program** (2003/2.5, 2004/2) – better than expected

**1 nature of internship sites** (2003/2.5) – small start-up company offers unique experience

**1 program evaluation** (2004/3)

**2) What part of your involvement in 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.**

**16 length of internship too short** (2003/1, 2005/2) - didactic section now “cuts into internship” – perhaps overlap internship (start week 2) into didactic phase and have some material as a required prerequisite to the institute or as on-line tutorials?

**16 matching of students to internships needs improvement** (2003/5.5, 2004/2, 2005/2) - “has improved”, occurs too early so some internships are not “good matches”; interns appear to use lab websites versus actual project descriptions when choosing sites; mentors mention later that they need to develop better defined project descriptions and write brief descriptions of desired qualifications for project so interns can make better informed choices; mentors also note that they need to think of a range of possible projects and then match their assigned intern to an appropriate project, should produce greater levels of satisfaction for both interns and mentors; mentors ask that the institute require interns to fill out a form indicating level of interest in various types of bioinformatics projects and also have the interns write a short description of their perceived strengths and weaknesses so that matching is more efficient – current required resumes were not seen as useful to the process; “time is lost when interns shuffle among mentors”; would like to see resume or list of projects and technical skills for interns

**13 Communication with mentors re. Didactic phase** (2005/2) – mentors do not know what is covered in the didactic phase, i.e. what bioinformatics knowledge/skills interns bring to internships – give mentors access to didactic faculty evaluations so they know desired outcomes for workshops

**4 admissions standards for interns/screening should be higher/better** (2003/2.5, 2004/2) - C programming skills weak, “it is very difficult to find anything meaningful to do for someone with little or no background knowledge”

**2 Extreme time constraints on mentors (2003/2.5)**

**2 lack of intern enthusiasm for project (2005/4)** – “had not been a problem in the past”; “students should do some background reading before first day at internship site”

**2 nothing (2004/2)**

**2 problems with support at worksite (2003/5.5, 2004/4)** – paperwork at research site

**1 work schedule (2003/5.5)** – academic versus 9-5

**1 much work in industry is proprietary (2003/5.5)**

**3) Would you recommend to a colleague that they accept an intern in the SoCal BSI Program? Please answer either NO, YES, or YES WITH RESERVATIONS. Please explain your response.**

**20 YES or YES WITH RESERVATIONS** – large labs so that time impact on mentor is smaller; depends on specific needs of receiving lab; if in LA and have a match to the BSI theme; “I learned a lot by mentoring the interns.”; internship must be viewed by mentors as an “educational experience” for the students (as opposed to a benefit to the mentors) – note that this attitude requires a specific type of individual (specifically interested in mentoring and interacting with the intern); expectations for completion of a project must be tempered/realistic – something that can be completed in 6 weeks; projects should be tailored to the specific intern; “beneficial to both interns and mentors”; “good experience, would recommend it to other colleagues”

**2 No answer**

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

- Try to tailor didactic phase to individual student backgrounds
- Very impressed with student work/presentations
- Major problem in future may be too many well-qualified students will apply
- Student presentation evaluation form is long – maybe convert to scantron?
- The mentors need feedback (another mentor told me this informally at the final presentations)
- “Thanks for making it happen!”
- “Thanks again for letting us participate.”
- Consider including the mentors in the intern selection process
- Group considered asking interns to suggest their own internship projects, but discarded the idea because the students were “not mature enough yet”