

Minutes: First *Aspergillus* Meeting (April 21, 2004)

The provisional AGRPC (*Aspergillus* Genomes Research Policy Committee, members: Steve Osmani, Michelle Momany, Jiujiang Yu, Masayuki Machida, Marco Van Den Berg and Cees van del Hondel, chaired by David Denning) was conscripted during the *Aspergillus* Genomics workshop at the 2003 Asilomar Fungal Genetics Meeting and charged with creating a structure for community-wide coordination and organizing an annual meeting. The First Meeting of the *Aspergillus* Genomes Research Group (AGRG) was held in Copenhagen, April 21, 2004, as a satellite meeting of ECFG-7. There were 160 registered participants.

STATUTES: Statutes proposed by the provisional AGRPC were disseminated before the meeting and appeared in the program. During discussion of the statutes there was concern that the proposed election of at-large representatives rather than species-specific representatives might disadvantage those from some regions or smaller research communities. Several points were raised in response: (1) The *Aspergillus* research community should not be viewed as those working on individual species, rather it should encompass all Aspergilli since diversity and the power of comparative genomics are two of our major strengths; (2) the proposed statutes allow the committee to appoint representatives from the community as needed to correct inequities; (3) the Fungal Genetics Policy Committee has ensured diversity by considering under representation when nominating those who run for the committee. This model has worked well. A vote was taken on whether we should change the statutes to include species-specific representatives. Only 8 of the 160 voted for changing the statutes, so the change was not introduced. The unamended statutes were unanimously approved.

ELECTION OF THE AGRPC: There were 13 nominees from 8 countries working with 6 *Aspergillus* species. Meeting participants each cast two votes. To facilitate rotation, committee members' terms were assigned as 1, 2 or 3 years. In the future all terms will be for 3 years. The following were elected: 1 year terms: Gerhard Braus (Germany, *A. nidulans*) and Jiujiang Yu (USA, *A. flavus*); 2 year terms: Michelle Momany (USA, *A. nidulans* and *A. fumigatus*), Masayuki Machida (Japan, *A. oryzae*) and Cees van den Hondel (Netherlands, *A. niger* and *A. nidulans*); 3 year terms: Paul Dyer (UK, *A. fumigatus*) and Michael Hynes (Australia, *A. nidulans*). For the upcoming year the committee choose Michelle Momany as chair, Cees van den Hondel as meeting organizer and Paul Dyer as treasurer.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES DISCUSSIONS

1. **MICROARRAYS:** There was quite a bit of discussion on microarrays and this seemed to be the top priority for many attending. *A. nidulans* researchers had met the day before to discuss this topic. The only clear consensus was that people want microarrays as soon as possible. Three types of arrays were discussed: Affymetrix, cDNA and short amplicons. Jens Neilsen had estimates on Affymetrix that with enough interest to order 240 arrays each chip would run 500 Euros (~\$592USD). It was pointed out that the *Fusarium* community had gotten a grant to pay for Affy chips and that this might be a possibility to offset costs. Bill Neirman of TIGR said they could generate amplicons that cost ~\$6/slide and roughly \$100 for reagents on each experiment. He pointed out that some communities had formed consortia for array purchases.

2. DATABASE: It was suggested that we really need an “SGD-like” database for Aspergilli. This also seemed to have a lot of support from attendees. Michael Anderson explained that such a database (CADRE) was in progress for *A. fumigatus* with plans to expand to other Aspergilli. He later presented a talk on the CADRE database.

3. ASPERGILLUS RESOURCES WEBPAGE: It was suggested that a webpage listing *Aspergillus* Resources should be assembled by the committee and posted. There was a great deal of support for this idea.

4. SUGGESTED OTHER *ASPERGILLUS* SPECIES TO SEQUENCE: *A. sydowii* (marine coral pathogen and source of echinocandin drugs); Aspergilli closely related to *A. nidulans*, *A. fumigatus* or *A. oryzae* to give comparative power; Aspergilli that cause sick building syndrome.

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Kevin McCluskey, curator of the FGSC pointed out that curator serves as an *ex officio* member of the Fungal Genetics and *Neurospora* Policy Committees and volunteered to do the same for the AGRPC (this was later enthusiastically approved by the newly elected committee).
2. *Penicillium marneffei* and *Penicillium chrysogenum* genomes have been sequenced. How to get them in public domain should be investigated.
3. Joan Bennett suggested that subcommittees might be needed for certain topics such as gene nomenclature.
4. Michael Anderson presented nomenclature recommendations that will be posted online.

RESOURCES

Meeting participants volunteered to make the following resources available:

1. Microarrays are being made for *A. oryzae*. If people are interested in getting arrays they can participate, but must contact Masayuki Machida before August (M.machida@aist.go.jp).
2. The USDA laboratory in New Orleans has completed the *Aspergillus flavus* EST project. Over 7,000 non-redundant EST sequences will be released soon through NCBI GenBank Database. The *A. flavus* Gene Index, constructed based on the EST data, will be available for access at TIGR web site (<http://www.tigr.org/tdb/tgi/>) and the *Aspergillus flavus* web site (<http://www.aspergillusflavus.org/>). An *A. flavus* amplicon microarray (over 5,000 elements) has been constructed and is being tested. Currently no funding mechanism has been worked out for supplying microarrays to the community. For more information, please contact Jiujiang Yu (jiuyu@srrc.ars.usda.gov).
3. C. D’Enfert and G. Goldman have made a 4000 *A. nidulans* EST collection and will deposit a nonredundant set with FGSC.
4. Steve Osmani has made *A. nidulans* two-hybrid libraries, which will be deposited with FGSC.
5. Reinhard Fischer has made mRFP, sGFP, BFP, YFP and CFP vectors along with *A. nidulans* strains with organelles labeled and will make these available through FGSC.