

Bioinformatics Librarian Services at the University of Florida



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Bioinformatics Librarian



- New position in August 2001; groundwork initiated in 1996
- Housed at the Health Science Center Libraries
- Funded by the U.F. Genetics Institute
- Supervised by Directors of the HSCL and UFGI
- Filled by former reference/cataloging librarian, basic sciences liaison (MLIS; PhD in Biology)
- Intended to support UF genetics and bioinformatics research and education

Bioinformatics Librarian “Liaises” To:



- UF Genetics Institute (umbrella organization)
- College of Medicine
 - Anatomy and Cell Biology
 - Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
 - Molecular Genetics and Microbiology
 - Physiology and Functional Genomics
 - Graduate Students
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
 - Department of Zoology
- College of Agriculture (IFAS)
 - Plant Molecular & Cellular Biology

Bioinformatics Librarian Duties



- Extensive e-mail reference/communication
- Literature & genetics database course development and instruction (most time-consuming)
- Literature & fact-based database searches/consults
- Resource evaluation and selection
- Research and literature summaries
- Citation analysis
- UFGI Executive Board; Co-chair Seminar Comm.
- Data mining (yet to commence)

Resource Instruction



- Course-integrated Instruction:
 - General Genetics (1996-); Biophysical Chem ('99-)
- “Stand-alone” Classes:
 - Clinical Genetics Resources ('00); Molecular Protocol and Model Organisms ('01); NCBI Structures ('02)
- “For-credit” Courses:
 - 15 hr Bioinformatics course for PhD students (Fall '02); semester course in NCBI resources (Spr '03)
- Orientations:
 - Incoming graduate students; new faculty; journal clubs; faculty interviewees; laboratory visits

Research and Literature Summaries



- University Fundraisers
 - Lay-person summaries - why genetics/bioinformatics important; UF projects; donation opportunities
- Health Center Public Relations Office
 - Lay-person descriptions of non-medical UFGI faculty research
- UFGI Executive Board
 - CV of potential faculty recruit - research content, impact on field, info on current laboratory

Bioinformatics Librarian Needs



- Dedicated position
 - Can't be done in librarian's "spare time" (although that's what laid the foundation for the current position)
- Time to think, learn, reflect
 - Librarian's ref desk, teaching, committee work often more than 40 hrs/week - no time for value-added
- Time away from the library
 - To visit labs; attend seminars; sit in on classes/ journal clubs

Barriers to Implementation



- Lack of trained individuals or training programs
- Lack of money or open positions
- Attitudes and Expectations:
 - Librarians - why do I need subject knowledge or evaluation or statistical skills? All I need to do is find information - doesn't matter if I know what it means.
 - Administrators - why are genetics and bioinformatics important to a medical library?
 - Researchers - what can librarians possibly teach us? I search PubMed at my desk-top all the time.

What got our foot in the door ...



- Laying the groundwork, 1995-:
 - Getting all parties to think outside the box - constant patron "education" and librarian visibility
 - Started with General Genetics CII and Ph.D. student orientations to show what could be done
 - Added new classes every year since 1996
- Liaison Librarian Program, 1999-:
 - Librarians specialize, fostering customization, communication, comfort and competence
 - See Tennant et al., *BMLA*, Jan. 2001, 89(1):8-20
 - Informal evaluation and anecdotal evidence suggest success of the program

Liaison Librarians



- “Personal” librarians with subject expertise, who provide:
 - bibliographic instruction
 - literature database searching and consults
 - selection
 - e-journal access assistance, etc.
- Bioinformatics Librarian adds:
 - more formal or technical subject expertise
 - non-bibliographic database searching/instruction
 - information filtering, evaluation, and summarizing

What Library Schools Can Do



- Embrace “bioinformationist” ideals:
 - Require (and support) classes in life sciences, bioinformatics, as well as library and info science
 - Coordinate and credit internships in laboratories as well as libraries (skills and culture)
 - Partner with life sciences departments to develop teaching assistantships and opportunities to teach
 - Bring in bioinformatics librarians to teach short courses; hire faculty in these areas

Continuing Education



- **MLA CE Classes -**
 - Molecular Protocols, Molecular Biology and Genetics for Librarians, Basic NCBI Course (approved)
 - Immunology Made Simple, Clinical Genetics Resources (soon to be submitted)
 - 40 hr NCBI “Advanced” Course (to be submitted for approval by module)
- Encourage MLA to accept multiple “molecular” CE classes at annual meeting

Professional Associations



- Library and Informatics Groups:
 - MLA Molecular Biology and Genomics SIG
 - SLA Biomedical & Life Sciences and Pharmaceutical & Health Technology Divisions
 - AMIA Genomics Working Group
- Provide:
 - Conference programming, networking and support, and continuing education
- Encourage MLA, its members, and institutions to partner with and learn from other organizations