

A Shining Star Has Arrived

Xth Spanish Workshop on Rapid Methods and Automation in Food Microbiology, November 2011

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In the year 2002, Dr. Josep Yuste and Dr. Marta Capellas, associate professors at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, organized the 1st Spanish Workshop on Rapid Methods and Automation in Food Microbiology in Barcelona, Spain after Dr. Yuste spent a year of intensive training at Kansas State University as a NATO post-doc fellow in Dr. Fung's laboratory in 2000-2001. He worked day and night and designed many exciting experiments and published many journal articles from the results of the short year of intensive research work at Kansas. He also witnessed and experienced the excitement and energy of the world renowned Kansas State University Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology Workshop conceived and directed by Dr. Fung since 1980. He came home to Spain energized and inspired to start a similar workshop at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona on the condition that Dr. Fung MUST come to the Spanish workshop every year forever to be a key-note speaker and a resource person in the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona workshop. Dr. Fung agreed to come for as long as he can but cannot promise "forever". Well, the first one was a success and then the second one and now the TENTH one is at hand. For an intensive workshop, ten years is indeed "forever"!! When Dr. Fung completed his first workshop in 1980 in Kansas, he was so tired that he said to himself "never again" but it has lasted for 30 years!!

Year after year in the Spanish workshop, established loyal companies and innovative new companies from Spain, Europe, and indeed around the world came to introduce new systems, ideas, instruments to support this budding workshop in Barcelona. Outstanding scientists like Dr. Cécile Lahellec, trained in Pasteur Institute, and other scholars around Spain and Europe also made presentations to the group. Many students at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona attended the workshops and had unparalleled experiences in the newest, best, most advanced concepts, instruments, systems, and interacted with experts from the industries as well as from other universities and institutions. These students truly absorbed knowledge and experiences from some of the world best minds in this field. Government, university, industry, public health microbiologists of many disciplines came to take the workshop and contributed their knowledge in open discussions on all types of topics. Besides the lectures, many students and participants also had hands-on experiences in the laboratory sessions to work with some of the newest diagnostic kits and instruments. It was truly a unique experience for many of the budding scientists.

The size of the workshop remains to be about 150 people so that it will continue to have great interactions between participants and presenters. Some of the best sessions are the open discussions between experts on the stage and exciting participants and students in the audience. Appropriate social activities, friendly environment, good food, and the presence of Dr. Catherine Fung also help to make the workshop fun.

So, the Spanish workshop will celebrate the Xth workshop in November 2011 with joyful interactions and may it last for at least 30 years and many more to come!! The future of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology remains to be very bright and may the workshop in Barcelona shines like a Star in the Universe of Rapid Methods and Automation in Food Microbiology forever!!