



**CENTER FOR BIOMEDICAL  
RESEARCH SUPPORT**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

# CAREERS IN CORES

## Journey to a Core Director

**Jessica Podnar**

Genomic Sequencing and  
Analysis Facility, GSAF

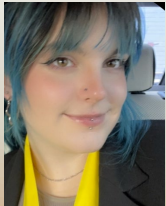


**TEXAS**  
The University of Texas at Austin

# About Me!

Facility Director for the Genomic Sequencing and  
Analysis Facility

Full-Service Genomics core providing services  
ranging from DNA sequencing, Spatial  
Transcriptomics, training and consultations



Robin Breese  
RESAI, Quality Control  
Specialist



Madeline Dworz, PhD  
RESAIII, Spatial



Sean Vargas, MS  
RESAIV, Single Cell/R&D



Gabriella Huerta  
Program  
Coordinator



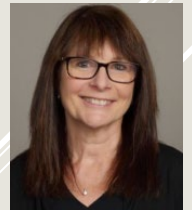
Holly Stevenson, PhD  
RESAIV, Single Cell



Coral Lookerman, MS  
RESAII, Library  
Specialist



Andrew Villarreal  
Administrative  
Associate,  
Accounting



Sylvie Beaudenon-Hubregste, PhD  
RESAIV, Spatial & Methylation

# Where it all began!

My journey began at Southwest Texas State University and eventually led me to Reno, Nevada where I started my career at Sierra Sciences, working for a company focused on extending telomeres through telomerase activation.

Hired as a laboratory technician I swiftly moved up the career ladder, promoted to cell culture laboratory manager, followed by designated team member to perform our TRF Analysis assays, and lead our high throughput screening team.

The work at Sierra Sciences provided me with invaluable experience in cell and molecular biology techniques and prepared me for the next phase of my career in genomics.



# My Transition to UT Austin

After experiencing the harsh Nevada winters it was time to return to the warmth of Texas! 😂

Joined UT as the GSAF Lab Manager in 2010. Zero knowledge of NGS, and completely new field

From week one, I had to hit the ground running!

Learning everything from library preparation protocols to sequencing platform operations at an accelerated pace.

Learned quickly the genomics field moves incredibly fast, and success requires continuous learning and adaptation, and a lot of personal drive!

Drive, dedication, and hard work paved my path from lab manager to my director role



# BUT, where is really all began....

## Just a small-town girl.....

Humble beginnings, grew up in the country, a small town in south Texas, yes, on a farm 😊



Curious, always looking for answers or trying to solve problems

Competitive, Might be the “womb-mate” effect.

Driven, first to attend college, no guidance on how to manage that new chapter, let alone how to pay for it!



Hard working, worked my way through college, and never stopped

Dedicated, didn't give up no matter how hard it was

Spontaneous, and open to change, that's how I got to Reno

Resourceful, landed my position at Sierra Sciences with no experience and continued to grow from there!

# What set me up for a successful career path in core

- **Going beyond what was required**
  - Note taking and documentation
  - Putting in those extra hours to ensure successful projects
- **Displaying Leadership Skills**
  - Demonstrated enthusiasm for training and mentoring staff
  - Identify opportunities to better assist my supervisors
- **Streamlining processes**
  - Finding ways to improve workflows in my position
- **Learn new things and expand my current knowledge**
  - Joined ABRF in 2009, then the DSRG
  - Took bioinformatic classes to be less dependent
- **NETWORKING!**
  - Working with my vendors
  - Communicating with researchers



# Take Away!

There is no single path to leadership roles on cores

Titles and degrees do not pave your road to success, you do!

Commitment, hard work and the willingness to move forward will  
lead you to success

Thank you

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