Exit Survey Results

The exit survey was completed by most of the program participants on the day they left the program (all the students filled it, and about 85% of the faculty/postdoc who were visiting Santa Cruz). A few statements from the local participants are added at the end of this survey.

The numbers (1-5) which appear after a statement indicate the level of agreement with the statement, from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree.

Week 1 Program

<u>The schedule of week 1 is adequate in the view of the goals of the school.</u> **[4.52]**
Comment from PI: The week 1 schedule was very busy, and we wanted to see on the exit survey what people thought of it. The reason for such a busy schedule is to make sure the student projects get under way as soon as possible, so there were many discussion sessions, and meetings in addition to the lectures. It seems that people didn't mind that too much.

<u>The mentoring workshop was useful.</u> **[2.79]**
Comment from the PI: The mentoring workshop was probably the least successful part of ISIMA, although, having attended it, I thought it was very useful to make sure people were focused on thinking about what a "good project selection is" and what "good mentoring practices are". However, given the poor results, in the future we will probably modify this workshop quite a bit. A separate exit survey focusing on the workshop alone was collected, and will help ISEE revise it.

<u>What percentage of lectures were useful to your current research?</u> **[44%]**
<u>What percentage of lectures will be useful to your future research?</u> **[63.5%]**
Comment from the PI: These numbers were slightly lower than we hoped for. Having attended all of the lectures, it was clear that we probably had too many different lecturers and there was not much continuity between the lectures -- which could have made them a bit confusing for the students. Also some of the lecturers were not able to place themselves at the level of the students, and gave very difficult/technical lectures. Note that others, on the other hand, were absolutely tremendous! On the whole, I estimate that about 50% of the lectures only were at the level of graduate students, which is consistent with the ratios above. This will be improved for future ISIMA programs.

<u>The discussion sessions were stimulating.</u> **[4.22]**
Comment from the PI: The discussion sessions were extremely popular, despite being held late in the afternoons. This was also surprising, but in a good way. We encouraged questions by making them anonymous (collecting them in a jar at the end of each lecture). The questions were read out loud during the discussion sessions, and everyone participated in the answers. The students loved that format, which enabled them to

ask questions without feeling pressured, and many interesting discussions started from there.

Projects:

The ISIMA program expectations about the projects were clearly explained. **[4.08]**
Comment from the PI: we forgot to tell the students ahead of time that they would have to write up a project report, and there was some grumbling about it. However, overall, they understood that the report is necessary and can be used as a first draft for a paper, and so they nearly-happily complied.

(For students) The selection of projects offered was diverse and stimulating. **[4.42]**
The project(s) you worked on were interesting. **[4.5]**
Comment from the PI : one of the most important aspects of ISIMA is to propose a large number of scientifically diverse projects, so that each student can select something of their interest, either in a field different from their own, or in a similar field but using new tools for them. Overall, this was a great success and every single student found a project they were really excited about.

You were able to complete the project adequately. **[3.96]**
Comment from the PI : This was one of our major worry, whether the students would be able to complete a project in the 5 weeks between "decision" and "presentation". Overall, I would estimate that about 80% of the projects were more-than-satisfactorily completed, some yielding paper-ready results, and some yielding invaluable preliminary analyses for future papers. Only about 3 of the projects were not as advanced as we would have hoped. For two of those, the major issue was that they were very computationally intensive projects, and the code hadn't advanced as they would have hoped by the end of the program. This is more of a project selection issue than anything else, and will be an important lesson for the future.

The project is likely to result in a publication. **[4.6]**
Comment from the PI : We were very happy to see this high response here, but of course, only the future will tell. A list of all of the papers published from the ISIMA program will be put online as soon as they are available.

(Students/Postdocs) You had good scientific support from the ISIMA or local faculty for the projects **[4.78]**
Comment from the PI : This is also a great result, and we have to thank all of the ISIMA participants who put in a tremendous amount of work to advise the students. None of the students felt isolated or left-out, and everyone learned a lot from their mentors.

Networking:

This meeting helped you create new research collaborations/opportunities. **[4.5]**

This meeting helped you meet future postdoc advisors/colleagues or future postdocs/colleagues. **[4.44]**
Comment from the PI : These were our major goals for ISIMA: creating a new network, both professionally and scientifically. The overall response about this was overwhelmingly positive.

Logistics:

The seminar room facilities were adequate for the meeting. **[4.15]**
The community room facilities were adequate for the meeting. **[4.27]**

The computing facilities were adequate for the meeting. **[3.72]**
Comment from the PI : The computing support from the School of Engineering staff was not at the level we expected. This is not due to their lack of good will but to the budget cuts which have gravely affected UCSC: the IT support is under-funded and under-staffed. As a result, the deployment of the upgraded supercomputer was delayed by a few weeks, and this affected a few of the student projects (although, thankfully only a few).

The apartments (rooms or offices) facilities were adequate for the meeting. **[3.52]**
Comment from the PI : (see also below). The students would have preferred to have their own offices, and possibly even share with the faculty. This will be corrected in future programs.

The LOC provided adequate help with visa/travel issues. **[4.82]**
The LOC provided adequate help with lodging issues. **[4.8]**
The LOC provide adequate information about the area/campus. **[4.28]**
The LOC satisfactorily explained how to fill in the various forms required. **[4.84]**
The LOC satisfactorily dealt with your travel/per diem/reimbursement . **[4.84]**

The LOC satisfactorily organized reception/lunches/coffee/conf. dinner. **[4.56]**
The cost of the lunches/conference dinner were reasonable. **[4.29]**

Overall:

UCSC is a good venue for ISIMA. **[4.46]**
You would recommend ISIMA to colleagues and students. **[4.84]**
You would come back to ISIMA. **[4.5]**
Comment from the PI: These are all great numbers, which are encouraging us to continue with the program. We hope the NSF will concur and will renew funding in the future.

You would be interested in helping with running ISIMA (LOC or SOC). **[3.37]**
Comment from the PI: Of course, most students were not interested in running ISIMA, but surprisingly, a few were, and are already helping us with next year's program.

Some of the younger faculty are very enthusiastic about the next program, and will be part of next year's SOC.

Here are some sample comments from the surveys.

#1 Congratulation comments:
- "Great Stuff"
- "Superb stuff, would definitely be interested in attending and helping organize future ISIMA meetings"
- "The program was a great success, specially in its first year. Being a student I enjoyed every bit of it. I would wish ISIMA all success in the future and wish to be a part of this program in the future as well"
- "I had great fun! Even felt like I was being productive (for a change from my PhD)"
- "I learned a lot from the stellar physicists + enjoyed helping the students where I could. Interacting with UCSC faculty a big plus (Lin, Fortney, Nimmo, Krumholz, and Garaud)"
- "I had a wonderful time, thank you!"

#2 Suggestions/comments
- "Perhaps having more observational talks/observers would provide further motivation for the modeling we are trying to do."
- Several students were unhappy about not having an office, and did not like having to work in their apartments. -> Suggest having real offices in the future, ideally shared with other students and more importantly, with the faculty.
- A few students would have wanted to give presentations about their own research as well.
- "Six weeks is not nearly enough for project. Make projects available beforehand so that students can read about them before coming to ISIMA. Some faculty took on too many students, which skews the overall research interest of the student group".
- "Continue the discussion sessions Weeks 2-6".