

# Graduate Student Spotlight

## Jeffrey Pina



### Where did you grow up and complete your undergrad?

I grew up pretty local in the city of Orange. After transferring from Santiago Canyon College, I finished my Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry at CSUF.

### Whose lab are you in and what has it been like working in that lab?

I'm currently working in Dr. Keppetipola's lab. Working in the lab has been a unique learning experience which has developed my critical thinking skills. I've had the chance to mentor new students by demonstrating biochemistry techniques and through assisting with troubleshooting experiments which has helped to facilitate development of their scientific thinking.

### What are some of the requirements for your graduate program?

The majority of the program consists of a research project and thesis. It is very important to pick a lab that studies subject matter that you are interested in while also finding a professor you can form a close relationship with. These are vital to conducting good research and writing a strong thesis.

### How do you manage workload, classes and research?

It primarily comes down to good time management. A lot of research techniques in the lab often have large periods of wait time, so I've learned how to utilize these gaps of time to complete assignments and schedule my classes. Aligning your schedule so it flows as efficiently as possible is key.

### What is a typical day like for you?

I get to campus around 10am. I first head to lab, check on emails, go through my lab notebook and review what I've done the past week, what I'll need to complete today and what I'll be working on for the rest of the week. I'll discuss results with Dr. Keppetipola, give my interpretation on the results and the reasoning for my next experiments, write down a plan for the week, and try to follow the plan as much as possible. It's important to keep up on lab work, reading research papers and data analysis so as not to fall behind.

### Can you tell us about CSUPERB?

In January 2019 the CSU Program for Education & Research in Biotechnology held their annual conference in Orange County and I applied for the Don Eden Graduate Student Research Award. Out of 19 applicants, I was selected as a top 5 finalist and presented a research poster to a panel of judges as well as an oral presentation to the entire conference. It was a nerve racking event but I'm glad I got to be a part of it and try something new.

### What are some of your goals once your graduate program is complete?

Right now I have been applying to PhD programs in the local area. I have interviewed with UCI and UCLA, and I have an upcoming interview with UCSD. The programs seem very interesting and I can see myself pursuing them if I am accepted. If I don't end up going that route, I'm planning on finding a job in a biotech company, possibly in Irvine which has a lot of opportunities. I am also interested in the forensic sciences as well as potentially working more in the business side of biotechnology. I'm keeping my options open for now by being willing to try new things.

### What advice do you have for future prospective graduate students?

I would say for research projects if the work isn't going well, if a student is not getting results or the experiment is having many difficulties, don't be afraid to step back and put it to the side for a little while and do something else. It is easy to get caught up in trying the same thing over and over, but you only have a limited time in the program. Don't waste good science on a bad experiment. Find something that lets you use your time effectively and acquire good data while remaining of interest to you.