Newsletter

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS, UIB
No.16/2023, 13.10.2023
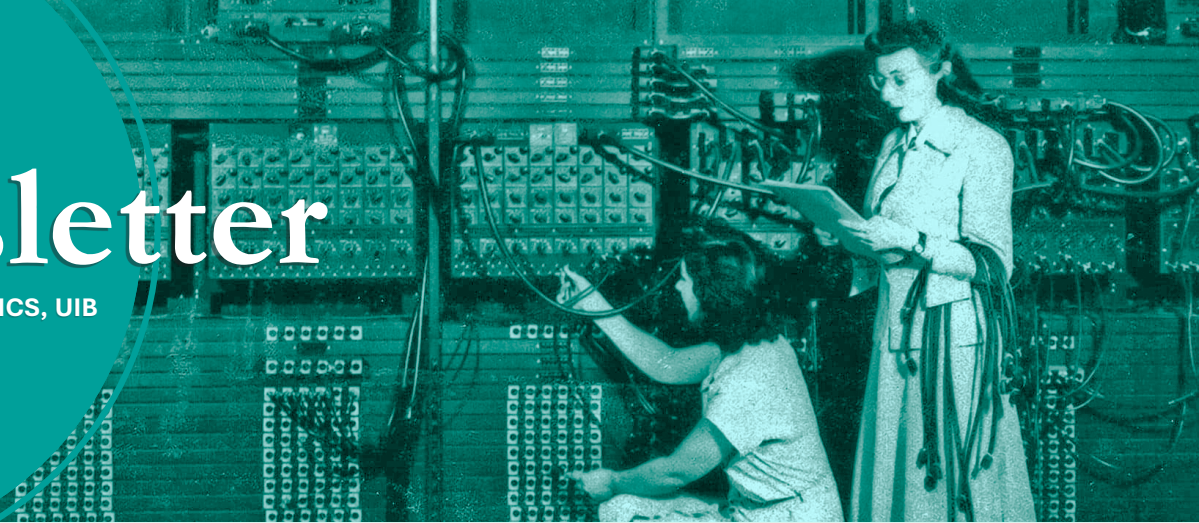
Dear Colleagues,

At this time of year, it is always exciting to see the new national budget. The government launched its proposal on October 6th. The proposal is subject to discussions in the parliament and since we have minority government, there may be adjustments before the budget for 2024 is finalized. For UiB, a big disappointment was that there is no funding for a new building for the Grieg Academy.

For our department, however, a positive element is that the government proposes increased student capacity in ICT. This comes with some increased funding, and if some of this ends up in our department (which should be the case), then it will help fund an extension of our staff, i.e., new professors or associate professors. The government has talked a lot about investing in education which addresses needs in our society, and ICT has been mentioned specifically. This is why we are disappointed to see only 100 new study places proposed, and only 10 of them to UiB!

One could hope that UiB internally decides to increase student capacity towards informatics through funding. This would help meet societal needs for more IT experts and would be in line with the new strategy for our faculty, which emphasizes the importance of ICT and computing. While many departments struggle to fill their student capacity, our programs have record high application numbers. Our department has a far lower staff to student ratio than other departments at our faculty.

We need to increase our staff in order to maintain the high quality of our education while maintaining our research activity, enabling us to provide research-based education.

In such discussions, we need to acknowledge that study programs at other departments may be more resource demanding with lab-work, field trips etc. An informatics education also involves learning hands-on skills, and new student active learning methods are more resource-demanding than traditional lecturing. This is why, to maintain and increase our student numbers and modernize our education, we do need to increase the number of professors and associate professors at the department.

A seemingly good piece of news (as was leaked earlier in the autumn) is the allocation of 1 billion kroner towards artificial intelligence over the next five years. At least for 2024, the corresponding 200 million will be taken from other programs within the research council ☹. However, there is still hope that this allocation will result in calls that would be relevant for our department.

