

EDUCATION

UC San Diego PhD Bioengineering, GPA: 3.98	La Jolla, CA 2023–Present
Massachusetts Institute of Technology Visiting Scholar Biological Engineering	Cambridge, MA 2021–2022
University of Utah Honors BS Biomedical Engineering with Chemistry Minor, GPA: 3.98 Thesis: Importance Sampling Techniques for the Analysis of Genetic Circuits	Salt Lake City, UT 2019–2023
University of Utah Honors BS Applied Mathematics, GPA: 3.98 Thesis: Stability of Genetic Oscillators with Distributed Delayed Feedback	Salt Lake City, UT 2019–2023

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Researcher, UC San Diego Biodynamics Lab, PI: Jeff Hasty	La Jolla, CA August 2023–Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Designed and constructed synthetic genetic circuits utilizing control systems algorithms for therapeutic applications– Built and rigorously analyzed synthetic genetic circuits illustrative of complex nonlinear phenomena including chaos and self-organized criticality– Developed novel physics-informed machine learning architectures for biological system identification	
Research Software Engineer, CU Boulder Genetic Logic Lab, PI: Chris Myers	Boulder, CO May 2020–September 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Developed simulation tools for the computer-aided design of genetic circuits– Adapted variance-reduction techniques such as importance sampling for stochastic simulation of genetic circuit dynamics– Developed novel stochastic simulation algorithms for the analysis of rare genetic events	
Visiting Researcher, MIT Synthetic Biology Center, PI: Ron Weiss	Cambridge, MA December 2021–December 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Constructed hybrid biophysical models of neuromorphic genetic circuits biological systems– Applied statistical and machine learning techniques to large -omics datasets to infer unknown regulatory dynamics– Constructed and characterized neuromorphic genetic circuits <i>in vivo</i>	
Biostatistics Researcher, University of Utah Scientific Computing and Imaging Institute, PI: Tamara Bidone	Salt Lake City, UT August 2021–June 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Developed biophysical simulations of E-cadherin dynamics– Applied biostatistical methods to relate simulation results to biological phenomena	

- Demonstrated the emergence cancerous phenotypes from simple models of E-cadherin dysregulation

Project Lead, InnovaBio

SKIP Project, PI: Mary Nelson

West Jordan, UT

August 2017-August 2019

- Utilized genetic engineering techniques to produce bioactive, recombinant human skeletal muscle and kidney-enriched inositol phosphatase in *E. coli*
- Trained interns in the essential techniques of biotechnology and genetic engineering
- Presented results and literature reviews to supervisors and lab mates

TEACHING & MENTORSHIP

Teaching Experience

Tutor, High Performance Tutoring

Private Tutor

Salt Lake City, UT

August 2018-Present

- Tutored mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and English from the high school to advanced undergraduate level
- Taught over 400 students for more than 3000 hours with an average rating of 4.96/5 stars
- Developed ACT and SAT curricula

Graduate Instructional Assistant, UC San Diego

Teaching Assistant

La Jolla, CA

Spring 2024-Present

- Wrote curriculum, homework assignments, and quizzes as well as lectured course content
- Awarded TA excellence award for teaching efforts
- Course List:
 - * BENG 123: Dynamic Simulation in Bioengineering (UG)
 - * BENG 125: Modeling and Computation in Bioengineering (UG)
 - * BENG 254: Synthetic Biology (G)

Tutoring Assistant, Kumon

Private Tutor

West Jordan, UT

August 2017-May 2018

- Tutored children ages 3 to 14 in mathematics and reading
- Graded student homework assignments

Mentorship

BUMMP Mentor, UC San Diego

Biology Undergraduate and Master's Student Mentor

La Jolla, CA

October 2023-Present

- Involved undergraduate biology students in academic research
- Organized social and recreational events for around 100 students
- Guided URM students to find success in STEM

JUMP Mentor, UC San Diego

Engineering Undergraduate Student Mentor

La Jolla, CA

October 2023-Present

- Helped undergraduate engineering students navigate their program and career

- Facilitated program workshops on career and technical skills
- Fostered a sense of community by leading small-group social activities

College of Engineering Ambassador, University of Utah
Ambassador

Salt Lake City, UT
August 2019-May 2023

- Conducted STEM outreach and education events at local high schools
- Mentored undergraduate engineering students in the Engineering Scholars program
- Organized Engineering Day at the University of Utah for over 1000 students annually

