

# Nathan J. Hillson

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## EDUCATION

**Stanford University School of Medicine**, Stanford CA  
Postdoctoral Fellowship, Microbiology, 2009

**Harvard Medical School**, Boston MA  
Ph.D., Biophysics, 2004

**Rice University**, Houston TX  
B.A., Physics; Computational and Applied Mathematics, *cum laude*, 1999

### Selected Course Work:

Macromolecular X-ray Crystallography; Chemical Biology; Simulation of Macromolecules; Single-molecule Biophysics; Molecular Approaches to Drug Action, Discovery, and Design; Proteins: Structure, Function and Catalysis; Genomics and Computational Biology; Molecular Biology and Genetics; Numerical Analysis; Partial Differential Equations; High Performance and Parallel Computing; Algorithms and Data Structures; Statistical Mechanics and Thermodynamics; Quantum Mechanics.

## EXPERIENCE

**DOE Agile BioFoundry**, Emeryville CA **2016-present**  
Title: *Principal Investigator*  
Responsibilities: To lead the development and demonstration of the Agile BioFoundry.

**DOE Joint BioEnergy Institute (JBEI)**, Emeryville CA **2009-present**  
Title: *Director of Synthetic Biology Informatics* 2014-present  
*Director of Synthetic Biology* 2009-2014  
Responsibilities: To develop and demonstrate experimental wetware, software, and laboratory automation devices that facilitate, accelerate, and standardize the engineering of microbes.

**DOE Joint Genome Institute (JGI)**, Berkeley CA **2012-present**  
Title: *Program Lead, Synthetic Biology Informatics*  
Responsibilities: To develop and demonstrate DNA screening biosecurity software and Synthetic Biology Institutional Review processes and software, and coordinate Synthetic Biology Informatics work at the JGI, JBEI, and the Agile BioFoundry.

**Lawrence Berkeley National Lab (LBNL)**, Berkeley CA **2009-present**  
Title: *BioDesign Dept. Head, Biological Systems & Engin. Div.* 2015-present  
*Senior Staff Scientist, Biological Systems & Engin. Div.* 2020-present  
*Staff Scientist, Biological Systems & Engin. Div.* 2015-2020  
*Co-Deputy Director, Biological Systems & Engin. Div.* 2015-2016  
*Staff Scientist, Physical Biosciences Division* 2011-2015  
*Research Scientist, Physical Biosciences Division* 2009-2011  
Responsibilities: In addition to Agile BioFoundry, JBEI, and JGI responsibilities (see above), provide and participate in the strategic and operational leadership of the Biological Systems & Engineering Division and more broadly the LBNL Biosciences Area.

**Engineering Biology Research Center (EBRC), Emeryville CA** 2016-present

*Title:* *Affiliate Investigator*

*Responsibilities:* To further develop and demonstrate the ICE repository platform towards achieving a “Web of Registries”.

**TeselaGen Biotechnologies, Inc., San Francisco CA** 2011-present

*Title:* *Co-Founder and Chief Scientific Officer*

*Responsibilities:* To lead the design of TeselaGen’s DNA design and assembly bioCAD/CAM platform, and provide software development quality assurance and control.

**Synberc, Emeryville CA** 2013-2016

*Title:* *Affiliate Investigator*

*Responsibilities:* To further develop and demonstrate the ICE repository platform towards achieving a “Web of Registries”, and to support and maintain Synberc’s ICE repository instance.

**Stanford University School of Medicine, Stanford CA** 2004-2009

*Title:* *Postdoctoral Research Fellow*

*Research Advisor:* *Lucy Shapiro, Department of Developmental Biology*

*Research topics:* Engineered the bacterium *Caulobacter crescentus* into a whole-cell Uranium biosensor. Developed a high-throughput microscopy screen to identify mutant strains of *Caulobacter* that mislocalize the polar histidine kinases DivJ/PleC, or the cell-division protein ZapA. Protein-engineered a chimera of the essential histidine kinase CckA to generate a colorimetric reporter of CckA activity. Utilized the CckA chimera reporter system in a high-throughput screen to identify *Caulobacter* mutant strains that fail to activate CckA.