I wish you all a nice weekend!

Inge

The Dean's Blog - Gunn Mangerud

[The Dean's blog](#) aims to inform us of ongoing work and processes at The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Her latest posts:

- [Ikke krise, men alvorlig for realfagsrekrutteringen](#)
- [Vivat Academia](#)

Welcome, new colleagues!

Fabio Massimo Zennaro

Fabio has started in a tenure track position as an associate professor in the machine learning group. Fabio is originally from Italy, but did his PhD at the University of Manchester and worked as a postdoc at the University of Oslo. He has spent the last year working as a research fellow at the University of Warwick.

Welcome, Fabio!

Morten Blørstad

Morten did his master's degree in the machine learning group, and he has now returned to do a PhD.

Welcome back, Morten!

Mikolaj Cuszynski-Kruk

Mikolaj has started a PhD position in the optimization group. Mikolaj is from Sweden, where he did two master's degrees (IT and maths) at Uppsala University.
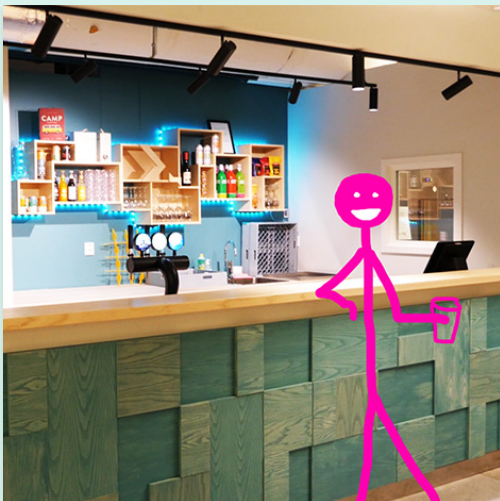
Welcome, Mikolaj!

PhD Defence

Hyeongji Kim

Hyeongji Kim will defend her thesis "On the Significance of Distance in Machine Learning" on the 23rd of October at 09:00 in the VilVite auditorium.

Read the announcement here.

Current Issues

Staff meetup at Programmerbar *aka "Lønningspils"*

Did you know our students have a bar on the first floor? In their reading hall? A type of room which most students would use for reading?

In return for this privilege, the students are organising a monthly meetup for informatics employees, the first of which will be held next week!

Join us on Thursday the 19th of October from 17:00 to 20:00 at this ~~place of academics and learning~~ bar, which can be found in the corner to the right when you exit the lifts.

To celebrate the start of a new tradition, there will also be **free pizza!**

Illustration: This could be you at Programmerbar, laughing with a bunch of co-workers who are just out of frame.

Christmas dinner - Save the date!

The annual Christmas party will be held on the 15th of December from 19:00 at Grand Hotel Terminus.

We can't promise a bouncy castle, but we can promise loads of food and fun!

More details to come.

"Channel Capacity and Integrated Sensing and Communication (ISAC)"

A distinguished lecture by Prof. Michèle Wigger

19.10.2023 - 12.45–13.45
Large auditorium, 2nd floor, Høyteknologisenteret

[Read full event description on uib.no.](#)

Data Science Competition
03.11.2023 - 17.00–05.11.2023 - 23.59

Reminder: The deadline for the upcoming Data Science Competition 2023 is October 25th. Make sure to tell your students to participate if interested!

We are happy to announce the upcoming Data Science Competition 2023, on November 3 - 5, sponsored by the research centers CEDAS & NORBIS as well as the Department of Informatics!

In each category (bachelor, master and PhD student), the best submissions will be awarded prizes including movie tickets, clothes and UiB-merch, and receive a certificate from the evaluation committee. Top submissions will get the opportunity to discuss their results with the researchers who study this dataset. There will also be free pizza and snacks available on Friday, November 3rd. If interested, sign up using the registration link on the event page.

