

## Alumni Profile

### Ricardo Ramirez – Cellular and Molecular Biosciences Gateway PhD Program



#### Career

What made you get into the career that you are in?

*I was always interested in basic science, ranging from biochemistry to astronomy, but when diagnosed with anti-phospholipid antibody syndrome at the age of 16, I was intrigued to learn more about this under-studied disease. This process introduced me to the process of scientific research. Since then, I have been fortunate enough to traverse across the 'space' of scientific research; aquatic toxicology, biochemistry of lipids, stem cells, to the innate and adaptive immune systems.*

What do you see yourself doing in five or ten years?

*My hopes are to conduct research with my own group investigating basic and translational research questions.*

How do you hope to make a difference?

*I hope to make a difference both across the community and at the personal level. I hope to show young aspiring scientists through my work and story, that hard work, diligence and perseverance are important for making their dreams a reality. We truly make a difference in our community if we take the time and effort to focus on each member. I enjoy teaching and partake in opportunities that strengthen the skills of others and for myself.*

#### Your Time at UCI

When did you attend UCI?

*2011-2016.*

What program were you in?

*Entered through the CMB, but later joined the department of Developmental and Cell Biology, Center for Complex Biological Systems.*

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

*I enjoyed the interactions with faculty and research opportunities at UCI.*

## **Reflections**

What is your most memorable moment/experience at UCI?

*While it is difficult to sum this up in one distinct example, the most memorable moments were the valuable discussions with esteemed colleagues and friends about research.*

Was there one thing or one person at UCI that really helped or made a difference in your graduate/postdoctoral career? If so, tell us about whomever or what it was?

*I really am very appreciative of Dr. Peter Donovan, for not only providing feedback during my thesis, but for his support as a colleague and friend.*

Did you do any research while at UCI and what was it?

*My thesis was focused on deciphering the gene regulatory networks during human myeloid differentiation. Aside from this, I was fortunate to work with colleagues on iPSC-derived human microglia and on transcriptional regulation of human embryonic stem cells at UCI. Outside of UCI, I was an active member of the ENCODE and STATegra consortiums.*

- How would you explain your research to your grandparent? How would you help someone understand the importance/significance of this research?

“Dear Grandma, in every cell of our body, we have a *blueprint* called the Genome. Like the *blueprint* that describes the location and function of each positioned room within your home, our Genome contains information that is specifically localized, but also serves a particular function. Part of my research is to investigate how these different genomic locations and their unknown functions are maintained or perturbed across diseases like cancer.”

## **Alumni Life**

What are you currently up to?

*I am currently a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School working on gene regulation and chromatin structure of T regulatory cells.*

How did your education at UCI benefit you in your current life?

What book or podcast would you suggest to someone who is just getting started with their graduate career at UCI? (Examples – *Podcast: Happier with Gretchen Rubin; Book: Who Moved my Cheese*)

*Book: Dr. Seuss; Oh, the places you'll go!*

What advice do you have for a new graduate student?

*Read papers that are outside of your discipline, stay on top of your field. You can actually learn a lot from other fields and could be useful for your own studies.*

What advice would you give to a current graduate student as they look towards their future careers?

*Network, network, network!! It never hurts to meet and listen to others talk about their experiences.*

What are your hobbies/passions outside of your work/research?

*I enjoy soccer and boxing both as a spectator and forms of exercise. My passions are enjoying life with loved ones and close family.*

How do you balance work/life?

*I enjoy starting my day earlier, and stop working when I get home to enjoy time with my loved ones.*

What person inspires you?

*My father, Ralph Ramirez.*

Is there a typical 'down' weekend for you—how do you relax?

*I enjoy cooking breakfast and eating it rather slowly (no need to rush 😊). Cooking and enjoying a nice glass of scotch is also quite relaxing.*