JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Expedition/Project/Conference Title: International Genetically Engineered Micoorganism (IGEM) competition 2009.....

Travel Dates: Oct 30-Nov3 2009 .....

Location: MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA .....

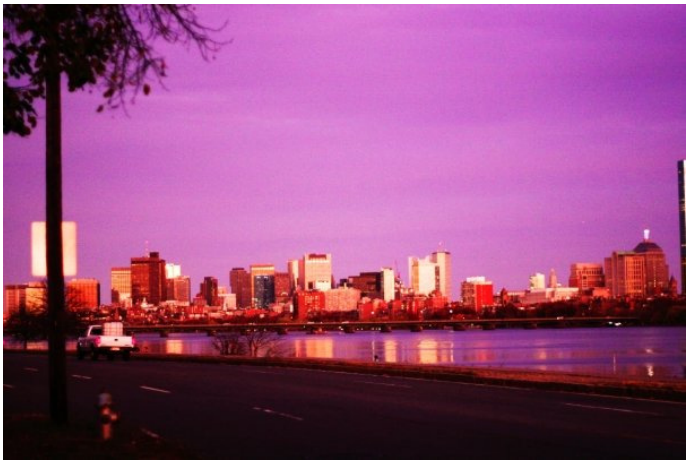
Group Member(s): Julia Skripka .....

Aims: To present our findings of a novel bacterial landmine detection method at this annual synthetic biology competition and to win prizes and medals!.....

OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

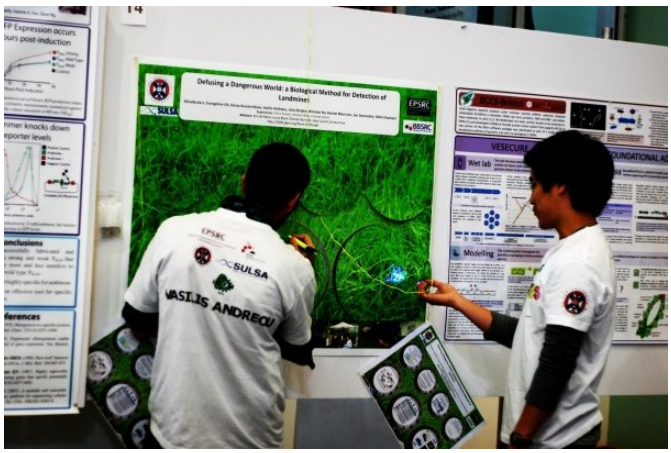
Over the summer the Edinburgh University IGEM team has worked hard on an ingenious way of detecting landmines with the help of bacteria. The final outcome of our project is a cheaply grown and maintained bacterial species which would be sprayed on minefields, followed by the production of a visible colour in the vicinity of the landmine within a few hours, in this way signalling its presence. Travelling to MIT, where over 200 teams competed this year, gave our team the chance to present our findings in front of many other bright competitors with a powerpoint presentation and a poster, securing a gold medal for our team. We have also succeeded in gathering significant media attention, leading to our findings being published in over 100 newspapers around the globe, and our team video aired across several mainstream TV channels in Germany.

Thank you from the IGEM2009 Edinburgh team members!



Boston, Massachusetts—view from Cambridge

Furthermore, being present at MIT gave us a chance to attend presentations and poster sessions of other brilliant teams from across the globe. Our team has been in contact with many teams personally, in particular the Cambridge, Bristol and Calgary (Canada) teams, who have shared their views and impressed us with their findings. Needless to say, IGEM is a gathering of the world's leading scientists and outstanding students and is a great way to promote Edinburgh University's name and to reinforce and its long-standing reputation of academic excellence and leadership in the field of research.



Installing the team poster

My personal experience at MIT lead me to understand how novel, fascinating and uncharted synthetic biology is and inspired me to apply for a master's degree in this sphere. I can safely say that participating in IGEM and being able to travel to the heart of the volcanic activity that surrounds synthetic biology today has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my academic career.