[Read more about the Data Science Competition here.](#)

Teacher's retreat
Save the date: 21th of March

To all teachers at the faculty

For the third time, the Faculty welcomes you to the MN teacher's retreat. The seminar will be held on 21 March on campus at UiB Læringsarena.

More information on the program and theme will be published later.

Yoga

Yoga is back!

You can join a relaxing yoga session every Wednesday from 14:30 to 15:30. If you don't have your own matte, you can borrow one there.

Multimedia screen

The department has acquired a 55-inch screen on wheels, for the purpose of having presentations in rooms which lack multimedia equipment.

If you are interested in using this for an event or presentation, please contact Randi H Eilertsen for details.

UiB FERD
career center for early stage researchers

"UiB Ferd supports early stage researchers in their career development"

UiB Ferd Career Centre supports doctoral candidates, postdoctoral fellows, researchers and associate professors. We offer a range of services designed to help you develop your career within or beyond the university.

You can sign up for the UiB Ferd newsletter here.

Upcoming UiB Ferd events include:

17.10.23: Introductory course to LaTeX (Course)
Registration deadline: 16.10.2023 at 12:00

20.10.23: Make your research visible using researcher profiles (Course)
Registration deadline: 18.10.2023 at 10:00

25.10.23: GIS Workshop (Workshop)
Registration deadline: 20.10.2023 at 12:00

25.10.23: Webinar for EURAXESS Career Development tools (Seminar)

26.10.23: Pitch your research (Workshop)
Registration deadline: 24.10.2023 at 23:55

International Newsletter

UiB has a newsletter made especially for internationals, where you can find useful tips and news about upcoming events.

If you have moved to Bergen from a different country, we highly recommend subscribing to the newsletter here.

You can also follow the International Centre calendar to find events that are of particular interest to international staff and students.

Department Discord

We have a department dicord channel, in which you can find notices about events, alerts about leftover cake, and generally great banter.

Join our discord here.

Reminder: Guest routine

Inviting and hosting guest researchers is a natural and welcomed part of our academic work. It is still crucial to act according to our routines and procedures when planning to invite a guest.

If you are inviting a guest researcher to our department, you must follow the guest routine found here.

Vacant positions

- Senior Engineer/ Chief Engineer (Research software development)
- Forskingsteknikar
- Studiekonsulent (seniorkonsulent)

See all open positions at UiB

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Please contact research coordinator <u>Stefanie Meyer</u> if you plan to apply. All applications need to be approved by the department leadership before submission. By following the link, you can find out more about our <u>research support services</u>.

Forskningsrådet

FRIPRO: The Research Council of Norway has published the upcoming FRIPRO (groundbreaking research) calls on their website.

- [Researcher Project for Experienced Scientists (FRIPRO)](#)
- [Researcher Project for Early Career Scientists (FRIPRO)](#)
- [Three-year Researcher Project with International Mobility (FRIPRO)](#)

Application deadline: open-ended (to be opened on 18 October)

TROND MOHN STIFTELSE

TMS Starting Grants 2024 - Nomination of applicants at the Department of Informatics: The [TMS Starting Grant programme](#) is a highly competitive and prestigious funding mechanism designed to help UiB in recruiting and/or retaining talented young researchers. The application process has several stages, starting with the nomination of applicants by the department (and faculty). We ask all research groups to send their suggestions for applicants to the head of department, who will select up to two candidates that will get the opportunity to apply for a TMS Starting Grant the following year (2024).

More detailed information has been sent to all scientific staff and Postdocs at the department via email.

Deadline: 1 December 2023. Please send the required documentation via email to the head of department, cc head of research section.

New **Young CAS Grant:** "The [Young CAS Grant](#), (previously known as the Young CAS Fellowship), is the funding opportunity offered to early career scholars below the age of 40. Recipients of a Young CAS Grant receive funding and support for their research project and gain valuable experience in organising multiple workshops and a two-month research stay at the Centre."