**Harvard Medical School, Boston MA** 2000-2004

*Title:* *Graduate Thesis Student*

*Research Advisor:* *Prof. Christopher T. Walsh*  
*Department of Biological Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology*

*Dissertation topics:* Studied the enzymatic activity of VibF, a six domain non-ribosomal peptide synthetase utilized in the biosynthesis of vibriobactin, an iron chelating siderophore (virulence factor) of the cholera causing pathogen *Vibrio cholerae*. Mapped catalytic activity to individual domains of VibF. Demonstrated that VibF functionally operates as a dimer, via biochemical mutant domain activity regain and by ultracentrifugation studies. Utilized correlated-mutation computational analysis to assist the chimeric-engineering of glycosyltransferases to decorate the peptide scaffold of the antibiotic vancomycin with alternative sugar moieties.

**Harvard University, Cambridge MA** 2000

*Title:* *Graduate Rotation Student*

*Research Advisor:* *Prof. Eugene Shakhnovich*  
*Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology*

*Rotation topic:* Adapted an existing all-atom protein folding model/program to study protein-peptide interactions in the MHC-II/10-mer peptide recognition system. Implemented the Perceptron learning device to cyclically refine the intra- and inter-molecular potentials to guarantee the lowest energy of the native (crystal structure) state of the protein-peptide complex when challenged with generated decoy structures.

- Harvard University**, Boston MA 2000  
*Title:* Graduate Rotation Student  
*Research Advisor:* Prof. Christopher T. Walsh  
*Department of Biological Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology*  
 Rotation topic: Studied the enzymatic activity of two previously uncharacterized proteins (YbtU and YbtT) implicated in the biosynthesis of yersiniabactin, an iron chelating siderophore necessary for the virulence of the plague causing pathogen *Yersinia pestis*. Attempted to measure cofactor binding and detect novel chemical species produced by YbtU, a protein predicted to be a putative reductase. Assayed for increased hydrolysis rates of a substrate analog mediated by YbtT, assigned as a putative external thioesterase.
- Harvard University**, Boston MA 1999  
*Title:* Graduate Rotation Student  
*Research Advisor:* Prof. Gerhard Wagner  
*Department of Biological Chemistry and Molecular Pharmacology*  
 Rotation topic: Used NMR spectroscopy to study the BID protein, a pro-apoptotic factor in the cell-death signaling pathway which becomes 100 times more potent after truncation by caspase-8. Conducted an experiment to collect a novel HSQC spectra of truncated BID. Analyzed differences in the spectra of truncated and full-length protein to identify residues whose chemical environments were changed due to the cleavage.
- Los Alamos National Laboratories**, Los Alamos NM 1996-1998  
*Title:* Undergraduate Summer Research Associate  
*Research Advisor:* Angel Garcia, Ph.D.  
*Theoretical Division (T-10): Theoretical Biology and Biophysics*  
 Area of study: Composed Monte Carlo code to study minimalist off-lattice protein folding models. Investigated pressure effects on folding thermodynamics and kinetics of the theoretical Thirumalai protein. Optimized numerical Lambda Repressor protein model to best fit experimental B-factor data.

**TEACHING** *Teaching fellow*, Biochemistry and Protein Structure, Harvard University 2001  
 Taught weekly session of 15 undergraduates and led review sessions.  
 Graded exams and weekly problem sets.

*Teaching assistant*, General Physics I and II, Rice University 1996-1999  
 Taught weekly class recitation sessions and review sessions.

**HONORS**  
 Genscript/Molecular Cloud: 2019 Distinguished Research Cloud Scientist Award  
 Journal of Biological Engineering 2016 Publication of the Year  
 NSF Bay Area Regional I-Corps Summer 2015, Trailblazer Award  
 Berkeley Lab Director's Awards for Exceptional Achievement: Technology Transfer 2013  
 Emerging Leaders in Biosecurity 2013 Fellow  
 Synthetic Biology Leadership Accelerator Program 2012 Fellow  
 Joint BioEnergy Institute 2012 Entrepreneur Award  
 Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
 National Defense Science and Engineering Predoctoral Fellowship  
 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow  
 Harvard University Distinction in Teaching Award  
 Sigma Pi Sigma Physics Honor Society

## PATENTS

**Hillson, N.J.** (2016) Scar-Less Multi-Part DNA Assembly Design Automation. U.S. Patent No. 10,373,703. Issued August 6, 2019.

**Hillson, N.J.** (2012) Scar-Less Multi-Part DNA Assembly Design Automation. U.S. Patent No. 9,361,427. Issued June 7, 2016.

Chang, C., Bharadwaj, R., Singh, A., Chandrasekaran, A., and **Hillson, N.J.** (2012) Microfluidic Platform for Synthetic Biology Applications. U.S. Patent US10131903B2. Issued November 20, 2018.

