

## INTRODUCTORY MICROSATELLITE WORKSHOP HOSTED ONLINE DURING LOCKDOWN

The DNA Sanger Sequencing facility at the University of Pretoria (UP) hosted an annual in-house Introductory Microsatellite Workshop (IMW) for UP postgraduate students and staff from 4 to 11 May 2020. The workshop was scheduled for early April but was postponed due to the national lockdown in South Africa. Due to the overwhelming interest in participants still wanting a workshop, facilitators therefore decided to host the workshop online instead of the usual 'in-person' workshop. The sessions were re-formatted to take place over six mornings to make online participation more accessible and manageable.



The workshop was reorganised as a hybrid of pre-recorded presentations and software demonstrations combined with online discussions and presentations to ensure that personal engagement and an open discussion forum with the participants were maintained. Facilitators of the workshop were Prof. Paulette Bloomer and Dr. Deon de Jager (BGM, MEEP), FABlans Prof. Irene Barnes (TPCP) and Dr. Felix Fru (TPCP), Dr. Arista Fourie (MPP), Melissa Reynolds (FMG), Renate Zipfel (DNA Sanger Sequencing facility) and Dr. Shani Bekker, a technical specialist from Thermo Fisher Scientific in South Africa.

The online format also allowed for a larger group of students than usual to participate, including many FABlans. Two FABlans even joined the workshop from China. Special permission was also granted for two participants from the ARC-Roodeplaat and one intern at the CSIR to participate in the in-house workshop.