Application deadline: 9 December 2023

Forskningsrådet

New **Researcher projects (thematic calls):** The Research Council of Norway has published preliminary information about researcher project calls for [early career scientists](#), [experienced scientists](#) and [large interdisciplinary projects](#) for a variety of pre-defined topics.

Application deadline: 6 March 2024 (tentative)

NORBIS activities

Course: Metabolic pathway analysis

Time: January/February 2024, two weeks

Place: University of Bergen, Biomedical Institute

Course responsible: Ines Heiland

Course description: This course will provide an introduction to the computational analysis and reconstruction of both small and genome-scale metabolic networks. The main goal is to familiarize students with relevant state-of-the-art computational tools and databases, as well as to provide the students with hands-on experience in metabolic modelling approaches. Furthermore, we will cover the mathematical basis of constraint-based analysis of genome-scale metabolic models and provide a foundation for stability and control analysis of dynamic models.

Course: Sequence analysis (phylogenetics, genome sequencing, genome annotation, antimicrobial resistance, comparative genomics)

Time: Mach 25-29, 2024

Place: University of Bergen, Computational Biology Unit

Course responsible: Anagha Joshi and Tom Michoel

Invited lecturers: Dr. Grigorios Amoutzias, Marios Nikolaidis

Suggested amount of ECTS: 5

Registration form: Coming soon

Course description: The course will be given over a week (5 days Monday-Friday) with lectures (34 hours including discussions) in the mornings and practical hands-on sessions in the afternoons. On the last day there will be a summing-up session where the students can provide feedback. The students will receive a reading list before the course and are expected prepare well for the course.

For more information about courses, see: https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/courses/

Workshop: Comparing genomes: Genome assembly and annotation, and hypothesis testing in comparative genomics.

Time: 1-5 April, 2024

Location: University of Oslo or University of Bergen

Workshop responsible: José Cerca (UiO), Ole Tørrensen (UiO), Inge Jonassen (UiB)

Workshop description: In this workshop, we will cover the technical principles of genome assembly, annotation, and genome comparison. We will explore the techniques related to genome sequencing, the software and strategies used for genome assembly and annotation. Following that, we will delve into comparative genomics, focusing on fundamental concepts such as genomic structural features (transposable elements, genes, centromeres), orthologs, and functional characterization of genes. Through this, participants will gain the necessary skills to test hypotheses in the field of comparative genomics.

For more information, visit our workshop website: https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/workshops/

Workshop: Genealogies and Ancestral Recombination Graph
Time: April/May 2024

Location: Drøbak Research Station (Tollboden)

Workshop responsible: José Cerca (UiO) and Ole Kristian Tørresen (UiO)

Workshop description: The Genealogies and Ancestral Recombination Graph workshop (GARG'w) is a comprehensive 3-day program designed to introduce participants to the fascinating world of population genomics and how recombination events shape genomes. This hands-on workshop will focus on utilizing the tskit environment, a powerful tool for simulating and analyzing genomic data (whole-genome resequencing data), to explore and understand complex inheritance patterns within populations. Join us for this immersive 3-day workshop to gain valuable skills and insights into the world of genealogies and Ancestral Recombination Graphics using tskit. Unlock the secrets hidden in genetic data and discover the historical events that have shaped the genetic ancestry of species and populations.

In addition we have soft skills courses available that are organized with other national research schools. Please visit https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/transferable-skills/ for more information.

Travel funding from NORBIS

Are you NORBIS member and in need funding to go to an international course or conference? NORBIS are happy to announce that we have a limited fund available for travel for our members for these activities. If you like to know more, please visit our website: https://norbis.w.uib.no/travel-funding-f…-and-conferences/

Funding for arranging courses and workshops

Do you have a course you like to organize under the NORBIS umbrella but in need of funding? Our call for courses is open now: https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/proposals/

For more information, please see our webpage: https://norbis.w.uib.no