

# Josh Vermaas

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## Education

- 2016 **Ph.D. in Biophysics**, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, Thesis title: Interfacial modulation of protein function explored through atomistic molecular dynamics simulation
- 2010 **B.S. in Physics, Biochemistry, and Computational Math**, *Arizona State University*, summa cum laude

## Research Experience

- 2021-Present **Assistant Professor**, *Michigan State University*, East Lansing, MI  
Assistant professor in the plant research laboratory, using molecular simulation tools to study photosynthetic systems to deliver renewable energy and sustainable bioproducts.<sup>4</sup> Our laboratory develops tools to facilitate this research.<sup>1,5</sup> We are also active in collaborative Cryo-EM projects,<sup>7,9</sup> and other diverse molecular systems.<sup>6</sup>
- 2020–2020 **Computational Scientist**, *Oak Ridge Laboratory*, Oak Ridge, TN  
INCITE liaison for NAMD-related projects,<sup>14</sup> and ensuring application readiness for NAMD on upcoming supercomputing systems. Also contributed to developing an accelerated drug-discovery pipeline for COVID-19 research.<sup>10–13,16</sup>
- 2016–2019 **Director's Postdoctoral Fellow**, *National Renewable Energy Laboratory*, Golden, CO  
Postdoctoral work under the mentorship of Michael Crowley and Gregg Beckham, with a number of projects, principally related to lignin utilization,<sup>15,19–21,23,25</sup> membrane permeability,<sup>3,21,26,28</sup> and enzyme structure and mechanism.<sup>22,24</sup>
- 2010–2016 **Graduate Student**, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, Urbana, IL  
Graduate research performed with Emad Tajkhorshid as advisor. Research projects include methods development<sup>8,29,33,38,43</sup> and application<sup>30,42,44</sup> of accelerated and conventional<sup>30,31,35,36</sup> membrane models, adding capabilities to the molecular dynamics visualization program VMD,<sup>34</sup> and simulations related to interactions within the photosynthetic reaction center of *Rhodobacter sphaeroides*<sup>41</sup> or cytochrome *bo*<sub>3</sub>.<sup>32</sup>
- Fall 2015 **Sandia Graduate Fellow**, *Sandia National Laboratory*, Albuquerque, NM  
On-site research supervised by Susan Rempe on the connection between substrate loading conditions and conformational change in the antibiotic resistance transporter EmrE.<sup>27</sup>

- Summer 2014 **Computational Science Graduate Fellow**, *Oak Ridge National Laboratory*, Oak Ridge, TN  
Analyzed a microsecond long multimillion atom lignocellulose system under the supervision of Loukas Petridis and Jeremy Smith, including novel visualization techniques.<sup>37</sup>
- Summer 2012 **Computational Science Graduate Fellow**, *National Renewable Energy Laboratory*, Golden, CO  
Developed and applied force fields for oxidized carbohydrates to gauge their impact on cellulose decrystallization and cellulase inhibition.<sup>40</sup> Supervised by Gregg Beckham, Michael Crowley, and Christina Payne. This was the foundation work for more recent studies for how oxidation changes cellulose crystallinity.<sup>2</sup>
- 2007-2010 **Undergraduate Researcher**, *Arizona State University*, Tempe, AZ  
Diverse projects across the physics department to gauge my interests across research fields and techniques,<sup>45</sup> with supervision by Bruce Doak and Ralph Chamberlin. Projects in biology included a research thesis developing computational kinetic models based on experimentally determined metabolic fluxes.

## Current Research Support

- 2022- Anton2 compute allocation
- 2022- NERSC compute allocation: m3968
- 2021- ACCESS allocation: TG-BIO210061
- 2021-2023 DOE BES: DE-FG02-91ER20021
- 2022-2024 DOE EFRC

## Postgraduate Awards

- 2016-2019 Director's Postdoctoral Fellow, National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- 2018 Wiley Computing in Chemistry Outstanding Postdoc Award
- 2014-2016 Sandia National Laboratories Excellence in Science and Engineering Research Program Fellowship
- 2011-2014 DOE Computational Sciences Graduate Fellowship
- 2010-2011 NIH Biophysics Trainee