AWARDS & HONORS

- **NSF Graduate Research Fellow, 2025** The NSF GRFP is the oldest graduate fellowship of its kind and one of the most competitive in the United States. It recognizes outstanding graduate students in STEM disciplines who demonstrate potential for significant research achievements. In 2025, 1,000 fellows were selected from over 12,000 applicants.
- **Teaching Assistant Excellence Award, 2024** Every year, the UCSD Bioengineering department confers a TA Excellence Award upon an Instructional Assistant that demonstrated exceptional professionalism, innovation, and dedication to their students. The award is based on student and instructor evaluations.
- **Hertz Fellowship Semifinalist, 2024** The Hertz Fellowship is a highly selective and prestigious graduate research fellowship. I was considered as a semifinalist among around 10% of the best PhD candidates from the top 55 engineering schools around the country.
- **Undergraduate Research Scholar, 2023** The Undergraduate Research Scholar Designation (URSD) recognizes a student's commitment to their development as a researcher during their undergraduate career. The URSD appears in the awards section of the transcripts of graduating students. URSD awardees receive a white research cord from the Office of Undergraduate Research to wear at convocation and commencement.
- **NonaWorks Software x Biology Hackathon Winner, 2023** Each year, Nona hosts a hackathon event where students have the opportunity to work as a team to develop software to solve open problems in the biotechnology space. I led a diverse team of five students to solve an advanced biosecurity problem and win first place in the competition.
- **SB³C Student Paper Contest Winner, 2022** Each year, the Summer Bioengineering, Biomechanics, Biotransport Conference (SB³C) selects 2 undergraduate papers from its international applicant pool as winners for an undergraduate paper competition.
- **Kennecott Engineering Scholar, 2022** Kennecott Scholars are excellent engineering students at the University of Utah who have the opportunity to live in an engineering themed living-learning community.
- **MIT Visiting Scholar, 2021** Visiting Scholars conduct academic research at MIT for a period of one week to one year. I was a visiting scholar in the Weiss Lab at the MIT Synthetic Biology Center.
- **Utah's Next Top Model Winner, 2021** The University of Utah holds this mathematical modeling contest annually. I led a team of three students to win first place in the competition.
- **UROP Awardee, 2021** UROP provides funding for students who assist with a faculty member's research. I was granted a UROP award for my work simulating E-Cadherin dynamics with Tamara Bidone.

- **Goldwater Scholar Finalist, 2021** The Goldwater Scholarship is the most prestigious undergraduate scholarship in the natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering in America. Four students are nominated for the award by participating institutions each year.
- **University of Utah Presidential Scholar, 2019** The Presidential Scholarship is the most valuable merit scholarship offered by the University of Utah. Presidential Scholars receive a full tuition waiver and housing stipend for eight semesters of undergraduate study.
- **Sterling Scholar: Science, 2019** A Sterling Scholar is a high school senior who is publicly recognized and awarded for the pursuit of excellence in scholarship, leadership, and citizenship in the State of Utah.
- **National Merit Scholar, 2019** The highest level of distinction given by NMSC, given to students who have been judged to have the strongest combination of academic skills and achievements, extracurricular accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous university studies.
- **National AP Scholar, 2018 and 2019** The highest level of distinction given by AP, granted to students in the United States who receive an average score of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams. Won twice.
- **SLCC SME Symposium First Place, 2018** First place prize at the annual Salt Lake Community College Science, Math, and Engineering Symposium in the Team Technical Poster Category. Awarded for my team's research on the expression and solubility of SKIP in E. Coli.

