

DATE: January 31, 2011

SUBJECT: Letter of collaboration for your NSF-PGRP proposal entitled "RCN: Establishment of the Maize Genome Assembly and Annotation Consortium"

TO: Carolyn Lawrence
1034 Crop Genome Informatics Laboratory
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011

FROM: Tom Brutnell
Chair, Maize Genetics Executive Committee

Dear Carolyn,

As the Chair of the Maize Genetics Executive Committee (MGEC), it is my pleasure to provide you with this letter of support. As you know the MGEC is a group of scientists elected by the maize community at large to identify both the needs and the opportunities for maize genetics, and to communicate this information to a broad community. This includes scientists, students, funding directors and the end users who benefit from the outputs of maize genetics, from farmers to consumers.

The proposal you have put together to support the Maize Genome Assembly and Annotation Consortium was by request of MGEC (see <http://www.maizegdb.org/Sept2010MGEC@NSF.pdf>), and was based upon feedback we have received from researchers via a community survey of current and future needs (see http://maizemeeting.maizegdb.org/mgec-survey10/analyze_final.php) as well as direct communication from researchers. For your proposal, three of the four PI's are members of the MGEC (yourself, Pat, and Brent) and the fourth PI (Doreen) is currently assembling and annotating the maize genome. Thus, I am confident that you have assembled an excellent team of scientists to lead this endeavor.

The methods you describe to document community-contributed updates to both the B73 genome assembly and its structural and functional annotation is extremely important, as we have lacked a mechanism to enable this input. The fact that you will make this data freely available via MaizeGDB (our community portal to the maize genome) for download is also exciting: this perspective exemplifies the cooperative spirit of the maize community where we have a history of allowing all to participate. Your plans to host an "all maize PIs" meeting in advance of the Annual Maize Genetics Conference to discuss assembly, annotation, and diversity with experts in the community, will further foster community participation in this project.

Finally, your plans to develop standards for assembly and annotation (both structural and functional) in collaboration with the Genomic Standards Consortium and the Genome Reference Consortium will help ensure integration of the maize genome data with

existing genome annotation projects.

The MGEC as a whole endorses your proposal and the MGEC will contribute to accomplishing the work you describe by:

- including Consortium-specific items on surveys of the maize community;
- contacting maize cooperators via email for input, where appropriate; and
- giving input on whitepapers and manuscripts, where appropriate.

In addition, individuals from the MGEC will be sure to attend the meetings you have planned on the topics of genome stewardship, whole-genome diversity representations and tools, and educational opportunities for primarily undergraduate institutions as well as the maize all-PI meeting.

We appreciate the work you have already put into this endeavor and will support the Maize Genome Assembly and Annotation Consortium fully in its activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Brutnell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom Brutnell on behalf of the Maize Genetics Executive Committee

Current MGEC membership: Tom Brutnell, Pat Schnable, Marty Sachs, Virginia Walbot, William Tracy, Sue Wessler, Jeff Bennetzen, Ed Buckler, Carolyn Lawrence, Brent Buckner, Jean-Philippe Vielle-Calzada, Roberto Tuberosa, and Jinsheng Lai.