

Building successful collaborations between biology and statistics

17 December 2012, 9.00-13.00, Fogg Lecture Theatre

Organisers: Heiko Grossmann (H.Grossmann@qmul.ac.uk), Richard Buggs (R.Buggs@qmul.ac.uk)

9.00 Introduction (Matthew Evans)

9.15 Success stories (Rosemary Bailey & Daniel Perkins; Heiko Grossmann & Lars Chittka)

Two mixed teams of researchers from Mathematics and Biology will showcase examples of a successful collaboration and report on the experience.

10.00 Discussion: Facilitating collaborations-How to make it happen? (chaired by organisers)

By reflecting on past experience it is hoped to clarify what is needed for initiating and maintaining a successful interdisciplinary work relationship. Question that may be considered include the following: Why the extra effort and what are the incentives? What are the expectations and impediments? What are the routes between Mathematics and Biology: Personal contacts and PhD students only? Why doesn't collaboration happen more often?

10.30 Coffee break (Fogg Foyer)

11.00 Opportunities

What do they do? Brief presentations from statisticians and biologists will give a flavour of potential areas where statisticians can provide and biologists would be interested in getting input. This will allow statisticians to share aspects of their work that biologists can use and biologists to share data sets that need new methods of statistical analysis.

12.00 Discussion: Needs of postgraduate students (led by PhD students)

Contacts between Statistics and Biology frequently emerge from PhD students in SBCS asking for statistical advice. This discussion will focus on the PhD experience and student needs for statistical support. It will also address how Statistics PhD students could become more aware of biological applications for their work.

12.30 Discussion: How to sustain the dialogue and translate it into successful collaborations? (chaired by organisers)

How can we keep the dialogue going? What scope is there for funding of interdisciplinary projects by the research councils (e.g. BBSRC and EPSRC) and other sources?

13.00 Closing and lunch (Fogg Foyer)