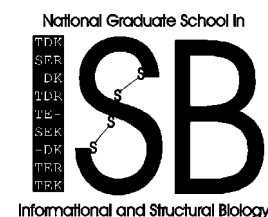


National Graduate School in Informational and Structural Biology



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Dear Members of the Graduate School,

We hope to see everyone in Lapland and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In this issue of the **ISB Newsletter**, we highlight the following:

1. [Talking point: Writing!](#)
2. [Hall of Fame, Congratulations!!](#)
3. [New supervisors](#)
4. [New students joining the school 2003-2006](#)
5. [Revised ISB Handbook](#)

Talking point: Writing!

“Mark! what is rule number 7?” The question was asked of me only a few years ago and by my Ph.D. supervisor Professor Russell Doolittle when he visited Finland. “Omit needless words!” I immediately replied, with complete confidence that this time I did know the answer. When I was a graduate student, 1982-1986, we played these question-answer games from the first day that I began studies in “RD’s” laboratory. This was how he taught students. RD taught me how to approach writing. I cannot say that he taught me to write because it has taken many years of pain and practice and I am still learning. I think writing is too hard to teach, but everyone can develop the skills with lots and lots of practice. RD’s approach to writing was two-fold. First, I got the required copy of Strunk and White and learned the 13 rules of writing (hence rule number 7). Second, I wrote, I presented my text and then both of us spent hours together, crafting every word of the text over, and over and over again. RD’s own special rule is “revise, revise, revise” and then keep revising until you wouldn’t alter a single word. The process was hard, it was painful, but it works and I still use that method today.

For nearly all of us English is not the mother tongue and, unfortunately, Finnish or Swedish are not the languages used internationally for peer-reviewed publications. The sad fact is that all graduate students need to develop skills in written scientific communication in English before they graduate. This means you need to write and write and write, and if your supervisor is doing all of the writing for you, he or she is not doing you any great favor. You need to suffer through the writing process in order to get the skills that you will need after you graduate, whether you plan to go on in science with postdoctoral studies or you plan a career in industry.

Now, would the person who borrowed my copy of Strunk and White please return it to me!

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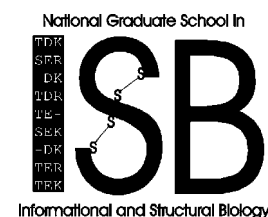
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Hall of Fame, Congratulations!!

Michael Okoh defended his academic dissertation on 22 November 2002: "Molecular and biophysical analysis of the non-catalytic PH, TH, SH3 and SH2 domain of Bruton tyrosine kinase (Btk) protein". Michael has been a graduate student in ISB since 1998 in the research group of Mauno Vihinen, Department of Biosciences, Division of Biochemistry, University of Helsinki.

Fredrik Ollila defended his academic dissertation on 22 November 2002: "Characterizing the interactions of small molecules with lipid membranes and cyclodextrins". Fredrik is a member of Peter Slotte's research group and joined the school in 2001. Fredrik has accepted a position with Novartis in Switzerland.

Professor Erkki Soini (University of Turku) has retired and appears to be extremely happy.

Lotta von Ossowski (Söderholm) was married on August 17th !

New supervisors

We would like to welcome the following new research groups, industrial collaborators, and postdoctoral researchers that joined the school during the Summer and Fall:

Professor Liisa Holm, Institute of Biotechnology, University of Helsinki;

Professor Pekka Hänninen, Institute of Medical Biophysics, University of Turku;

Dr. Markus Linder, VTT Biotechnology;

Professor Emeritus Pekka Mäntsälä, Department of Biochemistry and Food Chemistry;

Dr. Jarmo Niemi, Department of Biochemistry and Food Chemistry;

Professor Emeritus Ossi Renkonen, Biomedicum-Helsinki;

Professor Pirkko Vihko, Biocenter Oulu and Research Center for Molecular Endocrinology, University of Oulu.

Ari Aalto, CEO, AiLab Solutions, Helsinki; and

Dr. Piero Pollesello, Orion Corp.

Two postdoctoral researchers have joined the school:

Dr. Pekka Lehtovuori, CSC IT Center for Science and

Dr. Tomi Airene, Department of Biochemistry and Pharmacy, Åbo Akademi University.

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New students joining the school

2003-2006

The school received 25 applications for the twelve Ministry of Education funded positions. All 25 applications were of “excellent” quality and all applicants were invited to join the school.

Three funded positions were awarded to students that are presently members of the school:

Vesa Hytönen, M.Sc. (protein structure engineering; JY; Prof.

Kulomaa);

Krister Karlsson, M.Sc. (structures of cyanobacterial toxins; ÅA; Doc. Meriluoto);

Heidi Kidron (X-ray crystallography; ÅA; Dr. Salminen)

Nine new students were awarded funding for 4 years:

Jan-Jonas Filén (proteomics and bioinformatics; CBT; Prof. Lahesmaa);

Kai Fredriksson (NMR for structure determination; HY; Prof. Annala);

Johanna Jokinen (protein structure-function analysis; JY; Prof. Heino);

Pauli Kallio (protein engineering; TY; Prof. Mänsälä, Dr. Niemi);

Elina Kuokkanen (X-ray crystallography; TY, Univ. Tromsø, Norway; Dr. Heikinheimo);

Virve Rauhamäki (biophysics; HY; Prof. Verkhovsky, Doc. Puustinen);

Lotta Salminen (structural determination of carbohydrates; Biomedicum; Prof. O. Renkonen);

Annu Söderholm (bioinformatics, drug discovery; CSC; Dr. Nyrönen, Dr. Lehtovuori);

Géza Szilvay (structure-function of hydrophobins; VTT Biotechnology; Dr. Linder)

Tarmo Nuutinen (structure-function DNA/chromatin; JoY; Prof. Syväoja) was placed on the waiting list and will receive partial funding from ISB.

Jiri Lisal (macromolecular assemblies; HY; Dr. Tuma);

Tuomas Nikula (microarrays, bioinformatics, biocomputing; CBT; Prof. Lahesmaa); are funded by their supervisors.

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Revised ISB Handbook

The ISB Handbook has been revised! The 2nd Edition of the ISB Handbook incorporated changes and additions that we hope will make the school more efficient and effective. We have added a section on scientific ethics and a list of important deadlines on the back page of the Handbook. Everyone should have received a copy along with this Newsletter. The text is also available as a PDF file on our website www.abo.fi/isb/booklet.pdf.

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