

Suliman Sharif

PhD Student

I am a British and San Francisco native, software engineer and scientist currently embarking on the PhD Student journey. I love to code and I also love chemistry which has now been popularized into the field of cheminformatics.

In my undergraduate days, I was a hardcore natural product chemist turned into a peptide synthesizer for manufacturing therapeutics across the board for various institutions (University of Houston, University of Texas at Austin, MD Anderson Cancer Center) and along side that I was receiving an informal education from my peers for computer science. Eventually, I took a break for wet lab and focused solely on learning computer science via classes and an internship with Macromoltek and then finally began my masters in organic chemistry.

After my masters, a friend messaged me through the internet relay chat saying he was going to start a biotech company in Austin, TX and needed folk that could code but also under the science. I joined the company alongside 10 others and we built a LIMS software company to manage data for big name pharma companies and us/canadian government research. Through which I not only honed my coding skills, but also learned how to build a company from the ground up.

As my coding skills increased, so did my love for cheminformatics and its growing field. In my spare time I developed packages via python on top of various existing open source cheminformatic platforms and distributed them on PyPi (Cocktail Shaker, Global Chem, MolPDF). Through my contributions I was offered to talk at the RDKit conference and I found other folk like myself passionate about this field.

I was offered a doctoral position at the University of Maryland, School of Pharmacy and so with a team of others I landed series B investments worth 10 million to keep the company afloat, took my leave and entered the doctoral program under the tutelage of Jana Shen.

Jana is interested in combining both Molecular Dynamics and Cheminformatics and forming a solid bridge between the two. For the past couple of months I have spent significant time learning Molecular Dynamics and also contributing my own ideas into some theories about why polymers self assemble in a simulation. For the summer 2021, I want to learn from the industry how cheminformatics is utilized and help aid me in linking all this knowledge together. I hope at your company I can achieve a better knowledge as well as incorporate it into my own research.

Sincerely,

Suliman Sharif