PUBLICATIONS

1. **PJ Thomas**, T Transue, Jeff Hasty, Bao Wang, "A Learning-based Approach to Inferring RNA Velocity Landscapes", *IEEE/ACM Transactions on Computational Biology and Bioinformatics*, [IN PREPARATION]
2. L Buecherl, M Ahmadi, A Gerber, B Israelsen, J Jeppson, T Prouty, E Reiss, R Roberts, L Taylor, **PJ Thomas**, C Winstead, Z Zhang, H Zheng, CJ Myers, "Applications of Infinite Stochastic Model Checking to the Dynamic Analysis of Biochemical Systems", *ACS Synthetic Biology*, [SUBMITTED]
3. M Ahmadi, L Buecherl, **PJ Thomas**, CJ Myers, Z Zhang, C Winstead, H Zheng, "A Bounded Model Checking Approach to Analyzing Infinite-State Stochastic Models", *IEEE/ACM Transactions on Computational Biology and Bioinformatics*, [SUBMITTED]
4. **PJ Thomas**, "Stability of Genetic Oscillators with Distributed Delayed Feedback", *Range: Undergraduate Research Journal*, July 2023
5. **PJ Thomas**, "Importance Sampling for the Analysis of Genetic Circuits", *Range: Undergraduate Research Journal*, July 2023
6. Z Sents, TE Stoughton, L Buecherl, **PJ Thomas**, P Fontanarro, and CJ Myers, "SynBioSuite: A Tool for Improving the Workflow for Genetic Design and Modeling", *ACS Synthetic Biology*, March 2023
7. **PJ Thomas**, M Ahmadi, L Buecherl, C Winstead, CJ Myers, and H Zheng, "A Comparison of Weighted Stochastic Simulation Methods for the Analysis of Genetic Circuits", *ACS Synthetic Biology*, December 2022
8. B Shaikh, LP Smith, D Vasilescu, G Marupilla, M Wilson, E Agmon, H Agnew, SS Andrews, A Anwar, ME Beber, FT Bergmann, D Brooks, L Bruschi, L Calzone, K Choi, J Cooper, J Detloff, B Drawert, M Dumontier, GB Ermentrout, JR Faeder, AP Freiburger, F Fröhlich, A Funahashi, A Garny, JH Gennari, P Gleeson, A Goelzer, Z Haiman, J Hasenauer, JL Hellerstein, H Hermjakob, S Hoops, JC Ison, D Jahn, HV Jakubowski, R Jordan, M Kalaš, M König, W Liebermeister, RSM Sheriff, S Mandal, R McDougal, JK Medley, P Mendes, R Müller, CJ Myers, A

- Naldi, TVN Nguyen, DP Nickerson, BG Olivier, D Patoliya, L Paulevé, LR Petzold, A Priya, AK Rampadarath, JM Rohwer, AS Saglam, D Singh, A Sinha, J Snoep, H Sorby, R Spangler, J Starruß, **PJ Thomas**, D Van Niekerk, Daniel Weindl, Fengkai Zhang, Anna Zhukova, AP Goldberg, JC Schaff, ML Blinov, HM Sauro, II Moraru, and JR Karr, “BioSimulators: A Central Registry of Simulation Engines and Services for Recommending Specific Tools”, *Nucleic Acids Research*, May 2022
9. L Buecherl, R Roberts, P Fontanarrosa, **PJ Thomas**, J Mante, Z Zhang, and CJ Myers, “Stochastic Hazard Analysis of Genetic Circuits in iBioSim and STAMINA”, *ACS Synthetic Biology*, October 2021

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

1. C Daruwala, **PJ Thomas**, J Hasty, “Built to Flip: Noise-induced Switching in Genetic Circuits”, *UCSD UG Engineering Research Symposium*, May 2025
2. **PJ Thomas**, T Transue, B Wang, J Hasty, “Nonlinear Biosystem Identification with scRNA-seq”, *JSOE Research Expo*, April 2025
3. **PJ Thomas**, J Hasty, “Self-organized Criticality in Gene Regulatory Networks”, *Winter qBio*, February 2025
4. P Emmanuele, **PJ Thomas**, N van der Wagt, S Kumar, L Tsimring, J Hasty, “Dynamic Division of Labor using Duplicate Origins of Replication”, *Winter qBio*, February 2025
5. **PJ Thomas**, T Transue, QH Ho, Y Binik, PK Tran, “BioGenius–Biosecurity for DNA Synthesis Cores”, *NonaWorks Software x Biology*, September 2023
6. **PJ Thomas**, T Transue, “A Learning-Based Approach to Inferring RNA Velocity Landscapes”, *IWBDA*, September 2023
7. L Buecherl, **PJ Thomas**, M Ahmadi, J Jeppson, A Gerber, E Reiss, C Winstead, H Zheng, Z Zhang, CJ Myers, “A Collection of Biological Models for the Development of Infinite-State Stochastic Model Checking Tools”, *IWBDA*, September 2023
8. **PJ Thomas**, “Importance Sampling for the Analysis of Genetic Circuits”, *University of Utah Undergraduate Research Symposium*, April 2023
9. **PJ Thomas** and TC Bidone, “The Role of Actin Coralling in the Formation of Cell-Cell Adhesions”, *SB3C*, June 2022
10. **PJ Thomas**, M Ahmadi, H Zheng, and CJ Myers, “A Comparison of Weighted Stochastic Simulation Methods”, *IWBDA*, September 2021
11. T Stoughton, L Buecherl, **PJ Thomas**, P Fontanarrosa, and CJ Myers, “iBioSim Server: A Tool for Improving the Workflow for Genetic Design and Modeling”, *IWBDA*, September 2021
12. **PJ Thomas**, “Production of Biologically Active Recombinant Human SKIP”, *SLCC SME*, March 2019
13. E Green, V Scott, and **PJ Thomas**, “Purification and Expression of SKIP”, *SLCC SME*, March 2018