

Career Path: From Core to Industry

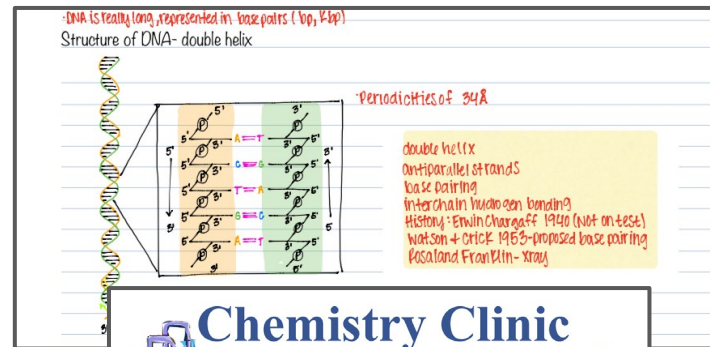
Nicky Nikolakis, PhD

Where it All Started: Molecular Bio, Mentorship & Hustle

Undergrad at UT Arlington:

- UG research in *two labs* — Organic Chemistry (Dr. Foss) & Genetics (Dr. Castoe)
- Paid tutor at the Chem Clinic: ran review sessions, helped with assignments/study questions
- Sold my class notes for \$25 each and hosted study groups for classes I was currently taking
- Worked 3 nights a week at a bar to make ends meet

Hindsight: I didn't realize it then, but I was already building skills that would shape my entire career.

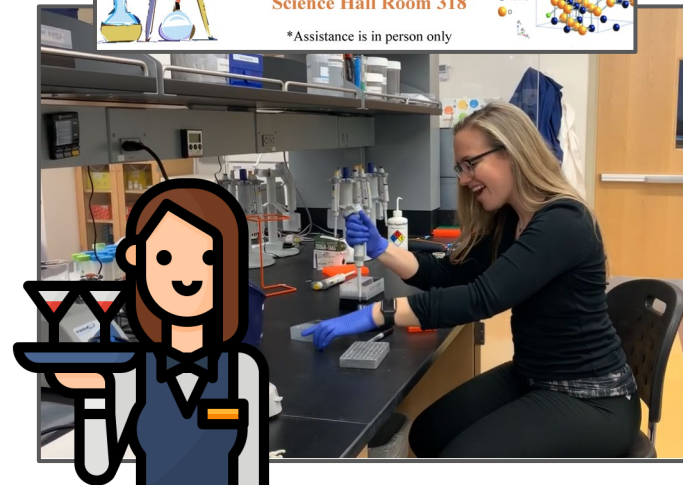
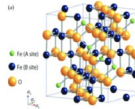


Chemistry Clinic

FREE CHEMISTRY ASSISTANCE*

Science Hall Room 318

*Assistance is in person only



Experience During Grad School

PhD in Quantitative Biology – UT Arlington (2016–2019)

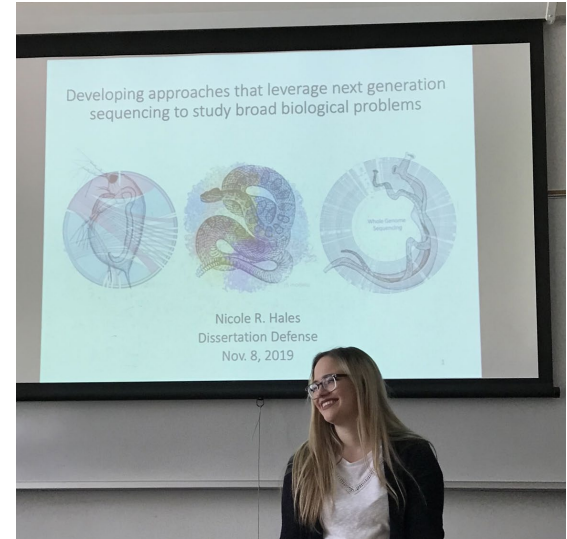
- Dissertation: used NGS to explore broad biological questions
- Grew my public speaking & mentoring skills through teaching labs to UGs
- Worked across *multiple model systems*: reptiles, *Schistosoma*, *Daphnia*
 - applied **cutting-edge NGS workflows** to vastly different biological questions
 - experimental design, data challenges, and the **importance of choosing the right tools**

Big milestone: Helped launch the *North Texas Genome Center* out of our lab space

→ Trained new staff and was later hired to build assays on the Eppendorf epMotion automation system

