



AMERICAN  
SOCIETY FOR  
MICROBIOLOGY

***Education Board***

September 15, 2005

Dr. Sarah Boomer  
Natural Sciences and Math  
Western Oregon University  
Monmouth, Oregon 97361

Dear Dr Boomer;

Thank you for submitting your laboratory exercise titled “A laboratory class exploring microbial diversity and evolution using on-line databases, the biology workbench, and phylogenetics software” to ASM’s MicrobeLibrary. The Curriculum Resources Committee felt that this was an interesting and potentially valuable addition to the collection but that minor modifications and improvements are needed for it to be accepted. As the primary reviewer I would like to provide you some feedback from our review conference to help you and your co-authors with the modifications.

Overall, we found this exercise very well written. Both myself and the secondary reviewer easily followed the protocols up to the PAUP analysis, which neither of us had access to. The inclusion of examples, and the extensive instructor notes were very helpful, and will allow instructors with little practical knowledge of current technologies or phylogenetic analysis to incorporate the exercise in their class activities. We felt that the learning objectives were valuable and important, and that the exercise was carefully designed to address those objectives.

As I mentioned above, neither reviewer had access to PAUP... initially we were concerned with the price, however there are many protocols in the Library which require equipment with price tags. PAUP is just one more piece of equipment. However, in looking around the Biology Workbench, I discovered the Phylip software, and was able to print some trees. In talking to a colleague at Alfred, I learned that she has used this free version of a phylogenetic program in her courses. As such, the committee felt that an alternate procedure utilizing the free software on the Biology Workbench would be a valuable addition to the protocol. To clarify – we do not recommend replacing the existing protocol, but rather supplementing it with an alternate protocol for instructors for whom PAUP is out of their price range. Finally, a short paragraph in the instructors notes on why one would choose PAUP vs. Phylip would be helpful to those not familiar with either program.

As I mentioned previously, please find attached the review sheet and the review criteria the committee used in the review process. I urge you to look these over carefully for specific comments. I hope that you can use these to aid your revision process. We would appreciate to



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have your revised version by October 10, 2005. Please contact me if I can be of any assistance in clarifying the suggestions above or helping in any other way to make your activity acceptable for the ASM Microbe Library.

We do ask that you review and sign the enclosed copyright agreement form, which states that ASM has the non-exclusive right to publish the activity in the MicrobeLibrary. Contact Jean Gondwe at ASM with any questions regarding the copyright agreement. She can be reached at <jgondwe@asmusa.org> or by phone at 202-942-9299.

Sincerely,

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