Administration & Research Support

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Administration

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Petra Saporito
Peter Jahn (part-time, temporary)
Malgorzata Klemm (part-time)
Ursula Schulz (part-time)

External project funding:
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Joachim Gerlach

Purchasing department:
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Carola Baumgarten (on leave)
Ute Müller
Rita Röfke-Bohnau
Kerstin Steudtner (temporary)
Sebastian Klein (trainee, temporary)

Stock room:
Jürgen Joch
Dirk Grönboldt-Santana
Iranmodai Maki (on leave)
Chris Imöhl (temporary)

Guest houses, apartments:
Rosemarie Wolniak (part-time)
Helena Netzer

Reception, post office:
Barbara Gibas (part-time)
Monika Schweizer-Annecke (part-time)

Driver:
Claus Langrock

Overview

In the last several years the central services' work has been determined mainly by the growth of the institute due to the increase in externally funded projects. According to payroll figures, the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics has grown to the fifth largest institute of the Max Planck Society.

However, the number of permanently funded staff positions in the administration could not be increased to adjust the infrastructural backbone to the growing institute. This is important, as the rigorous German industrial law makes temporary employment of service staff extremely difficult. Better legal conditions, which take the particularities of science and research management into consideration, are highly desirable.

Major problems arose from the 2003 collective bargaining round of the state of Berlin. Berlin salary scales now differ significantly from the "Bund" (federal) scales and, at the time of this writing, the Berlin universities were still negotiating individual agreements. It is feared that, as a result, the conditions of employment for the research institutions and universities in Berlin will become more and more heterogeneous and will severely hamper cooperation and flexibility.

Concerning the technical development of the institute, the most important issues in the next several years are the refurbishment of towers I and II and planning the construction of tower III (for details see "Technical Management and Workshops").

Recently, an institute specific cost accounting system within the framework of the Max Planck Society concept has been developed comprising cost type, cost centre, and cost unit accounting. The introduction of cost accounting is supposed to improve resource planning and budgetary control and to maintain financial flexibility despite considerable budget constraints. Primary aims for the coming year are implementing the system and integrating external funding.

In 2003 the personnel department implemented a new personnel administration system (SAP R/3 HR), which facilitates the integration with the accounting system. However, the system requires reorganisation of certain procedures and still needs much improvement. It should take another few months before the system is up and running optimally.

An electronic materials logistic system, to be developed in the next year, will also enable us to connect the storeroom records to the integrated accounting system.

During the last year, a public relations and communication concept for the institute has been developed. Primary aims are promoting an ongoing dialogue with the general public, enhancing in-house communication and, in the long run, establishing public relations as a strategic means.

First steps have been taken to realise this concept. The new institute's website was launched in fall 2001. It now conforms to the corporate design of the Max Planck Society.

A brochure describing the research program and the organisation of the institute is in progress. It will be targeted specifically at the general public.

In June 2002 and 2003 the MPIMG participated in the "Long Night of Sciences", where universities and research institutes in Berlin open its doors to the public. The MPIMG is also engaged in inviting school classes, providing them the opportunity to learn about the institute's research and the researchers' daily work.

Addressing the wider scientific community, the "Dahlem Colloquia", a lecture series with renowned speakers in the field of genome research, has been held since 2001.

Resoundingly successful were the "Science Days" in spring 2002 and 2003. These in-house conferences bring together all research members of the institute for a day of exchange and support inter-departmental communication and co-operation.

An exceptional event was the visit of the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien in February 2002. On this occasion an agreement between the Canadian Institute of Health Research, the Canadian Genetic Disease Network, and the MPIMG was signed to collaborate on the elucidation of human genetic disease using genomic technologies.

Technical Management and Workshops

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In the next several years the renovation and modernisation of the technical infrastructure, as well as the improvement of the structural condition of towers 1 and 2 (constructed 1968-1970) are of utmost importance.

The renovations will encompass the new installation of media providers, and an air circulation system, as well as laboratories outfitting. Structurally speaking, the composition floor and floor coverings will be replaced on all floors, the toilets renovated, and steps will be undertaken for energy conservation.