## Service

- 2022 NAMD application judge and mentor for the Student Cluster Competition associated with the SuperComputing conference
- 2021 Nationwide Science Bowl volunteer
- 2020- Reviewer for XSEDE supercomputing allocations
- 2020 Moderator for Tennessee Science Bowl
- 2017-2019 Special awards and physics judge for the Denver Metro and Washington/Morgan Bicolony science fairs
- 2018-2019 Scorekeeper or moderator for the Colorado regional high school science bowl

## Publications

- (1) Sarkar, D.; Kulke, M.; Vermaas, J. V. LongBondEliminator: A Molecular Simulation Tool to Remove Ring Penetrations in Biomolecular Simulation Systems. *Biomolecules* **2023**, *13*, 107, DOI: 10.3390/biom13010107.
- (2) Uchiyama, T.; Uchihashi, T.; Ishida, T.; Nakamura, A.; Vermaas, J. V.; Crowley, M. F.; Samejima, M.; Beckham, G. T.; Igarashi, K. Lytic Polysaccharide Monooxygenase Increases Cellobiohydrolases Activity by Promoting Decrystallization of Cellulose Surface. *Sci. Adv.* **2022**, *8*, eade5155, DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.ade5155.
- (3) Vermaas, J. V.; Crowley, M. F.; Beckham, G. T. Molecular Simulation of Lignin-Related Aromatic Compound Permeation through Gram-Negative Bacterial Outer Membranes. *Journal of Biological Chemistry* **2022**, *298*, 102627, DOI: 10.1016/j.jbc.2022.102627.
- (4) Andeme Ela, R. C.; Raza, S.; Heiden, P. A.; Vermaas, J. V.; Ong, R. G. Lignin Nanoparticle Morphology Depends on Polymer Properties and Solvent Composition: An Experimental and Computational Study. *ACS Appl. Polym. Mater.* **2022**, *4*, 6925–6935, DOI: 10.1021/acspapm.2c00854.
- (5) Kulke, M.; Vermaas, J. V. Reversible Unwrapping Algorithm for Constant-Pressure Molecular Dynamics Simulations. *J. Chem. Theory Comput.* **2022**, *18*, 6161–6171, DOI: 10.1021/acs.jctc.2c00327.
- (6) Ayala Mariscal, S. M.; Pigazzini, M. L.; Richter, Y.; Özel, M.; Grothaus, I. L.; Protze, J.; Ziege, K.; Kulke, M.; ElBediwi, M.; Vermaas, J. V.; Colombi Ciacchi, L.; Köppen, S.; Liu, F.; Kirstein, J. Identification of a HTT-specific Binding Motif in DNAJB1 Essential for Suppression and Disaggregation of HTT. *Nat Commun* **2022**, *13*, 4692, DOI: 10.1038/s41467-022-32370-5.
- (7) Vant, J. W.; Sarkar, D.; Nguyen, J.; Baker, A. T.; Vermaas, J. V.; Singharoy, A. Exploring Cryo-Electron Microscopy with Molecular Dynamics. *Biochem. Soc. Trans.* **2022**, *50*, 569–581, DOI: 10.1042/BST20210485.
- (8) Vermaas, J. V.; Mayne, C. G.; Shinn, E.; Tajkhorshid, E. Assembly and Analysis of Cell-Scale Membrane Envelopes. *J. Chem. Inf. Model.* **2022**, *62*, 602–617, DOI: 10.1021/acs.jcim.1c01050.
- (9) Baker, A. T.; Boyd, R. J.; Sarkar, D.; Teijeira-Crespo, A.; Chan, C. K.; Bates, E.; Waraich, K.; Vant, J.; Wilson, E.; Truong, C. D.; Lipka-Lloyd, M.; Fromme, P.; Vermaas, J.; Williams, D.; Machiesky, L.; Heurich, M.; Nagalo, B. M.; Coughlan, L.; Umlauf, S.; Chiu, P.-L.; Rizkallah, P. J.; Cohen, T. S.; Parker, A. L.; Singharoy, A.; Borad, M. J. ChAdOx1 Interacts with CAR and PF4 with Implications for Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome. *Sci. Adv.* **2021**, *7*, eabl8213, DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.abl8213.
- (10) Glaser, J.; Vermaas, J. V.; Rogers, D. M.; Larkin, J.; LeGrand, S.; Boehm, S.; Baker, M. B.; Scheinberg, A.; Tillack, A. F.; Thavappiragasam, M.; Sedova, A.; Hernandez, O. High-Throughput Virtual Laboratory for Drug Discovery Using Massive Datasets. *The International Journal of High Performance Computing Applications* **2021**, *35*, 452–468, DOI: 10.1177/10943420211001565.

