Volume 12

Washington University
Undergraduate Research Digest

Spring 2017

Annotation of the Genomic Landscape on Contig29 of the D. eugracilis Dot Chromosome

Kristina Zudock
Washington University in St. Louis

Annotation of the Genomic Landscape on Contig29 of the *D. eugracilis* Dot Chromosome

Kristina Zudock

Mentor: Sarah Elgin

Most *Drosophila* have a small chromosome known as the dot chromosome (F element). This chromosome is unusual because it appears to be almost entirely heterochromatic, yet its 1.3 Mb-long arm has a normal gene density and three times the number of repetitive elements on euchromatic chromosome arms. The ~80 genes found on the F element are expressed and function in heterochromatin at the same levels as is typical of euchromatic genes. The genomic landscape of the *D. eugracilis* dot chromosome was examined in this study. *D. eugracilis* was selected because it is more recently diverged (10-15 million years) from a common ancestor with *D. melanogaster* than other *Drosophila* previously analyzed, meaning its dot chromosome regulatory motifs likely share enough similarities with *D. melanogaster's* to be recognizable. This study focuses on the annotation of contig29, an ~56 kb region of the *D. eugracilis* fourth chromosome. One goal of this project is to identify the most parsimonious gene model for the two features on contig29 as compared to the *D. melanogaster* ortholog. Each gene model was required to have appropriate stop and start codons, coding exon boundaries, and splice sites that do not lead to phase shifts across an intron while being in congruence with transcription data. Using a mixture of bioinformatics tools and genomic databases along with *D. eugracilis* expression data (including RNA-Seq analysis in embryos, adult male, and adult female flies), the coding spans for two genes and their isoforms were identified—*MED26* (two isoforms differing in their 5' UTRs) and *bt* (five unique isoforms). Additionally, genomic data for *D. melanogaster*, *D. biarmipes*, and *D. eugracilis* was examined for evidence of transcription start sites for the two features on contig29. Ultimately, annotation of these conserved regulatory motifs will provide insight into how gene regulation functions on the dot chromosome.