**Hillson, N.J.**, Shapiro, L., Hu, P., and Andersen, G.L. (2008) Heavy Metal Biosensor. U.S. Patent Application No. US20110117590

## RESEARCH

Somtirtha Roy, Tijana Radivojevic, Mark Forrer, Jose Manuel Marti, Vamshi Jonnalagadda, Tyler Backman, William Morrell, Hector Plahar, Joonhoon Kim, **Nathan Hillson**, and Hector Garcia Martin. (2021) "Multiomics Data Collection, Visualization, and Utilization for Guiding Metabolic Engineering". *Frontiers in Bioengineering and Biotechnology* 9, 45. DOI=10.3389/fbioe.2020.01009

Chris Lawson, Jose Manuel Martí, Tijana Radivojevic, Sai Vamshi R. Jonnalagadda, Reinhard Gentz, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Sean Peisert, Joonhoon Kim, Blake A. Simmons, Christopher J. Petzold, Steven W. Singer, Aindrila Mukhopadhyay, Deepti Tanjore, Josh Dunn, and Hector Garcia Martin. (2020) "Machine learning for metabolic engineering: A review" *Metabolic Engineering* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ymben.2020.10.005>

Garima Goyal, Nick Elsbree, Michael Fero, **Nathan J. Hillson**, and Gregory Linshiz. (2020) "Repurposing a microfluidic formulation device for automated DNA construction" *PLOS One* <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0242157>

Gledon Doçi, Lukas Fuchs, Yash Kharbanda, Paul Schickling, Valentin Zulkower, **Nathan Hillson**, Ernst Oberortner, Neil Swainston, Johannes Kabisch. (2020) "DNA Scanner: a web application for comparing DNA synthesis feasibility, price, and turnaround time across vendors". *OUP Synthetic Biology*, ysa011, <https://doi.org/10.1093/synbio/ysaa011>

Fero M.J., Craft J.K., Vu T., and **Hillson N.J.** (2020) "Combinatorial-Hierarchical DNA Library Design Using the TeselaGen DESIGN Module with j5". In: Chandran S., George K. (eds) *DNA Cloning and Assembly*. *Methods in Molecular Biology*, vol 2205. Humana, New York, NY. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-0716-0908-8\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-0716-0908-8_2)

Ernst Oberortner, Robert Evans, Xianwei Meng, Sangeeta Nath, Hector Plahar, Lisa Simirenko, Angela Tarver, Samuel Deutsch, **Nathan J. Hillson**, and Jan-Fang Cheng. (2020) "An Integrated Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing Workflow for Synthetic Biology". In: Chandran S., George K. (eds) *DNA Cloning and Assembly*. *Methods in Molecular Biology*, vol 2205. Humana, New York, NY. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-0716-0908-8\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-0716-0908-8_1)

Sam Weiss Evans, Jacob Beal, Kavita Berger, Diederik A. Bleijs, Alessia Cagnetti, Francesca Ceroni, Gerald L. Epstein, Natália Garcia-Reyero, David R. Gillum, Graeme Harkess, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Petra A. M. Hogervorst, Jacob L. Jordan, Geneviève Lacroix, Rebecca Moritz, Seán S. ÓhEigeartaigh, Megan J. Palmer, Mark W. J. van Passel. (2020) "Embrace experimentation in biosecurity governance" *Science* Vol. 368, Issue 6487, pp. 138-140 DOI: 10.1126/science.aba2932

Christopher B. Eiben, Tian Tian, Mitchell G. Thompson, Daniel Mendez-Perez, Nurgul Kaplan, Garima Goyal, Jennifer Chiniquy, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Taek Soon Lee, and Jay D. Keasling\*. (2020) "Adenosine Triphosphate and Carbon Efficient Route to Second Generation Biofuel Isopentanol" *ACS Synth. Biol.*

<https://doi.org/10.1021/acssynbio.9b00402>

Chiniquy J, Garber ME, Mukhopadhyay A, and **Hillson NJ**\*. (2020) "Fluorescent amplification for next generation sequencing (FA-NGS) library preparation". *BMC Genomics* 21, 85. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12864-020-6481-8>

Sebastian Barthel, Sebastian Palluk, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Jay D. Keasling, and Daniel H. Arlow. (2020) "Enhancing Terminal Deoxynucleotidyl Transferase Activity on Substrates with 3' Terminal Structures for Enzymatic De Novo DNA Synthesis" *Genes* 11(1), 102 <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4425/11/1/102>

