

Jesús Federico Peña

Education

- Pres. **Ph.D**, *University of California, Riverside, CA.*
Microbiology
Thesis: *Evolutionary developmental biology of zygomycetes*
Advisor: Dr. Jason E. Stajich
- 2015 **Master of Science**, *University of Denver, CO.*
Cell and molecular biology
Thesis: *Gene expression in the choanoderm*
Advisor: Dr. Scott A. Nichols
- 2013 **Bachelor of Science**, *University of Denver, CO.*
Major: Molecular biology
Minors: Mathematics, chemistry

Certifications

- 2020 **University Level Teaching**, *University of California, Riverside, CA.*

Experience

Research

- 2016–Pres. **Graduate student researcher**, STAJICH LABORATORY, University of California, Riverside.
The Stajich Lab studies evolutionary and functional genomics of Fungi. My research addresses hypotheses about sexual development in early-diverging fungi through a combination of wetlab and bioinformatics techniques.
- 2013–2015 **Graduate student researcher**, NICHOLS LABORATORY, University of Denver.
The Nichols Lab focuses on the early evolution of animals. My master's project focused on gene expression in the choanoderm, a sponge specific tissue composed of cells with putative homology to choanoflagellates, the sister group of animals.

Non-academic

- Pres. **Vice President and Chair of Training**, *SciComm @ UCR*, University of California, Riverside.
I am one of the founders of UCR's science communication student group and the chair of our training committee. We have organized workshops to train other grad students in science communication, coordinated public outreach events, created the podcast Beyond the Bench, and we are curating a new blog

- 2016 **Laboratory programs assistant**, *Denver Museum of Nature and Science*, Denver. I oversaw daily operations of Biology Basecamp, a participatory lab space within Expedition Health, the health sciences exhibit. Additionally, I managed and trained volunteers on laboratory facilitation, maintained microbial and invertebrate cultures, and managed organ programming.

Publications

Peña JF, Alié A, Richter DJ, Wang L, Funayama N, Nichols SA. Conserved expression of vertebrate microvillar gene homologs in choanocytes of freshwater sponges. *EvoDevo* 2016; 7(13)

Presentations and Posters

- 2019 **Evolution of the Mating Type Locus in Mucoromycotina**, *Mycological Society of America*.
Poster
- 2018 **Evolution of the Mating Loci of Mucoromycotina**, *Gordon Research Conference - Cellular and Molecular Fungal Biology*.
Poster
- 2016 **Conserved expression of vertebrate microvillar gene homologs in choanocytes of freshwater sponges**, *Denver Museum of Nature and Science*.
Presented *Peña et al. 2016* to a general audience
- 2016 **Impact of drugs on freshwater crustacean Daphnia**, *Denver Museum of Nature and Science*.
Trained museum volunteers to work with *Daphnia* and how to facilitate a drug impacts experiment
- 2013 **Bioluminescence**, *The Wildlife Experience*.
Provided training for volunteers working a bioluminescence exhibit

Service & Outreach

- 2020 Distinguished Teaching Assistant Selection Committee, UC Riverside
- 2019-20 Microbiology Graduate Program Ambassador, UC Riverside
- 2020 Beyond the Bench Podcast, UC Riverside
- 2018 Plant Pathology Day, UC Riverside
- 2017 Volunteer, LA County Museum of Natural History
- 2016 Dia del Niño, Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Languages

English **Fluent**
Spanish **Fluent**
Norwegian **Basic**