

The Bioinformatics Italian Society



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The Bioinformatics Italian Society (BITS) is a non-profit scientific association grounded on 19 June 2003, to gather scientists with interests in the field of Bioinformatics, intended as multidisciplinary science studying biological problems at the molecular level by using informatics and computational methods. The Society has now about 230 members and aims at overcoming 250 in 2012.

Founding members were Rita Casadio, Manuela Helmer-Citterich, Giancarlo Mauri, Luciano Milanese, Graziano Pesole, Cecilia Saccone, and Giorgio Valle. The first elected President was Cecilia Saccone who was in charge until April 2006. Graziano Pesole was then elected President in 2006. Finally, Manuela Helmer Citterich, who had been BITS Secretary since the beginning, was elected President in 2010.

The main aim of the Society, which is a Regional group of the International Society for Computational Biology (ISCB), is the fostering of Bioinformatics in Italy. Its activities include the organization of an annual scientific meeting, the maintenance of a web site and of a mailing list for the distribution of news of interest for the involved community of researchers, the coordination of educational initiatives in Italy, from bachelor to PhD degrees, the coordination of research activities among members, and the promotion of the participation of Italian researchers, both senior and junior, to international events and projects of relevance.

The Society has always devoted a special attention to the needs of young researchers. In

2007, it granted the BITS prize for best bioinformatics PhD thesis, and in 2008 it granted the BITS prize for best bioinformatics research paper from a young researcher. Since 2010, also thanks to the "Preparata" Foundation, it is managing Travel Grants for the participation of young researchers in the BITS Annual Meeting. This initiative already allowed some 50 researchers to attend past and current meetings.

The Society is also paying attention to scientific events at an international level. It awarded three travel grants to young Italian researchers wishing to attend the ISMB/ECCB 2011 Joint Conference in Vienna and is now awarding three more grants for attending the ECCB 2012 Conference in Basel.

BITS is offering its patronage and organization support to scientific events of an international interest which are organized by its members. In the last three years, about 10 such events, including workshops, meetings and courses, were sponsored by BITS.

BITS Steering Committee (in charge until BITS 2012)

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