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## *Preface*

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Writing a synthetic biology textbook is beset with many of the same challenges faced by the field in the wider scientific world. What is the 'definitive' definition? What are the core topics that define the field? What terms and phrases have the community accepted? What terms and phrases have the contributing authors accepted? Ultimately these issues must give way to providing an account of the research, even though debate may continue. Initially, this book was envisaged as an olive branch to the more cynical or unaccepting members of the fundamental life science community. But as the sheer scale of elegant and interesting work piled up for inclusion in each chapter, it became clear that a comprehensive textbook would also be valuable for the diehard biohackers, academics, entrepreneurs and captains of synthetic biology industry who have rolled their sleeves up and got to work founding companies, making research breakthroughs and democratizing biology over the last decade. I would like to thank all the contributing authors for their hard work in producing these chapters and the publishers for their patience in the face of my spaghetti deadlines.