- (11) Vermaas, J. V.; Sedova, A.; Baker, M.; Boehm, S.; Rogers, D.; Larkin, J.; Glaser, J.; Smith, M.; Hernandez, O.; Smith, J. Supercomputing Pipelines Search for Therapeutics Against COVID-19. *Comput. Sci. Eng.* **2021**, *23*, 7–16, DOI: 10.1109/MCSE.2020.3036540.
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- (14) Vant, J. W.; Sarkar, D.; Streitwieser, E.; Fiorin, G.; Skeel, R.; Vermaas, J. V.; Singharoy, A. Data-Guided Multi-Map Variables for Ensemble Refinement of Molecular Movies. *J. Chem. Phys.* **2020**, *153*, 214102, DOI: 10.1063/5.0022433.
- (15) Vermaas, J. V.; Crowley, M. F.; Beckham, G. T. Molecular Lignin Solubility and Structure in Organic Solvents. *ACS Sustain. Chem. Eng.* **2020**, *8*, 17839–17850, DOI: 10.1021/acssuschemeng.0c07156.
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### Invited Presentations

- 2022 Tracking Carbon Diffusion in Photosynthesis from a Molecular Perspective, *Biophysics Seminar Series* Arizona State University
- 2022 Tracking Carbon Diffusion in Photosynthesis from a Molecular Perspective, National Renewable Energy Laboratory
- 2021 Exploring biological mechanisms and materials through molecular simulation for a sustainable bioeconomy *School of Molecular Sciences Seminar* Arizona State University
- 2021 Exploring biological mechanisms and materials to enable the bioeconomy through computational physics *Theoretical and Computational Biophysics Group Seminar* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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### Conference Presentations (Past 3 years only)

- 2022 Quantifying temperature dependent mesophyll conductance within leaf plasma membranes **Oral Presentation** *ACS Fall 2022 National Meeting* Chicago, IL
- 2022 Predicting Lignin Depolymerization Pathways and Products at High Temperature through Molecular Dynamics Simulation *Lignin Gordon Conference* Easton, MA
- 2022 Exploring Lignin Interactions Within the Cell Wall Through Computational Microscopy **Oral Presentation** *IX Cell Wall Research Conference* East Lansing, MI
- 2022 Tracking Photosynthetic Reactant and Product Diffusion Across Cyanobacterial Carboxysomes on Exascale Computing Platforms **Oral Presentation** *Biophysics at the Dawn to Exascale Computing* Hamburg, Germany
- 2022 Measuring heme-hopping electron transfer through a biological nanowire *Biophysical Society 66th Annual Meeting* San Francisco, CA
- 2021 Quantifying solvent impacts on lignin-cellulose interactions in diverse solvents **Oral Presentation** *ACS Fall 2021 National Meeting* Virtual Meeting
- 2021 Comparing inner and outer membrane permeabilities for lignin related aromatic compounds in a biorefinery context **Oral Presentation** *ACS Spring 2021 National Meeting* Virtual Meeting
- 2021 Exploring solvent-dependence in lignin polymer shape and structure through molecular simulation **Oral Presentation** *ACS Spring 2021 National Meeting* Virtual Meeting
- 2021 Comparing Inner and Outer Membrane Permeabilities for Lignin Related Aromatic Compounds *Biophysical Society 65th Annual Meeting* Virtual Meeting
- 2020 High-Throughput Virtual Laboratory for Drug Discovery Using Massive Datasets **Oral Presentation** *SC20* Virtual Meeting

2020 Dissociation Mechanism of Processive Cellulases Explored through Molecular Simulation  
*Biophysical Society 64th Annual Meeting San Diego, CA*