

## Biotech & Science

### Courtney Aiken

*Wildlife Research Coordinator*  
Irvine Ranch Conservancy

**Education Background:**

B.S. in Natural Science from Loyola Marymount University M.S. in Urban Ecology from Loyola Marymount University, Certified Wildlife Tracker from CyberTracker

**Current Job Tasks:**

I manage the wildlife program at IRC which consists of 50 wildlife cameras. I do constant data entry and data analysis. I am also in charge of expanding the wildlife program and exploring new opportunities that IRC can be a part of. I also give presentations about the wildlife program.

**Favorite Thing About Their Job:**

I enjoy doing what I love. I deeply care about protecting wildlife and I think using science to inform management decisions is really important, I enjoy being a part of that.

**Piece of Advice:**

I would tell them to get involved in as many projects as they can. I would also tell them to meet as many people in their field as they can and build relationships. The people you meet will be important later in your life for a potential job.

### Maneka Badrinath

*Quality Engineer*  
Alcon

**Education Background:**

Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering

**Current Job Tasks:**

Work in the customer experience lab within the quality engineering department

**Favorite Thing About Their Job:**

Company culture, hands on work

**Piece of Advice:**

Stay positive and persevere through your work. Engineering is all about critical thinking and working hard to solve a problem. There won't always be the right answer right away, but once you reach your goal it is the most rewarding feeling!



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### Michelle Hernandez

*Assistant Scientist*  
Q2 Lab Solutions

#### **Education Background:**

I earned my Bachelor's degree in Biology from UC Riverside in 2010 and my Master's degree in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology from UC Irvine in 2014.

#### **Current Job Tasks:**

Currently, I develop, qualify and validate bioassays (tests for specific biomarkers) for vaccine clinical trials. I work with clients to optimize their bioassays for mass production testing at our facility.

#### **Favorite Thing About Their Job:**

I get to do something different almost every day. I am afforded the freedom to test and plan different parts of the assays which can be daunting but it challenges me to continue to use my critical thinking skills and keep up to date on the relevant literature.

#### **Piece of Advice:**

Take opportunities to learn lab techniques early in your academic career. Keep an eye on trends in biotech to figure out where to focus your efforts. Techniques and assays go in and out of style so knowing the right techniques at the right time could land you a job sooner.



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### Melanie Myers

*Associate Manager  
Applied Medical*

**Education Background:**

Bachelors of Science in Mechanical Engineering from UCI Masters of Engineering in Engineering Management from University of Colorado, Boulder.

**Current Job Tasks:**

I currently manage a team of 4 engineers in our Group Process Development department. Our team provides support to the manufacturing process of one of the product lines. This can entail improving and helping to maintain the current process.

**Favorite Thing About Their Job:**

The people I work with and the ability to work on a variety of different projects and tasks. No two days are exactly the same.

**Piece of Advice:**

Be willing to work hard and continue to learn. Your education gives you the foundation to learn more and develop throughout your career.

