

Best Practices for NIMBioS Investigative Workshops

NIMBioS Investigative Workshops focus on a broad topic or set of related topics at the interface of biology and mathematics and have relatively large size (30-40 participants). Workshops attempt to summarize/synthesize the state of the art and identify future directions, and they have potential for leading to one or more future Working Groups. Workshops meet at NIMBioS just once for 2-3 days. This document describes some *best practices* for conducting a successful NIMBioS Workshop.

Before the Workshop:

- *At least two weeks before the Workshop*, provide participants with a clear but flexible agenda for the Workshop, including the overall goals. *Flexibility is important*--Be prepared for last minute schedule changes from cancellations due to a variety of reasons.
- Have participants provide short introductions (1 brief paragraph) on the Group's "Wiggio." The Wiggio is an online communication tool for posting agendas and other documents as well as emailing all participants. NIMBioS will establish a Wiggio for each Workshop. Watch for an email from "NIMBioS Admin" <workshopname@wiggio.com> notifying you that you have access.
- *At least two weeks before the Workshop*, provide participants via the Wiggio site access to relevant background information related to the Workshop topic (e.g. papers, presentations, datasets). Organizers should also ask participants to post resources they feel are relevant to the topic as well.
- Select a subset of participants to give presentations on topics focused on the goals of the Workshop (e.g. needed background, available data, existing models). Ensure that presenters and co-organizers are clear about what their roles will be in the upcoming Workshop.

During the Workshop:

- *On the first day of the Workshop*, have participants briefly introduce themselves and give their research perspectives on the goals of the group.
- *At the start of each day*, communicate the objectives for the day to the group.
- Remember that everyone in the group has different levels of expertise in different areas. Allow for plenty of questions and discussion after presentations.
- If forming subgroups within the group, ensure that participants in each subgroup clearly understand their objectives. Link these objectives to the larger Workshop goals.
- Ensure that participants in each subgroup understand how their work will tie in to the work of the other subgroups to achieve the overall Workshop goals.
- Be organized, but flexible. Allow new ideas to be explored, but keep the group focused on the ultimate Workshop goals.
- Before the conclusion of the Workshop:
 - Identify potential Working Groups that could arise from the Workshop and define who will take the lead in preparing the Working Group applications; and
 - if publications or products will result from the Workshop, define the products that will be produced and who will take the lead in organizing the creation of the product(s).

After the Workshop:

- *Immediately following the Workshop*, write an informal summary of the main ideas/activities of the meeting and post it to the Wiggio site for all participants to reference.
- *Within two weeks of the conclusion of the Workshop*, provide the necessary reports to NIMBioS via email to the Associate Director for Scientific Activities Sergey Gavrilets (sergey@nimbios.org). Click here for information on what to report: http://nimbios.org/research/reporting_requirements
- Submit Workshop-related Working Group applications to NIMBioS, if applicable.
- Post presentation slides from the Workshop on the Wiggio site.
- Follow-up with Workshop participants who have volunteered to submit working group applications and/or lead production of publications and/or products to monitor progress and address any issues that arise.
- Be sure to report to NIMBioS any publications or other products that arise from work related to the Workshop. Click here for suggested acknowledgment formats and information about press releases: <http://nimbios.org/research/acknowledgment> Click here for NIMBioS logo image files for inclusion in presentations about NIMBioS-related work: <http://nimbios.org/logos/> Results may be reported here: <http://nimbios.org/research/products>.