

15 MARCH 2023  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA



## Institute for Education

Harnessing the power of data, innovation and soft diplomacy in the global community.

# IFE's West Coast TechBio Meet & Greet

On March 15th, the Institute for Education invited West Coast civic tech leaders to meet with TechBio pioneers in San Francisco. Hosted at the dazzling home of longtime IFE friends, Rob and Mary Anne Cook, guests had the opportunity to learn about the synergies of TechBio and civic tech while watching the sunset over the San Francisco Bay.

The Meet & Greet was an opportunity for the civic tech community to hear from two Jim Valentine TechBio Fellows, Omair Khan and Jeremiah Sims, who are conducting their fellowship with Artis Ventures, the leaders in the emerging TechBio sector. The Jim Valentine AV TechBio Fellowship was set up by the Kemper Valentine Family in memory of their father and IFE Founder, Jim Valentine, in 2021 to carry on his spirit of hard-work, innovation, risk-taking, and stimulating change that has positive and far-reaching financial and societal impacts.

Omair is currently pursuing his MD-PhD at Stanford University, focusing on stem cell biology and regenerative medicine. Jeremiah is pursuing his MD-PhD at the University of Washington, studying computational methods to develop protein-based therapeutics.

One of IFE's goals is to introduce complex concepts to those outside of the tight-knit community so that everyone can learn from one another, find common ground, and collaborate. So, the first learning of the night was, what is TechBio? Omair shared, "TechBio means harnessing the power of deep technology to influence how we understand and interrogate biological systems to deliver better, more robust solutions to the people who need it most: our patients." One example Omair shared is how artificial intelligence is being used across the board from drug discovery to patient experience.

It was fascinating for guests to draw a parallel between the world of TechBio and the world of civic tech. Civic tech leverages technology and collaboration to engage the public and solve civic problems. Similarly, TechBio leverages disruptive technology and collaboration to solve healthcare problems. "The TechBio mindset values innovation and technical excellence as the drivers of a platform's success", shared Jeremiah. In both worlds, it is critical to understand the role of technology and how it can be thoughtfully deployed to solve problems and create solutions for large-scale societal issues.

Former U.S. Chief Technology Officer and IFE Leader, Todd Park, then introduced Founder and former Executive Director of Code for America and former U.S. Deputy Chief Technology Officer, Jennifer Pahlka. Jennifer recently wrote a book *Recoding America: Why Government Is Failing in the Digital Age and How We Can Do Better*, coming out this summer.

The night ended with guests taking turns holding Rob Cook's Academy Award, the only Oscar that most of us will ever be lucky enough to hold. Rob won the Award in 2001 for the development of RenderMan. It was the first Academy Award ever given for a software product.

