How it all got started

Manuel Corpas
Imagine no Student Council

- No ISCBSC website
- No RSGs
- No SCSs
- No dedicated support/maillists for ISCB students
- No student social events at ISCB conferences
Students were

- On our own
- Not believed to be reliable
- Assumed they had no active role in the Society
NINJAS vs PROFESSORS
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

NINJAS

- Experts in methods of subterfuge
- Employs assortment of lethal weapons
- Can kill you without remorse
- Always shown wearing the same outfit
- Wears a hood
- Hurls Shurikens
- People think they’re pretty cool
- Shrouded in mystery

PROFESSORS

- Experts in methods no longer used
- Employs a bunch of lazy peons (you)
- Can kill your career or worse
- Always wears the same outfit
- Wears a hood at graduation
- Hurls when you present your research
- They think they’re pretty cool
- Shrouds you in misery
2003 UCSD Internship at Phil Bourne’s lab

- Just stepped down as ISCB President
- Next door to then current President: — Mike Gribskov
- UCSD: official location of ISCB
- BJ Morrison located at UCSD
The initial proposal (from a nobody)

- Done with the help of ISCB’s exec officer (BJ)
- To be discussed by the BoD
- Submitted in September 2003
PROPOSAL FOR CREATION OF AN ISCB STUDENT COUNCIL

Introduction

Young scientists can be enthusiastic, ambitious, and full of ideas. They usually have more time than any of the senior colleagues to dedicate to the implementation of tasks within the organization. Many young bioinformaticians are asking themselves how they could be more involved with the Bioinformatics community. Within the Bioinformatics world, the International Society of Computational Biology (ISCB) aims to be the premier organization dedicated to represent internationally in a single resource the concerns and needs of the bioinformatics research community. In addition, the ISCB also organizes the main world Bioinformatics conference, ISMB, and has adopted Bioinformatics as the official journal of the society.
Preliminary BoD acceptance

- February 2004
- Email to ISCB’s constituency requesting participation
  - 20 people replied interested
Starting a global organisation

Website Content Management
The contents of the ISCB-SC web pages, including newsletters, are provided by the website content management team that is comprised of Student Council members.

Committees
1. **Operations**: Responsible for administration of the Student Council.

2. **Marketing**: Develops & implements campaigns to increase awareness of Student Council activities and opportunities.

3. **Events**: Coordinates opportunities for student and trainee interactions at career-related workshops, scientific conferences, and networking events.

4. **Business Relations**: Promotes relationships with other organizations.

5. **Outreach**: Strives to increase internship, scholarship, and mentoring opportunities.
The Official Approval

- ISMB Glasgow 2004
- BoD 50/50 divided
  – Provisional “yes”
Some “feedback”

• Not sure this was going to work
• Too much responsibility for students
• SC viewed as a personal exercise on self-aggrandisement
• Concerns about insurance coverage for Society in case things go wrong
The Official Set Up

• SC was effectively “another” committee
• Annual elections
• By selecting “Student Council” tick box in the ISCB joining form you effectively became part of the SC’s list
Why having an SC?

- To enable young computational biology students to have an active role within the Society
- A great professional opportunity to learn leadership skills
- An incredible network of support
  – And a place for meeting life long friends!
IMPACT
of the ISCB Student Council

Nils Gehlenborg

ISCB Student Council Chair 2008 – 2009
Student Representative on ISCB Board of Directors 2010 – 2011
Catering to needs of students

ISCB

Influencing direction of the society
Regional Student Groups

PLoS Article Series

Website and Social Media
The sky is the limit.
Jeroen de Ridder

Student Council Chair 2010 - 2011
Looking back...

• What did I learn from actively participating in the student council?
Learning from mentors

“I am going to teach you to become a good Student Council Leader!”
Learning to say no

He’s a SC leader
Learn to reflect

“Not THAT kind of reflection!”
Learning to network

THE SUCCESSFUL NETWORKER...

Maybe she is a good RSG volunteer...

HOW THE HELL ARE YOU? IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE RIDING YOUR TRAM - MY NAME'S SIMON...
Learning to lead

He really changed during his time in the SC...
Have fun!
Think about the future

“I’m sorry, but it says here that you did not join the Student Council”
Dr Geoff Macintyre

Student Council Chair 2011-2013
The ISCB Student Council 2011-2013

Our journey

....on the shoulders of giants.....
The *A* team
The *A* team
How it all started

Winter School in Computational Biology, Brisbane Australia, 2007

Formation of COMBINE, Melbourne, Australia 2007

First SCS, Toronto, Canada, 2008

RSG Australia affiliation, 2009

Oral presentation at SCS, Boston, 2010
The Challenges

Co-ordinate the council across timezones and cultures

Now know how to collaborate internationally
The Challenges

Present to the ISCB Board of Directors

Can communicate with anyone!
The Challenges

Reach out to more students

Internship program for developing nations
an education initiative of the ISCB Student Council

Understand the different challenges students face
The challenges

Table of Contents: *PLOS Computational Biology*. Stories from the Road: ISCB Student Council Collection

For the past 10 years the International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB) Student Council has provided events and activities to help support and encourage young budding scientists. This article series, written by past and present student council members, shares some of the trials and tribulations of the ISCB student community. The articles are designed to document the progress of the Student Council, instruct others on what to do (and what not to) when planning activities, and encourage future generations of students to build and maintain a thriving student community.

www.ploscollections.org/iscbstudentscouncil
The challenges

Find ways to reward the council members

Share the SC experience with the broader community
The future

Junior Principal Investigators Meeting

Manuel Corpas elected ISCB Board of Directors member in 2013
The Student Council lifts its members to new heights!

ISMB 2011 – Vienna, Austria