

> IUBMB TI – Your Monthly Minutes

Your favorite monthly newsletter



Traineer Initiative

Great to see you again!

Today we will hear from Ryan – and let me tell you, he saw a lot of the world. So, lets dive into our conversation and stay tuned for a very interesting tip from Ryan that might promote your scientific thinking ;)

> *Who Ryan is*

I am from the Philippines

–

I pursue my PhD in Texas



Already a medical doctor

–

Proficient in the “classics” of science!



Before doing my PhD, I did some research in Japan. It was very surprising to me that even strangers would greet you with a “good morning” – something I have not been used to at all! Honestly, the environment was pretty workaholic but I learned a lot from my sensei.



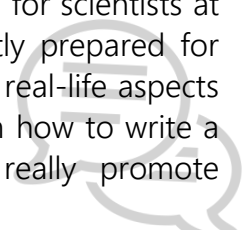
In my research, I am creating an organ-on-a-chip model of the intrauterine environment. More specifically, I am modeling the immune environment in the maternal-fetal interface. Why? Because many animal models do not accurately reflect human pregnancy due to differences in anatomy and physiology. Often, pregnancy is an exclusion criterion for many studies, thus, we have a lack of valuable data although we need it.



Probably, Texas is like you expect it to be. Texas is a very hot and humid place just like the Philippines, while Texans are nice, open and upbeat people. Bonus, our lab is near the beach!

Ryan, tell me, what have you been doing apart from studying? Any experience with volunteering before the IUBMB TI?

For sure! In the Philippines, I established a career assistance program for scientists at my university. In my mind, young students are often not sufficiently prepared for what is coming. We are educated about “science” but not about the real-life aspects of it. To help young students, we organized events that taught them how to write a CV or how to apply. Also, we hosted some career fairs to really promote opportunities young researchers have.



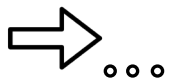
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Let me ask

"Ryan, what is more difficult, an MD or a PhD?" Honestly, I cannot tell you. To have an MD is super helpful since you see how far your research can help patients. And that is what people who offer grants often want to hear. Basically, the MD gives you a very broad knowledge, whereas the PhD provides the depth. They are both difficult, the MD is more physically exhausting since you might see your patients die but the constant struggle with negative results makes the PhD psychologically really challenging.



Our Future

I would love to see more ways for someone to contribute to the activities of the IUBMB TI. I know many people who would be happy to contribute. To my mind, it would be amazing to give everyone the possibility to suggest projects, bring in ideas or organize something they are passionate about. In this way we could open up the IUBMB to all our followers and fans. In that sense we would become even more democratic, I guess.



Networking

Especially younger scientists often miss out on great networking opportunities. We need to improve how to socialize and talk to fellow scientist. As an example, when you talk to an PI, do not be afraid, rather ask questions. Indeed, it will be appreciated. Thus, after a talk or presentation, hit them up. I think this is something we should also communicate to undergraduates because they often feel too shy.



An idea for you

I like to read original works by scientists. We all know about the greats such as "the Origin of Species" but we have no clue what is actually written in there. To my mind, it can be very inspiring to read such works. By the same token, "A Brief History of Time" is another book I can recommend. You will notice that the content is actually somewhat different from what you have been taught, not to mention that many interesting ideas are simply not mentioned anywhere.

> An inspiring thought

What I realized during my readings is that we are often used to think in the "Method, Result, Discussion" framework. However, we should see how creative and human the scientific method can be. How one actually arrives at certain hypotheses, how single findings fit into the bigger picture. That includes to embrace how theories are constructs which are created by the sum of single ideas and findings.

Inspirational greetings to all of you -



- Looking forward to next month!