

Dr. Rafael Palacios
Coordinator
Undergraduate Program in Genomic Sciences
National Autonomous University of Mexico

Dear Dr. Palacios,

It is with great pleasure that I provide my evaluation of the Undergraduate Program in Genomic Sciences. After meeting with you and hearing your seminar here at Genentech in December, 2006, I was delighted to accept your invitation to visit the Center for Genomic Sciences at UNAM in August, 2007. I was very impressed with your ideas about creating a learning environment that specifically addressed the innate interdisciplinary nature of genome research. In addition, I was touched by your commitment and belief in the education of students in Mexico. I share this interest in further strengthening the society of my neighbor country, and quality higher education opportunities is a fundamental underpinning of this mission.

During my visit I was impressed even more than I had imagined by the quality of both your program and the students. The curriculum includes courses in the various aspects of biology, computer programming and mathematics that are the basis of genomic research. As a bioinformatician who has conducted numerous research endeavors in this area, I know that each of the skills and biological backgrounds you are teaching is essential to performing this work. In order to do genomic research that makes significant contributions to scientific advancement, one needs to both understand the biology deeply enough to form a meaningful scientific question, and also have the computational and statistical skills to test ideas on a genomic scale.

The students exemplified the quality of the program through their interactions with me throughout my visit. They had

carefully read and discussed my publications beforehand, and during my seminars asked many excellent questions. This demonstrated both their intelligence and studiousness, but also the course design, teaching and mentorship of the faculty. In meeting with various students in small groups, I could sense their motivation and excitement about scientific research. A few were eager to discuss their own research with me and ask for ideas and guidance. Although I am a scientist in a biotechnology company, I also hold an Adjunct Professor in Biology position at San Francisco State University. There, I have taught an undergraduate course for senior level biology majors. The UNAM students compared very well to the students in my class. I was so impressed by the your students that I requested and received approval for a summer intern in my department here at Genentech and am hoping to be able to have a UNAM student take this opportunity.

In summary, I have a high opinion of both the curriculum, faculty and students of the Undergraduate Program in Genomic Sciences at UNAM.

Best regards,
Hilary Clark

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