These fundamental modernisations in Tower 1 and 2 can begin in 2006. Because work cannot be conducted during regular research activities, relocation will be necessary to space made available in other towers, in our branch in Fabeckstraße, or in Tower 3, which will be being built at the same time. The institute management hopes the plans for the new construction of Tower 3 can begin in 2004 and that the hoped for construction start in 2006 will follow.

In March 2002 a long term lease was taken out for a raw space of 800 m² in Fabeckstr. 60-62 from the Benjamin Franklin University Clinic, Freie Universität Berlin. This was converted into laboratory space. Eight laboratories and adjoining rooms were completed in April 2003. The laboratory floor contains room for 40 to 50 employees.

In 2002 the workshop area in the Ihnestraße 73 was reworked. Through new organisation and merging the House/Operations and Mechanics workshops, room was made in the basement for research groups. The space is now being used for microscope work stations and for using robots.

Analytics & Computing

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Roman Pawlik

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Daniel Rhiel

Lab kitchen:
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Computing Group

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Olde Hansen
Dirk-Robert Jacobs
Peter Marquardt
Sven Püstow
Frank Rippel
Jürgen Witczak-Losekandt (temporary)

Students:
Andreas Schebesch
Marius Tolzmann

The scientific service group Analytics is active in the fields of DNA template preparation, purification, sequencing and sequence analysis, protein purification and analysis by Edman sequencing, MALDI-MS methods, enzyme preparation and purification, as well as synthesis of highly specific oligonucleotides like Energy-Transfer primers etc.

Automation of procedures in any of these methods plays an important role. Another very important feature of our work is the miniaturisation, e.g. the down-scaling of reaction volumes and costs per reaction. The group has a good infrastructure for Mutation analysis and DNA-sequencing, especially for genome sequencing and analysis. Concurrently with conventional sequencing, we examine approaches designed at improving the efficiency of large-scale projects, like MS-MALDI methods for base determination and SNP detec-

tion based on the simplified GOOD assay and Mini-sequencing. The service costs for our main issues are calculated and those requesting the service are charged on a monthly basis of an individually assembled cost calculation.

In addition to the service aspects of our work, the group is a co-operation partner, together with Depts. Lehrach, Ropers and Vingron, of the international HUGO project, European based projects and the national DHGP and NGFN projects. For this purpose several software tools using advanced UNIX based (HP / Compaq Alpha systems and LINUX-PC-cluster) hardware were optimised or developed in close co-operation with the computing people of the group. For future needs we will extend new clustering strategies (multi-processor PC-based LINUX-cluster) for the automated assembly of very large data sets, automated checking, editing steps and web based software tools for co-ordinating projects with external partners. Most of this will be done in close co-operation with Dept. Vingron at the institute, the Sanger Centre (UK), and the University of Washington (US).

The computing group is responsible for updating and servicing the biological databases and the corresponding software tools. It is also responsible for the operation and development of the whole IT-infrastructure of the institute which includes workstation and server systems, wireless and wire based LAN, Internet access and services and remote access *via* modem, ISDN and DSL, and security devices (anti-virus and anti-SPAM software, data back-up and firewall). Our online storage capacity on disk-based file servers exceeds 6 TB of data, while the monthly backup volume is about 9 TB, summing up to a total backup capacity of 100 TB on tape robot systems. To manage and control the massive flow of data, our fibre based GigaBit-LAN, connecting laboratories in Fabeck- and Harnackstrasse to the campus Ihnestrasse, is segmented by about 100 manageable switches giving us the ultimate flexibility to control each segment and if necessary to configure each switch port individually. Presently we serve about 450 Windows based PCs and 67 Linux systems with a variety of hard- and software components, about 80 MAC systems and 54 Alpha based Unix systems of various hardware configuration. A variety of web-servers are protected by our firewall installation, 10 web-servers are actively run and maintained by us, including hard- and software development and are serving the scientific departments as well as the service and administration groups. In the future, **V**oice **o**ver**IP** (VoIP) might be a new field to be serviced.