→ Built strong relationships with vendors, especially Illumina & Eppendorf, and loved learning about new tech

I realized I didn't just love research, I loved *enabling* it!



eppendorf illumina®

Core Life

Research Associate, Genomics Core – UNTHSC (2019–2021)

- Built and ran a brand-new core: single cell, spatial, ATAC-seq, RNA-seq workflows
- Served as scientist, consultant, analyst, and tech support (sometimes all in the same day)

Hustle continued:

- Printed flyers and promoted cutting-edge services *door-to-door* across campus
- Focused on single cell & spatial (because I was genuinely excited about the tech)
- Tracked all sales and reported monthly numbers to my boss

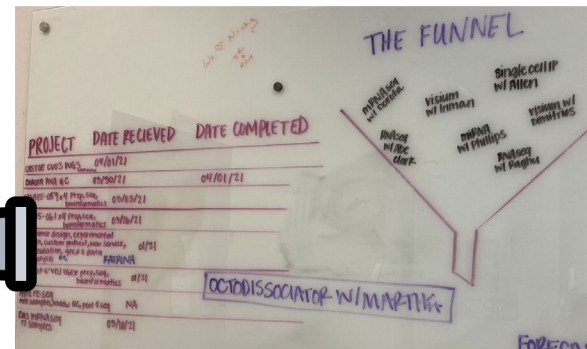
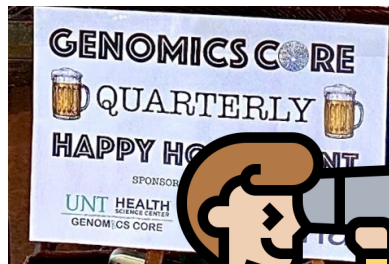
Wore every hat: marketing, inventory, pricing, invoicing, benchwork, analysis, consults, and events

→ *It felt like running a small business*

Industry noticed before I did: By 6 months in, vendors were encouraging me to apply for field roles; *they saw how I worked and how it would translate before I did.*



10X GENOMICS



First Step into Industry

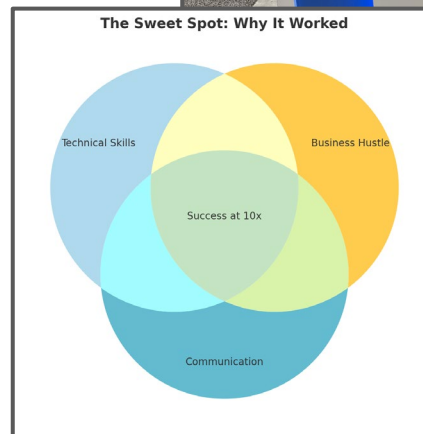
Sales Executive → Senior Account Executive – 10x Genomics (2021–Now)

- Joined as the *first new hire* under my manager who took a chance on me despite my nontraditional background
- Hands-on experience + business mindset + presentation skills = rare combo (& my sweet spot)
- 2022 *Rookie of the Year* – exceeded quota and helped scale adoption across a diverse territory

Why it worked:

- Years of enabling and educating researchers translated directly into pre-sales conversations
- Deep technical knowledge made me credible with customers, especially when launching complex workflows
- Love for numbers and tracking made sales feel like second nature

I wasn't trying to "be a salesperson" I was being myself in a new context



Pros & Cons

Academic Core Facility

Pros:

- Hands-on work
- Skill-building playground

(Potential) Cons:

- Low visibility
- Lots of reactive work

Industry/Sales

Pros:

- Professional growth
- Financially competitive

(Potential) Cons:

- Quotas & pressure
- Work/life blur

Where I'm Headed Next

Expanded Responsibilities at 10x Genomics (in addition to my Senior AE role):

- Mentor for peers and junior sales reps across the U.S.
- Lead onboarding for new team members
- Local district strategy leader: forecasting, customer engagement, and data-driven planning

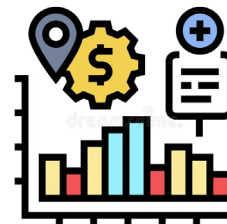
👑 “Queen of Data Tracking”

- Built a reputation for leveraging numbers to drive clarity and performance
- Known for creating frameworks others now use

What's next?

I see myself being more involved in mentorship, sales training and enablement; helping others *find their own sweet spot* (even if it's not the same as mine)

At the core: Helping people succeed is where I feel most passionate.



Thank you!



Nicky Nikolakis ✓
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