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# Newsletter

iGEM Team Vienna 2019

We are happy our fifth newsletter has found its way to you! Learn more about the final stages of our 2019 iGEM project „**A novel approach to Buruli Ulcer diagnostics**“ and further plans.

*"All beginnings are hard! This may be true in a certain sense, but more generally it can be said: All beginnings are easy, and the last stages are the hardest and rarest to climb. "*

*"Wilhelm Meister's Wander Years"*  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

It may be hard to start a project. There is a lot to keep in mind and to learn. Some things may work right away, others will require some time. Once everything has found a good balance, the project is often already over again. But also endings, as easy as they may come, have some difficulties to them.

And yet, we took that last step - Forced, of course, by a stringent deadline. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 at 11:59 PM EST, wiki-freeze would require our **website** to be online, with all data, results and discussions in place. This was a race against the wind, and required joint all-nighters for several days – but we were finally able to finish our wiki on time.

Until the morning hours of October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, we uploaded the last data, graphics and diagrams to our website. Last texts were written, formatted and improved, visuals were created, modified and replaced. No matter how late it got and how tired we were, we kept on pushing.

The tension and excitement were great in the last few hours and minutes before submission, seconds before Wiki-Freeze almost unbearable. But the joy of seeing

what emerged after 8 months of hard work was even greater. Therefore, the champagne corks were already allowed to pop at 6 a.m. in the morning on wiki-freeze day!



**Figure 1: After the wiki freeze**  
(picture provided by Stefan Karl Kaufmann)

Finally, our last trip took us to Boston, to the Giant Jamboree, the closing event of iGEM. We had been working towards these days for a long time. In addition to our own presentation, we had the opportunity to delve into the projects of other iGEM teams. We had our own presentation on the first day, shortly after the opening ceremony. After that, we were able to enjoy the rest of the conference until the very end.

On the last day, the prizes and medals were awarded. We sat there with tension and eagerly watched the award ceremony, hoping for our set goal: **No less than a gold medal.**

And since November 4<sup>th</sup> it is official: We have convinced the jury

of our work and are proud to have completed iGEM.



**Figure 2: iGEM Team BOKU-Vienna**  
(picture provided by Stefan Karl Kaufmann)

We certainly look back on the last months with one smiling and one crying eye. We have accomplished so much in a new team, made new friends, set up the whole project from scratch and learned so much on the way. There were successes and failures, comedy and drama. And all of this has shaped us.

And even though we are still overwhelmed by the great end to our journey, we will now take the time and reflect.

So while this is our last newsletter of the iGEM team BOKU-Vienna 2019, the next teams are coming for sure. We are already curious to discover their project next year!

And last but not least, we would love to say THANK YOU once again for your support throughout the competitions. Without your help, none of this would have been possible and we are very thankful for your interest and trust.

**For the iGEM Team BOKU-Vienna**  
**Stefan Karl Kaufmann & Martina Helmlinger**

## Impressions of the Giant Jamboree

Haynes Convention Center in Boston. The beginning of the end. This is where the Giant Jamboree, the final event of iGEM, took place.

From 04/11 to 05/11, there was a lot going on in Boston. Nearly 400 teams of almost 4,000 students came to Boston for these 4 days to share the fruits of their work with everyone and collect their medals and prizes. The convention center's auditorium was fully packed from 8 a.m., the start of the opening ceremony.



**Figure 3: Opening ceremony Giant Jamborees** (picture provided by Stefan Karl Kaufmann)

After the opening ceremony, our presentation was already about to start. We had only little time to look around and hurried to the next free seminar room where we practiced our presentation one last time.

Then it was time for us to present our project..



**Figure 4: project presentation** (picture provided by Melanie Salek)

The excitement was great, not only on stage. After the hard work, after a long preparation, we presented our results to the judges. Afterwards the whole team was allowed to answer the questions of the judges on stage.

The presentation was followed by a poster session where we could present our project in greater detail and answered the questions of the judges. After this, we could fully enjoy the Jamboree with all its amazing and creative project expositions. We took part in different workshops, listened to the presentations of other teams, got to know new people and met old acquaintances from Meet-ups.



**Figure 5: The team during the poster presentation** (picture provided by iGEM Vienna)



**Figure 6: Poster and knitted *E.colis*** (picture provided by Stefan Karl Kaufmann)

## What did we win?

On the last day of the Jamboree, the prizes and medals for the projects were finally awarded. Every team was judged according to having met eligibility criteria for the respective medal category.

The atmosphere was tense when the winners of the medals were announced.

We waited eagerly where we would find our team name. What would we go home with, nothing, bronze, silver or gold?

When our name finally showed up next to the gold medal award, we could not believe it. Our joy and pride was beyond limits:

We took home the **gold medal** with our project "Mycolactone Diagnostics - A new Approach to Diagnose Buruli ulcer".



**Figure 7: gold medal** (picture provided by Melanie Salek)

There was cheering, screaming and tears of joy.



**Figure 8: Part of the Gold Medal Winners** (picture provided by Stefan Karl Kaufmann)

## At the End

Often one can't put it into words, and yet two words are enough to say it all: **THANK YOU.**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals, teams and groups who accompanied and supported us on our journey with their input, support and contributions.

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MAX PERUTZ LABS Vienna

Lactan Roth

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## Time to say goodbye

It was an honor for us to represent the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna and the University of Vienna as iGEM BOKU-Vienna 2019 at the iGEM competition. We would be delighted if you supported the iGEM BOKU-Vienna team in 2020 just as much as we did.

*There is a new beginning in each end.*  
(Miguel de Unamuno y Yugo)



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