# SEA-PHAGES Reminders and Important Dates for 2015-16

We hope everyone enjoyed an excellent summer, except for our new Southern-hemisphere members at Massey University, who we hope had an excellent winter.

This document contains several important reminders, updates, and deadlines that will be useful for SEA-PHAGES faculty. A sort of “cheat sheet” for the 2015-16 academic year.

# Scientific Scope of SEA-PHAGES

As was discussed at the 2015 Symposium Faculty Meeting, the scientific scope of the SEA-PHAGES program has been more clearly defined as investigating the diversity of **phages that infect bacterial hosts in the phylum Actinobacteria**. While using the SEA-PHAGES course model to explore phages of other host bacteria is understandable, schools wishing to remain SEA-PHAGES members should *also* incorporate an Actinobacterial host into their classrooms by the 2016-17 academic year. Actinobacteria hosts other than *M. smegmatis* are being piloted, with details at the following link:

<http://seaphages.org/hosts/>. We are open to suggestions for additional Actinobacterial hosts.

Slides explaining this and more from the Symposium Faculty Meeting are available at the link below.

<http://seaphages.org/media/docs/Faculty_Meeting_--_SEA_Symposium_2015.pptx>

# SEA-PHAGES App

# The official SEA-PHAGES App is available for iOS and Android devices.  It can also be accessed by computer at [http://seaphages.csm.jmu.edu:3000](http://seaphages.csm.jmu.edu:3000/).  The app serves three major functions: a social network for all SEA-PHAGES participants, a way to keep track—including GPS coordinates—of your soil sampling locations, and a player for the Sounds of the SEA podcast. Please encourage your students to begin using it to stay connected across the SEA!

# Sequencing

All official SEA-PHAGES sequencing will take place at the University of Pittsburgh this year. Free of charge, Pitt will sequence, assemble, and QC **two samples** for each *In Silico* section of the SEA-PHAGES course you plan to run. PLEASE REMEMBER to use water or Elution Buffer to elute the DNA samples you will send to Pitt; TE interferes with library preparation. Address any sequencing-related questions to Dan Russell (dar78@pitt.edu). Samples are due at Pitt on November 20th, 2015.

Sequencing of extra samples is available via the North Carolina State Genomics Sciences Laboratory, for a cost of $250 per phage genome. Contact Dr. Andy Baltzegar (dabaltze@ncsu.edu) for details.

# 2016 Virtual Machine

The 2016 SEA VM will be nearly identical to the 2015 version, excepting that it will have updated versions of Ubuntu and consed. If it’s more convenient for your institution, you may continue using the 2015 version. The 2016 VM will be ready for download soon and will be posted at the link below.

<http://seaphages.org/software/virtualmachine/>

# Archiving

The protocol for archiving phage lysates remains largely unchanged this year, though note the earlier due date: December 15, 2015.  Archiving materials will be shipped to you from the University of Pittsburgh on October 5, 2015, and the number of tubes sent will be based on the Section information you enter on seaphages.org. Cohort 8 schools will receive a complete archiving package, while all other schools will receive bar-coded tubes only.  Please return two tubes of each phage lysate to Pitt by the December 15 deadline. Current archiving protocols (and video) are available at the link below.

<http://phagesdb.org/workflow/toolbox/>

# seaphages.org, the Wiki, and Forums

We continue to work on making seaphages.org the single online location for everything you need related to the SEA-PHAGES program. Very soon, once we’ve verified that all pertinent information has been transferred, the old SEA-Wiki site will be taken permanently offline. We’re working hard to make sure that all the information you need is available and easy to locate on seaphages.org.

We want to call attention to the **new** **Forums on seaphages.org** (<http://seaphages.org/forums/>). There is a Faculty Lounge that is only viewable and editable by logged-in faculty members, but there are also open forums where questions may be asked about any part of the program. We hope you’ll encourage your students to post (and answer!) interesting questions. We also intend these forums to be a primary form of software support, so please post your DNA Master or Phamerator questions there so that others with similar problems can benefit from the responses.

# Assessment

This year a new assessment instrument called the Persistence in the Sciences (PITS) survey will become the primary means of assessing the impact of the SEA-PHAGES course. All SEA-PHAGES institutions should have their IRB approval in place and should administer this survey towards the end of each semester (see **Important Dates**). The SEA-CURE survey remains available for use at your discretion, but is not a substitute for PITS participation. Details about the assessment plan and IRB information are available on the Faculty Documents page: <http://seaphages.org/faculty/documents/>

# Important Dates, 2015-16

**September 30, 2015**  Deadline for entering Fall section data into seaphages.org

**October 30, 2015** Applications for Cohort 9 due

**November 20, 2015** DNA samples for sequencing due at the University of Pittsburgh\*

**~December 1, 2015** Students should complete the PITS survey for fall semester

**December 7-11, 2015** Cohort 8 In Silico Workshop at HHMI Headquarters

**December 15, 2015** Archiving samples due at the University of Pittsburgh\*

**January 31, 2016**  Deadline for entering Spring section data into seaphages.org

**April 22, 2016** Symposium abstracts due

**~May 1, 2016** Students should complete the PITS surveyfor spring semester

**May 15, 2016** Submit final annotations for QC

**June 10-12, 2016** 8th Annual Symposium at Janelia Research Campus

\*Accommodations will be made for schools on quarter systems or with flipped spring-fall semester order.