

NSLS Annual RapiData Course in X-Ray Crystallography Again Successful

April 21 - 26, 2002

Brookhaven's offering of RapiData 2002, the fourth in an annual series of crash courses in x-ray crystallography, was once again a huge success. Forty-eight students from around the world participated from April 21 to 26.

More formally titled "Rapid Data Collection and Structure Solving at the NSLS: A Practical Course in Macromolecular X-Ray Diffraction Measurement," the program was developed by BNL's Biology and National Synchrotron Light Source (NSLS) departments to introduce students to the best people, newest equipment, and latest techniques in the field of macromolecular x-ray crystallography.

Half the students came to observe; the other half came with their own specimens with the goal of solving the structure of a particular enzyme. About four structures were solved during the course, and each of these is likely a publishable result.

Designed and run by Bob Sweet and Denise Kranz of BNL's Biology Department, the program is funded by a range of agencies. Key support comes from the

National Institutes of Health National Center for Research Resources, and significant support from DOE's Office of Biological and Environmental Research.

The course starts with two days of lectures and tutorials taught by BNL scientists and scientists from industry, academia, and other national labs - a total of 38 instructors, tutors, or helpers, many of them volunteers.

These mentors then serve as hands-on scientific supervisors when the students move to the NSLS beam lines to begin collecting data on their crystal

samples. There are also plenty of occasions for stimulating conversation over drinks and meals.

"Everyone, teachers and students alike, finds the experience absolutely riveting. The 60 hours of data collection are near chaos on the NSLS floor. But each of us ends up exhausted but happy, having learned a little from each of the others," Sweet said.

-Karen McNulty Walsh

[Editor's note: Reprinted with permission from the BNL Bulletin - May 17, 2002.]



Workshop Participants