Bioc Technical Advisory Board Minutes

2 April 2020

Attending: Stephanie Hicks, Martin Morgan, Laurent Gatto, Charlotte Soneson, Kasper Hansen, Levi Waldron, Aaron Lun, Robert Gentleman, Michael Lawrence, Aedin Culhane
Regrets: Matt Ritchie

Summary: Significant time was spent talking about BioC2020, scheduled for July 29-31 in Boston. This included discussion of whether and how to hold an online conference, for which there was majority support but a final decision was put off until the May meeting. A proposal for creating "Bioconductor awards" for outstanding contributions to the project, to be presented at this and future conferences, was approved contingent on minor modifications. Technical discussions focused on Python integration and basilisk.

Schedule

:00 - :05 2020-03-05 [minutes](#) approved

:05 - :25 Material for review
- **Highlights**
    - AnVIL: binary package installation to Linux - 10's of minutes to 10's of seconds
    - CSAMA postponed to 2021
    - Carpentries update (Laurent)
- Funding
    - [U41](#): (NHGRI; core) Renewal submitted January 24.
    - [U24](#): Monthly coordination meetings; private slack channel
    - [AnVIL](#): https://anvilproject.org: bi-weekly bioc meetings, public [slack](#); weekly tech calls. Bioconductor-specific [progress](#).
    - [CZI seed network](#): monthly meetings, private slack
    - CZI EOSS (Vince)
    - Other opportunities?
        - CZI EOSS call "The third distinct cycle will open mid-June 2020."
- Events
    - BiocAsia: [2020](#): Beijing Oct 17-18.
    - BiocEurope: Padova, Italy - Davide Risso as local host. Date not confirmed yet, but should be as usual in early December, not 8 Dec.
    - [Bioc2020](#): Boston July 29-31. Public [slack](#).
        - Discussion below
    - CSAMA 21-26 June 2020: Postponed to 2021
- Committees
    - Code of Conduct Committee (Levi, with Stephanie). No updates.

- Working groups
    - Carpentries training (Laurent)
    - Developer forum (Michael, Martin)
        - 21+ participants on upcoming release and build system
    - Fluent Genomics (Michael)
    - Build system / continuous integration (Vince)
- Other:
    - European Bioconductor Foundation planning document (Laurent / Wolfgang / Simone B.)

Topics.

:25 - :30 Community Advisory Board ([Governance document](#)) (Matt)
- Nominee status
- Next steps

:30 - :45 BioC2020
- Current planning update (Levi)
    - Contributed talks and workshops, decisions made and sent out
    - Proposal from non-competitive programme committee (led by Charlotte Soneson and Simone Bell) for Bioconductor awards ([link](#))
        - TAB & Bioconductor Foundation supportive of this
        - Clarify criteria for awards, especially 'first package', including who qualifies. More than just one award?
        - Add: engaging new (scientific|informatic) technologies as important criteria
        - Add: Outstanding documentation
        - Create: there should be categories of award, not all given in a single year
        - Proposal is approved by board contingent on above modifications
- Plan:
    - Conference sub-committee exploring virtualization approaches ([link](#))
    - Firm decision on conference format will be made at next (May) TAB meeting
- Financial exposure
    - Approximately $10,000 in deposits for rooms, hotel
    - The Bioconductor Foundation can absorb this, or explore ways to mitigate
- Best route forward
    - Mixed face-to-face and virtual? Pure virtual? Postpone (indefinitely?)?
    - Reduced (but still needed) virtual registration fee
        - costs of 'professional' virtual conference delivery
        - avoid anonymity / retain scientific integrity
    - Solicit invited, contributed talks and workshop contributors about willingness to participate remotely
- Technical brainstorming -- how to do this effectively
    - Brainstorming notes from the [conference committee](#)

- factlet about ENAR conference -- each session had a technical support person on -- don't know the vehicle used or company providing support
- poster approach with short video
- methods for ensuring mixing/random exposure to new ideas
- Zoom breakout rooms
- slid.do question & answer
  - Challenges of a virtual conference?
    - getting out of your own 'echo chamber' via accidental encounters
    - want to retain identity (avoid anonymity) for scientific integrity -- implies registration
    - want to enable **social interaction** -- more important than sharing information via lectures
    - seems to be preference on conference committee for pre-recorded presentations, but with scheduled Q&A rooms / discussion forums / coffee room / … Too many technical challenges with many short live talks.
    - task-oriented, e.g., white-paper / package production on a topic
    - time zones -- local breakout rooms / etc
      - sign-up for activities at different times
    - select keynote talks
    - Panel discussions can work well in a remote setting
    - all talks pre-recorded and available / viewed before interaction rooms
      - Is professional video editing affordable?
    - What about workshops?
      - talk to Carpentries
      - Novice versus expert deliveries; experts looking for exposure to new topics. Short talk / intro and then 2+ hours of Q & A / independent review
      - Have workshops available in advance, so people can try them before attending workshop Q&A
      - Self-organize into topics of interest -- require specific goals -- via slack etc., providing necessary support, e.g., chat
  - Partners / support
    - R consortium
    - Cold Springs Harbor

:45 - :60 Python strategy
- basilisk [motivation](#).
- conda versus other approaches? explored but conda seems to be the current best solution.
- collaboration w/ python community, e.g., Vince & pip people at CZI EOS