AfteriGEM Reception Report

On August 25th, The first ever AfteriGEM reception was held in Tsinghua Hi-tech building in Nanshan Science and Technology Park, Shenzhen, China. Hosted by iGEM Asian ambassador Rebekah Hong Chen and co-organizer Bluepha, there were together seven iGEM teams, over 30 past iGEMers attended the reception. This reception symbolized the launch of AfteriGEM community in the wider China region.

iGEM vice president, Meagan Lizarazo, representing iGEM HQ attended the reception and delivered a speech on iGEM in China, and how AfteriGEM could be developed in the local region. In her talk, she also shared some thoughts about how to fully utilize the opportunity of iGEM in China. China has an increasing number of teams participating in iGEM competition every year. Over the years, not only thousands of participants developed their academic capabilities in the competition, the whole experience of iGEM changed some of theirs’ life and career pathway completely.
This reception also invited some of the outstanding past iGEMers to share their experiences with current iGEMers. Bluepha CEO, Dr. Haoqian Zhang, who was a team leader of a 2010 iGEM team, since then extended iGEM spirits by co-founded Bluepha, the first synbio start-up established by past iGEMers in China, and inspired numerous fellow students to pursue in science. Furthermore, The CEO of Danhe-tech, Mr. Sui Rui, shared his ideas and suggestions on how to bring technology and business together that in turn benefit the society from a bigger perspective.

During the After iGEM round table discussion session, past iGEMers from different teams over the years discussed topics related to AfteriGEM network and program setting for the AfteriGEM community in China. There were lots of useful feedback and comments generated from the brainstorming in terms of competition, entrepreneurship, collaboration and diversity, for instance, one of the past iGEMers suggested that some troubleshooting programs and academic videos could be included on the AfteriGEM webpage that would be informative, especially for those iGEMers who still working on pursuing their studies in synthetic biology industry.

In summary, this remarkable discussion gave the AfteriGEMers an opportunity to propose projects to expand the scope of biology education targeting Chinese students. It may also help laying the foundation for the progress of synthetic biology society in China. With the continuous efforts of iGEM alumni, the Chinese AfteriGEM Community will certainly become broader, more united and inspired in the near future.
We’d like to thank you our co-organizer Bluepha for providing venue and all the necessary assistance, also SSTi-SZGD 2018 iGEM team for video/audio-visual assistance and on-site support.