



INSTITUT PASTEUR

Unité de Génétique Moléculaire des Levures

CNRS URA 2171

Dr Rafael Palacios
Coordinator
Undergraduate Program on Genomic Sciences
Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico
Centro de Ciencias Genomicas
Av. Universidad s/n Col. Chamilpa
62210, Cuernavaca, Morelos
Mexico.

Dear Dr Palacios,

My only direct contact with the Undergraduate Program on Genomic Sciences was at the level of the third year in the « Frontier of genomics » part where I have been teaching in 2006. I remember having a class of highly motivated students who were asking numerous and precise questions that demonstrated their very good knowledge of genetics at large and genomics in particular. In addition, the students were clearly able in bioinformatic methods and computation. Quite remarkable for students of this age, they were clearly benefitting from their personal reading of the scientific articles that were distributed to them or others that they had selected themselves. Therefore, they had reach a level of independence which is unusual for students of this level.

Regarding the program in general, it shows an original and very well balanced equilibrium between various aspects of Biology and Mathematics. This is a rare combination in all Universities of the world that are usually slower to adapt to the rapid changes of science. The National Autonomous University of Mexico deserves congratulations for this. It offers a program that corresponds well with the need of education for modern students in Biology in the genomic and post-genomic era. As I understand, this program is very selective and only the very best students are admitted to it, which is of course a condition for success in any innovative teaching program.

Perhaps one of the point for future improvement would be to have the students perform some actual experiments since the very first year. I am not certain if they do or not. Although modern genomics largely become a computer science, the whole of Biology remains significantly embedded in practical, not always logical, affairs that dictate the limits for exploration and set the background for further imagination. It would be wonderful if the

25-28, Rue du Docteur Roux
75724 Paris Cedex 15
Téléphone: +33 (0)1 45 68 84 78
Télécopie: +33 (0)1 40 61 34 56

students could acquire such a vision as soon as possible in order to replace in perspective what they learn in theory.

This being said, I reiterate that the Genomic Sciences program of the National Autonomous University of Mexico is an exceptionally good one and must be continued and extended.

It also happened that I had one student of this program for two months in my laboratory in the summer of 2006. Not only was she a very well educated young woman, but she proved very able with experiments in the lab. She was very dedicated to her work, asking critical questions, working very hard and performing clean and demonstrative experiments. It was always a pleasure to discuss with her the results of her experiments and how they would reply to the questions raised. It was also a pleasure to try to guide her with the possible continuation of the work, where it would lead, the available methods to reach the new goals and in which question of general interest her work would eventually lead her. At each step, this student proved a large autonomy despite her young age and the fact that she was in a foreign environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Dujon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bernard Dujon

Professor of Genetics at University Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris
Professor and Scientific General Director of Institut Pasteur
Member of the French Academy of Sciences