

Instructor Biographies

About the Instructors

IMC BioEd courses are taught and developed by PhD-level molecular biologists who bring with them many years of experience teaching and presenting these services as a contractor with the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI)—home of GenBank®, PubMed®, PubChem and dbSNP.

Steve Pechous, PhD

Steve Pechous currently designs and teaches the IMC BioEd courses. Previously Steve worked as an IMC/Kevric contractor to instruct bioinformatics courses at the NCBI from 2004-2008, where he taught over 120 courses on varied topics in bioinformatics. He also helped in the development of NCBI's highly popular Minicourses and Perl-based Powerscripting courses.

Steve earned his PhD at Penn State University where he focused on the similarities among oxidative enzymes in plants and animals. He went on to a Post-doctoral position at the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture where he studied genes and enzymes involved in the oxidation of apple fruit.

Steve has received awards for his presentations at the graduate and post-doctoral levels, and his research at Penn State was featured in Penn State Magazine. He has authored several papers based on his research work and co-authored an NCBI paper on Plant Genomic Resources.

Simin Assadi, PhD

Simin Assadi currently teaches the IMC BioEd courses. Before joining the BioEd team, Simin worked as an IMC/Kevric contractor to instruct and develop bioinformatics courses at NCBI from 2004-2008, where she taught the NCBI Minicourses and the Field Guide to NCBI Resources. She has also developed bioinformatics workshops.

Simin received her MS in Biology from the American University, where she studied the formation of neuromuscular junctions in *Xenopus laevis*. She earned her PhD at George Washington University where she studied targeting of peroxisomal protein into the peroxisomes in Castor beans. Simin was the recipient of the Weintraub fellowship for five consecutive years and received awards for her presentations. After earning her PhD, Simin spent four years as a Post Doctoral Fellow studying hormones and neurotransmitter sorting into trans-Golgi apparatus in neuroendocrine cells at the National Institute of Health's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

She was also an Adjunct Professor of microbiology at Marymount University.

Rana Morris, PhD

Rana Morris currently teaches the IMC BioEd courses. Previously Rana worked as an IMC/Kevric contractor to instruct bioinformatics courses at the NCBI from 2002-2008, where she taught the Field Guide to NCBI Resources, the highly popular Mini Courses, and the PubChem and Conserved Domain Structure courses.

Rana earned her PhD in Biomedical Sciences with a Biological Chemistry Track in a joint program of the Eastern Virginia Medical School and Old Dominion University, where she focused her research on the cellular and molecular dynamics of the queuosine modification in tRNA.

After earning her PhD, Rana spent three years as an Assistant Professor in the department of Biochemistry and Chemistry at Old Dominion University (ODU) with research for the development of a Trojan horse drug delivery agent for colon cancer by bioengineering *Shigella flexneri*. In addition to her research, Rana also taught biochemistry, molecular biology, structural biology, computational biology, computational chemistry, organic chemistry, and chemistry and drug design.

Rana was the recipient of a research fellowship at the Center for Pediatric Research, EVMS/Childrens' Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk, Virginia where she conducted research on the cellular, molecular and biochemical studies of the structure and function of two cAMP-dependent protein kinase catalytic subunits: altered catalytic parameters and different mechanisms of transcriptional regulation.

In addition to teaching the IMC BioEd courses, Rana is also an Adjunct Associate Professor, in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the George Washington University Health Sciences and Medical School in Washington, DC.