



The Bioinformatics and Genomics Careers Spotlight webinar series aims to inform African students of various possible career pathways once completing a degree in bioinformatics and genomics to which they might be unaware of due to the intense focus to complete their projects and graduate, as well as a lack of career centered events.

Date: 29th January 2021

Time: 3pm WAT / 4pm CAT / 5pm EAT

Link to webinar registration: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAtf-2rrDkvHNRj4IMTGggfEgRIjsRy1L3j>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting via Zoom.

Panelists:

Dr. Rukmini Kumar, Chief Scientist & Co-founder, Vantage Research



Rukmini Kumar started working on Model-Based Drug Development, specifically mechanistic physiological modelling during her PhD. Her work contributed to scientific publications as well as to the founding of [Immunetrix](#) in Pittsburgh. She spent 7+ years working with [Entelos](#), a pioneer company in predictive biosimulation, and since 2013 as Chief Scientist & co-founder of Vantage Research.

Rukmini leads multi-disciplinary teams in developing physiologically detailed models to simulate novel drugs and trial designs and enable better decision making in drug discovery. She has worked with many of the major pharmaceutical companies, including Eli Lilly, Merck, Bayer, Mitsubishi-Tanabe etc. as well as the Gates Foundation and in disease areas such as diabetes, oncology, auto-immune diseases, liver toxicity and sepsis.

Academic experience: Bachelors and Masters in Physics (University of Madras and IIT, Madras), and Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Pittsburgh (Thesis Title: Dynamics of Acute Inflammation)

Dr. Judith_Hornby Cuff, Managing Director, Centre for Proteomic and Genomic Research



Judith is currently the Managing Director at the Centre for Proteomic and Genomic Research. She is responsible for giving strategic guidance and direction to the CPGR board to ensure that the Company achieves its vision, mission and long-term goals. Her career path towards advancing biotechnology in South Africa started by being awarded a PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand (Biophysics). This was followed by a highly driven and focused five-year period of postdoctoral research at the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics at the University of Arizona, Tuscon, Arizona, USA). Judith joined the CPGR in 2007 as a platform manager, extensively involved in projects involving the study of biomarkers in the advancement of personalized medicine and individual health. The completion of an MBA degree from Stellenbosch University in 2013 supported her venture into the commercialization of science and innovation within the biotechnology and healthcare sectors. She also held a 2-year position as a member of the International Biomarker Consortium Inflammation and Immunity steering Committee managed by the FNIH and has just completed a postgraduate diploma on Genomic Medicine and Healthcare from the University of South Wales, UK, advancing her interest and passion for societal upliftment through the development of genomic healthcare opportunities.

Dr. Abasi Ene-Obong, founder and Chief Executive Officer, 54gene



Dr Abasi Ene-Obong is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of 54gene a health technology company advancing the state of healthcare through large scale discovery and translational research, advanced molecular diagnostics, and clinical programs for the benefit of Africans and the global population. He holds a PhD in Cancer Biology from University of London, a Masters in human molecular genetics from Imperial College London and a Masters in Business Management from Claremont Colleges, California. He also worked as a cancer researcher and published a seminal paper on pancreatic cancer immunology, Gastroenterology Journal. He has extensive experience operating in the US, UK and Nigerian healthcare industries. Prior to 54gene, Dr Ene-Obong worked with leading healthcare organisations, including Fortune 100 pharmaceutical companies, academic and research institutions, and governments as a management consultant with PwC and IQVIA (formerly QuintilesIMS). Founded in 2019, 54gene has made the Time Magazine list of 12 innovations that would change healthcare in the 2020s and has been listed by Nigeria's Punch newspaper as 1 of 5 innovations that would improve healthcare for Africans. 54gene also made the Fast Company list of the world's 'Most Innovative Companies' in 2020. It was also



awarded the best health technology solution by AppsAfrica and Dr Ene-Obong was listed as 1 of 30 most innovative entrepreneurs on the African continent in 2019 by Quartz Africa.

Dr. Junaid Gamielien, Head of Bioinformatics at Roche Diagnostics Cape Town



Junaid completed a BSc with majors in Microbiology and Biochemistry in 1992, a BSc Honours in Microbiology with a biotechnology focus in 1993 and a MSc in Biochemistry with a cancer molecular biology focus in 1995, all at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. After a year as a research assistant in the Oesophageal Cancer Research group at UWC, he joined the newly formed South African National Bioinformatics Institute (SANBI) in 1997 as a PhD candidate focused on novel genome scale approaches for identifying virulence genes and potential drug targets in pathogenic bacteria under the supervision and mentorship of the founder, Prof Winston Hide. Immediately after completing his PhD in 2001, he joined the SANBI/UWC spin-off company Electric Genetics as Director of Bioinformatics, where one of his roles was contributing to strategic improvements to stackPACK, the company's flagship product software used by amongst others, Affymetrix, as one of the components in the development pipeline for their first expression microarrays. After a period as manager of the central node of the National Bioinformatics Network in South Africa between 2004 and 2007, he worked as an independent bioinformatics consultant before re-joining SANBI as a research group leader from 2010 to 2019. His work was primarily focused on developing knowledge-driven approaches for maximising the potential of next-generation sequencing as applied to variant discovery, transcriptomics and epigenetics in mostly rare and/or atypical human diseases. During this time he graduated 7 PhD and 4 Masters students and mentored 2 postdocs.

Junaid is currently Head of Bioinformatics at Roche Diagnostics Cape Town, formerly Kapa Biosystems, where he leads a team of bioinformaticians that supports the research, development and quality activities of the company's NGS sample and library prep product portfolio. He is also a member of the site leadership team and advises on projects at other Roche sites related to large scale knowledge management/discovery and variant curation and prioritization.