Christopher B. Eiben, Tristan de Rond, Clayton Bloszies, Jennifer Gin, Jennifer Chiniquy, Edward E. K. Baidoo, Christopher J. Petzold, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Oliver Fiehn, Jay D. Keasling. (2019) "Mevalonate Pathway Promiscuity Enables Noncanonical Terpene Production", *ACS Synth. Biol.* <https://doi.org/10.1021/acssynbio.9b00230>

Chen Y, Guenther JM, Gin JW, Chan LJG, Costello Z, Ogorzalek TL, Tran HM, Blake-Hedges JM, Keasling JD, Adams PD, Garcia Martin H, **Hillson NJ**, Petzold CJ. (2019) "An automated 'cells-to-peptides' sample preparation workflow for high-throughput, quantitative proteomic assays of microbes". *J Proteome Res.* [doi:10.1021/acs.jproteome.9b00455](https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jproteome.9b00455)

Jesus F. Barajas, Ryan P. McAndrew, Mitchell G. Thompson, Tyler W. H. Backman, Bo Pang, Tristan de Rond, Jose H. Pereira, Veronica T. Benites, Héctor García Martín, Edward E. K. Baidoo, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Paul D. Adams, and Jay D. Keasling. (2019) "Structural insights into dehydratase substrate selection for the borrelidin and fluvirucin polyketide synthases" *J Ind Microbiol Biotechnol* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10295-019-02189-z>

Paul Opgenorth, Zak Costello, Takuya Okada, Garima Goyal, Yan Chen, Jennifer Gin, Veronica T. Benites, Markus de Raad, Trent R. Northen, Kai Deng, Samuel Deutsch, Edward E.K. Baidoo, Christopher J. Petzold, **Nathan J Hillson**, Hector Garcia Martin, and Harry R Beller. (2019) "Lessons from two Design-Build-Test-Learn cycles of dodecanol production in Escherichia coli aided by machine learning". *ACS Synth. Biol.* DOI: 10.1021/acssynbio.9b00020

**Nathan Hillson**, Mark Caddick, Yizhi Cai, Jose A. Carrasco, Matthew Wook Chang, Natalie C. Curach, David J. Bell, Rosalind Le Feuvre, Douglas C. Friedman, Xiongfei Fu, Nicholas D. Gold, Markus J. Herrgård, Maciej B. Holowko, James R. Johnson, Richard A. Johnson, Jay D. Keasling, Richard I. Kitney, Akihiko Kondo, Chenli Liu, Vincent J. J. Martin, Filippo Menolascina, Chiaki Ogino, Nicola J. Patron, Marilene Pavan, Chueh Loo Poh, Isak S. Pretorius, Susan J. Rosser, Nigel S. Scrutton, Marko Storch, Hille Tekotte, Evelyn Travník, Claudia E. Vickers, Wen Shan Yew, Yingjin Yuan, Huimin Zhao & Paul S. Freemont. (2019) "Building a global alliance of biofoundries". *Nature Communications*, 10:2040 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-10079-2>

Garima Goyal, Zak Costello, Jorge Alonso Guitierrez, Aram Kang, Taek Soon Lee, Hector Garcia Martin, and **Nathan J. Hillson**. (2018) "Parallel Integration and Chromosomal Expansion of Metabolic Pathways" *ACS Synthetic Biology* DOI: 10.1021/acssynbio.8b00243

Thomas L. Ruegg, Jose H. Pereira, Joseph C. Chen, Andy DeGiovanni, Pavel Novichkov, Vivek K. Mutalik, Giovanni P. Tomaleri, Steven W. Singer, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Blake A. Simmons, Paul D. Adams & Michael P. Thelen. (2018) "Jungle Express is a versatile repressor system for tight transcriptional control". *Nature Communications* 9, 3617. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-05857-3>

Sebastian Palluk, Daniel H. Arlow, Tristan de Rond, Rathin Bector, Justine S. Kang, Hratch M. Baghdassarian, Alisa N. Truong, Peter W. Kim, Anup K. Singh, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Jay D. Keasling. (2018) "De novo DNA synthesis using polymerase-tethered nucleotides" *Nature Biotech* doi:10.1038/nbt.4173

