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

Brussels, Feb 14, 2008

Dear Prof. Palacios,

In answer to your mail from Feb 12, please find hereafter my evaluation of the Undergraduate program in Genomic Sciences.

1) The fact to develop a specific training program on Genomic Sciences is an original and important undertaking. Indeed, in order to meet the new challenges of modern biology, multidisciplinary training will be an absolute requirement, combining good bases in genetics, molecular biology, computer sciences, statistics, …

2) The program is structured in a clear and convenient way. During the first year, students are introduced to the main concepts of the disciplines involved in the multidisciplinary field of genome sciences. These topics are explored in a mode advanced way during the second year. The third year aims at integrating these fields, in order to reach efficient multidicsiplinarity. The research project of the fourth year aims at providing students with a concrete realization in the domain.

3) About the quality of the students, I will only participate to the 2008 teaching in May, but I can already give you my impressions about the audience I had during the courses I gave in 2005 and 2006, respectively. I was favorably impressed by the fact that these students are already familiar with both the mathematical, algorithmical and biological concepts that are required for my courses. Usually, I am speaking to audiences who have a good training in one of these disciplines, and almost no background for the other ones.

4) During my previous stages at Cuernavaca, I was also very impressed by the quality of the teaching infrastructure: classrooms are equipped with one terminal per student, thereby allowing the teacher to go back and forth between theory and practice. This is in my opinion the most efficient way to keep the attention of students, and to associate the concepts to a practical experience. Actually, since I came back to Brussels, I tried to convince my Faculty to equip some teaching rooms on the LCG model, for our Master program in Bioinformatics.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you need additional information.

Bets regards,

Jacques van Helden
Chargé de cours at ULB
Director of the BiGRe laboratory