Both scientific groups are very active in the field of training and education for young technicians to promote their further job career. During the period of this research report, the analytic group has organised the laboratory training for 5 persons for about 16 month time. Due to the still increasing demands for training in IT infrastructure, the computing group has even extended this effort and has organised training for 6 persons for about 39 month time:

Analytics:

- Susann Thiele, TFH Berlin, 7/98-1/99
- Heiner Kuhl, TU Berlin, 2/99-4/99
- Martin Schulze,TU Berlin, 2/00-4/00
- Oliver Klein, TFH Berlin, 9/02-1/02
- Hayri Gündogan, Seminarzentrum Göttingen, 7/02-8/02

Computing:

- Dunja Neubauer, TFH Berlin, 10/98-1/99
- Irene Sakoulas, TFH Berlin, 10/98-1/99
- Ronny Loose, System Data, 5/00-3/01
- Kay Fechner, System Data, 11/01-11/02
- Matthias Schmelz, OSZ Technik Teltow, 8/02-7/03
- Marco Ecker, System Data, 11/02-10/03

Animal Facility

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Sylvia Perkiewicz
Katja Pokrandt
Julia Wiesner (temporary)
Sina Ackermann (trainee)
Elisa Hinz (trainee)
Carolin Willke (trainee)

In 2002 the construction of a new animal laboratory was completed. It was brought fully into service in June 2003. The central animal laboratory (animal house) contains animal rooms for maintaining and breeding up to 20,000 mice. There are in total 3,500 IVC (individually ventilated cages). The mouse space will be expanded to include a final number of 4,600 IVC by 2004. The animal house also contains aquariums for maintaining and breeding up to 20,000 zebrafish. The animal laboratory houses a transgen unit to generate transgenic and knock out mice and zebrafish. In addition, the institute has rooms outside of the animal house with bird cages and aviaries for maintaining and breeding up to 500 zebra finches.

Library

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Vera Kalscheuer, Dept. Ropers
Knud Nierhaus, Ribosome Group
Enzo Russo, Dept. Lehrach
Georg Schwabe, Research Group Mundlos
Silke Sperling, Dept. Lehrach
Ralf Sudbrak, Dept. Lehrach
Andrea Vortkamp, Otto Warburg Laboratory

The library covers all research areas of the institute and is organized as a reference library. It holds about 50,000 volumes and subscribes to 268 scientific journals and series (130 print journals and more than 141 e-journals plus online cross access full text linking to several publishers and societies). In 2004 the library will begin, step by step, to reduce the costs for print journals but improve the electronic spectrum of scientific information. In addition to the web catalogue, 22 databases and 18 CD-ROMs, as well as electronic interlibrary loan service are offered. The library team undertakes searches in numerous online databases. It also offers introduction courses in how to use the databases (a basic handout packet is available in the library), as well as courses in how to use other services. Seminars, with guest speakers, about recent changes in electronic information systems are offered for the scientists of the institute. The library team is part of the pilot program within the Max-Planck-Society project “e-document server”.

The goal for the further development of the library is to improve the “Virtual Library”, a network of knowledge systems ensuring the delivery of information to researchers’ desk-tops wherever and whenever they need it.

Graphics/Photo

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Scientific advisor:
Dr. Rudi Lurz

In the graphic department designing figures and drawings, including tracing work has completely changed from classical drawing to Mac (Photoshop, Freehand) and PC (Photoshop, CorelDraw) based systems.

In the photo lab all the classic photographic work in the darkroom can still be done. Here, however, is also a general shift from traditional silver technology to digital work. All kinds of photographs of people and objects are taken as needed. For slides there is a digital slide maker (Lasergraphics Personal LFR plus), but most presentations are prepared now exclusively for PowerPoint. Negatives and slides can be scanned with two scanners (Minolta Dimage and Nikon Coolscan). A flatbed Epson DINA3 scanner has an adapter for transmitter light to be used also for (wet) gels and big films. Results are finished mainly using Adobe Photoshop. The digital equipment of the photo lab is open to members of the institute.