

Nicolas Pinel



What's your educational background?

Nic went to the University of Miami for his undergraduate degree where he studied Microbiology.

He then worked on Microbiology and Astrobiology at the University of Washington.

What did you do before you came to ISB?

He worked with a newly discovered system of symbiotic bacteria that live in the kidney-like organs of earthworms. They searched for what kinds of bacteria were associated with the earth worms and what sorts of functions the bacteria performed for the earthworms.

(Paper can be read here: <http://ijs.sgmjournals.org/content/58/9/2147>)

What do you do at ISB?

Nic is a postdoctoral researcher. He develops a a question or project into a series of experimental approaches to come closer to answers. "In other words, I just do a lot of experiments." When he doesn't have a specific question, he tries out new ways of addressing questions, tries to confirm observations, and cultures microorganisms.

So what's your overarching question now?

"What is the nature of the interaction between Dunaliella and Halobacterium and, more generally, how are the halophilic photosynthesizers like Dunaliella interacting with the coinhabiting Archaea?"

With your background in Microbiology and Astrobiology, what other careers would people be able to pursue?

There are many ways people can apply their experience and expertise as a researcher. They can research with an institute or a biological company. A traditional route is to become an academic researcher, acting as a professor as well. Or you could become a full-time teacher.

Colleges usually hire professors based off of the research they can do, right?

At research universities, that's primarily what matches a professor with the university. Teaching Universities are more focused on how well professors will be able to reach the students. The professor brings their research interest with them and the university tries to make sure that his or her research interests fit within a broader group. "Western Washington, a teaching university, has a group of researchers that do very different things. There are microbiologists and plant biologists teaching in the Biology department whereas at University of Washington, a research university, within one department the interests are more interrelated."

So, what do you do for fun?

"I don't work... although work is kind of fun. :)" Nic sails and hikes a lot in the summer, and dances Salsa and Tango year round.

Do you have any advice for upcoming students?

Make sure that what you decide to do will be fun and fulfilling. "The best strategy is to make sure what you're doing contributes to your dreams. So don't settle for less."

Ryan Pelan



What is your educational background and Career Path leading up to ISB?

Up until his junior year of high school, Ryan wanted to be a fireman and it was his goal to go to the Fire Academy, but one sweaty basketball game later he met up with an old friend who had been attending the Art Institute of Seattle. After seeing what he was doing there and what life in the city was like, Ryan started to doubt his ambition to be a Fireman and it wasn't until his dad said "you can always come back and be a fireman" that he decided to pursue "computer stuff." Ryan attended the Art Institute for a degree in Multi Media which was a study that encompassed a variety of media related fields. For his last two semesters at the Art Institute, Ryan interned at the call center of a company that would manage other company support sites while "replicating someone else's visual appeal" for the looks of the site. "I just decided at the age of 21 that I just wanted to get completely out of Washington so I moved down and worked for a company down in Las Vegas." There he worked with C++ and Java programmers. After leaving that company, he did his own web stuff on the side, but being a "9-5 kinda guy" he wanted a job that paid on a particular date and looked for a company that would let him do a little bit of everything, which he found worked best through non-profit companies. He took a job at ISB as a graphics designer because ISB fit his needs and would let him expand his experience outside of graphics designing.

What is your role at ISB?

Ryan is a graphics designer but does a lot more than just graphics. He manages ISB's websites and works a little bit on the designs, all the visuals and anything else that has an "ISB brand." His department started working on video editing a

few years back and just recently started with audio as well as Social Media. “At ISB I get to work on a little bit of everything.”

What other careers are available to people with your educational background?

There are many jobs that are available to people with experience with computers but Ryan categorizes them into non-profit and for-profit. The non-profit companies he finds are better because they will allow you to work outside of your job description and expand your experience and work with other departments whereas the for-profit companies will keep you in one specific line of work where you get really good at what you do. Ryan also has the unique option to offer to remake a business’s website or keep them up to date with social media in exchange for whatever that business’ services are.

What do you do for fun?

“Pretty much anything outdoors, I really like camping, hiking, snowboarding, downhill Mt. biking, pretty much anything in the water.” “The Pacific Northwest is pretty awesome for what it is because if you go outside there’s always something to do as long as you can brave the elements and the weather.”

Do you have any advice for up and coming students?

“Have fun? Because if you’re not having fun then something is wrong.”

Juan Caballero



What is your educational background?

First, Juan majored in Biochemical engineering. Then he pursued a PhD in planned genetics. At ISB, he works in bio-informatics and computation biology.

What has been your career path leading up to ISB?

It has been random. He first started on the engineering path and slowly moved to the computational side. He was really drawn to ISB's strong computational programs and people, especially in the Hood lab. That is why he moved here to the Institute for Systems Biology.

What is your role at ISB?

Right now, he is a postdoctoral fellow. He does analysis for different projects, which includes bio-marking discoveries, data analysis, visualization, data processing, and other kinds of investigation. He specialized in the next generation of sequencers, so he has to have skills in all types of data processing and analysis.

What other careers are available to people with your educational background?

Because he has such a diverse background, people with Juan's educational background can work in industry, pharmaceuticals, with plants, city improvement, human genetics, and genetic counseling.

What do you do for fun?

Juan watches a lot of movies and plays with his two year old son. He reads books and occasionally watches television, but his son takes up the bulk of his time.

Do you have any advice for up and coming students?

"Just be open." The Institute for Systems Biology especially is open to all educational backgrounds and to different approaches, so to succeed here, it is important to be open and be able to share and collaborate with others.