Jesus F. Barajas, Amin Zargar, Bo Pang, Veronica T. Benites, Jennifer Gin, Edward E. K. Baidoo, Christopher J. Petzold, **Nathan J. Hillson**, and Jay D. Keasling. (2018) "Biochemical Characterization of  $\beta$ -Amino Acid Incorporation in Fluvirucin B2 Biosynthesis". *ChemBioChem* 10.1002/cbic.201800169

Mitchell G. Thompson, Nima Sedaghatian, Jesus F. Barajas, Maren Wehrs, Constance B. Bailey, Nurgul Kaplan, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Aindrila Mukhopadhyay & Jay D. Keasling. (2018) "Isolation and characterization of novel mutations in the pSC101 origin that increase copy number". *Scientific Reports* 8, 1590 doi:10.1038/s41598-018-20016-w

Dossani ZY, Reider Apel A, Szmidi-Middleton H, **Hillson NJ**, Deutsch S, Keasling JD, and Mukhopadhyay A. (2017). A combinatorial approach to synthetic transcription factor-promoter combinations for yeast strain engineering. *Yeast* 1–8. doi:10.1002/yea.3292

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Gach PC\*, Iwai K, Kim P, **Hillson NJ**, and Singh AK\*. (2017) Droplet Microfluidics for Synthetic Biology. *Lab on a Chip*. DOI: 10.1039/C7LC00576H

Oberortner E, Cheng JF, **Hillson NJ**, and Deutsch S. (2016) Streamlining the Design-to-Build transition with Build-Optimization Software Tools (BOOST) *ACS Synth. Biol.*, DOI: 10.1021/acssynbio.6b00200

Apel AR, d'Espaux L, Wehrs M, Sachs D, Li R, Tong G, Garber M, Nnadi O, Zhuang W, **Hillson NJ**, Keasling JD, and Mukhopadhyay A. (2016) A Cas9-based toolkit to program gene expression in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. *Nucl. Acids Res.* doi:10.1093/nar/gkw1023

**Nathan J. Hillson\***, Hector A. Plahar, Jacob Beal\*, and Ranjini Prithviraj. (2016) Improving Synthetic Biology Communication: Recommended Practices for Visual Depiction and Digital Submission of Genetic Designs. *ACS Synth. Biol.*, 5 (6), pp 449–451. DOI: 10.1021/acssynbio.6b00146

Javidpour P, Deutsch S, Mutalik VK, **Hillson NJ**, Petzold CJ, Keasling JD, et al. (2016) Investigation of Proposed Ladderane Biosynthetic Genes from Anammox Bacteria by Heterologous Expression in *E. coli*. *PLoS ONE* 11(3): e0151087. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0151087

Gregory Linshiz, Erik Jensen, Nina Stawski, Changhao Bi, Nick Elsbree, Hong Jiao, Jungkyu Kim, Richard Mathies, Jay D. Keasling and **Nathan J. Hillson**. (2016) End-to-End automated microfluidic platform for synthetic biology: from design to functional analysis. *Journal of Biological Engineering* 10:3 DOI: 10.1186/s13036-016-0024-5

Philip Charles Gach, Steve C.C. Shih, Jess Sustarich, Jay D Keasling, **Nathan J Hillson**, Paul D. Adams, and Anup K Singh. (2016) A Droplet Microfluidic Platform for Automating Genetic Engineering. *ACS Synthetic Biology* DOI:10.1021/acssynbio.6b00011

Jacqueline Y. Quinn, Robert Sidney Cox III, Aaron Adler, Jacob Beal, Swapnil Bhatia, Yizhi Cai, Joanna Chen, Kevin Clancy, Michal Galdzicki, **Nathan J. Hillson**, Nicolas Le Novère, Akshay J. Maheshwari, James Alastair McLaughlin, Chris J. Myers, Umesh P, Matthew Pocock, Cesar Rodriguez, Larisa Soldatova, Guy-Bart V. Stan, Neil Swainston, Anil Wipat, Herbert M. Sauro. (2015) SBOL Visual: A Graphical Language for Genetic Designs. *PLoS Biol* 13(12): e1002310. doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1002310

Steve C. C. Shih, Garima Goyal, Peter W. Kim, Nicolas Koutsoubelis, Jay D. Keasling, Paul D. Adams, **Nathan J. Hillson**, and Anup K. Singh. (2015) A Versatile Microfluidic Device for Automating Synthetic Biology. *ACS Synthetic Biology* Article ASAP. DOI: 10.1021/acssynbio.5b00062

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