Taner Z. Sen, Ph.D.

- Lead Scientist, GrainGenes (https://graingenes.org; https://wheat.pw.usda.gov)
- Research Computational Biologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Crop Improvement and Genetics Research Unit, Albany, CA, USA
- Coll. Assist. Prof., Dept. of Genetics, Development, and Cell Biology, Iowa State University

Motivation to run for a position on the ISB Executive Committee

We need to work together as a community to promote the crucial role biocurators plays in science. The creation of the International Society for Biocuration established a sense of community that enabled a critical venue to encourage thinking about the future of biocuration.

If I am elected to the Executive Committee, I will pursue the following priorities in collaboration with the other members of the Society:

1) Strengthening the Biocurators Community: Annual meetings are a great venue for strengthening the community. Creating committees and recruiting scientists can be a good way to enable biocurators to be involved more with the Society. We should also strive to make our annual meetings financially affordable to attract graduate students and postdoctoral research associates to retain them as biocurators.
2) Increasing Recognition of Biocuration by Funding Agencies: Biocurators need funding to accomplish their work. We need to communicate with funding agencies about the need for supporting biocurators through creative funding mechanisms, such as creating specific fellowships for early-career biocurators. Without persistent funding, our ability to attract the best minds to biocuration will deteriorate.
3) Promoting Data and Metadata Standards: The Society should play an instrumental role in recruiting biocurators, PIs, funding agencies, and journal editors to work towards creating standard data formats that can be used by data generators, journals, and databases. Although a herculean task, standardization facilitates biocuration and the Society needs to take a proactive role in the development and adaptation of such standards.

Experience with Biocuration

As a scientist working at biological databases since 2007 (first MaizeGDB and now GrainGenes), my primary role has been to develop creative and useful ways to make curated and computed data available to research communities in a way that adds value to their research. I find it imperative to work with community members to determine how best to deliver scientific information in a way that enables researchers extract useful information out of data, and in a standardized format that is easy to use and share. The best way of accomplishing this task is through collaboration, especially when data generators and biocurators work together to create common solutions.

I have served in the Biophysical Society-Public Affairs Committee between 2008 and 2017, and in the International Society for Computational Biologists-Public Affairs and Policies Committee since 2010. I was part of the International Arabidopsis Informatics Consortium in 2010, and served as a Workshop Co-chair in ACM International Conference on Bioinformatics and Computational Biology in 2011.

Biographical Sketch

2016-present Lead Scientist, Research Computational Biologist, GrainGenes, Albany, CA
2007-2016 Scientist, Computational Biologist, MaizeGDB, Ames, IA
2003-2007 Postdoc, Iowa State University, Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology, Ames, IA
Education Ph.D., University of Akron, Polymer Engineering, Akron, OH, 2003; M.S. & B.S, Bogazici University, Chemical Engineering, Istanbul, Turkey, 1998, 1996

Statement of Conflicts and Other Commitments

Person or organization	**Nature of relationship and/or nature of conflict of interest / committment**
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service	Employment
Iowa State University	Affiliation – Collaborator Assistant Professor
International Society for Computational Biology	Committee Member - Public Affairs and Policies Committee