

Summer Internship Report 2017

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Birmingham, Alabama**

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

For my summer internship, I worked alongside Dr. Scott Elledge as a scribe. Dr. Elledge is an ENT doctor and would see patients for an array of problems daily, and it was my job to put the patients' histories and other important information onto the computer records. He had three offices that he visited weekly, and I would be present at each location to keep up with the patient's' records. In the mornings of three days of the week, Dr. Elledge would have his surgeries, and my only job was to observe and learn. Many times, I was also allowed to scrub in for his surgeries where I could have a better viewing of the surgery and aid Dr. Elledge in ways when needed.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

During my internship, the work I performed was part of the process of seeing a patient and resolving the issues that he or she is experiencing. I learned that even though the patient is only coming into see the doctor, there are still many other functions that must be done for the patient's care, which requires a team of individuals to perform. I did not directly care for any patients but my work as a scribe aided in the overall process. On a professional level, I am now better equipped with the skills to work alongside others in an office setting. On my path to becoming a doctor, I also now know the ways in which to treat and care for a patient.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

Everyday, I aided Dr. Elledge with information about the patient's history to help him make a decision about patient care. Many of the patients have been seen, therefore we had past notes on them. I would many times show the doctor what was done at the patient's previous visit. I would also tell him the medicines that we had prescribed the patient. In one case, a lady came in with a sinus infection that had persisted for about two months. She had visited before and her prescribed antibiotic had not been working, and she had many allergies to medicines. I told the doctor which antibiotic she was prescribed and her allergies so that he could work to come up with another medicine to treat her. In the end, we found a medicine that cleared her sinus infection by her next visit. I think Sewanee provided me with knowledge in the sciences so that I could easily understand what was going on medically with the patient and provide information to the doctor in an efficient manner.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

During my internship, my teamwork skills were strengthened in the area of patience. Before I could put any information about a patient on his or her note in the computer system, a nurse would have to create the note for the patient and put her information in, including the height and weight of the patient. If the nurse was on the note, I could not be on it at the same time, so I would have to wait until she was off to get on. There were many situations where I needed to get on a note to log information but was unable to do so because a nurse was on. I had to learn to be patient and wait until the nurse was finished with the note. Patience is a necessary skill when working with a team because you are always going to be waiting on someone to finish a task.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

The internship provided me with a lot of knowledge and a new perspective into what it is like to be a doctor. Before the internship, I was not entirely sure if the field of medicine (as a doctor) was what I wanted to pursue. I quickly learned that it was. During the six weeks that I followed Dr. Elledge, I learned what it would be like to be a ENT doctor, which is something that I could see myself enjoying. I really enjoyed watching his surgeries such as the septoplasties or tonsillectomies. I did not think I would enjoy surgery, but now from my experiences, I believe it's something that would be fun to take on. There are so many fields of medicine, which means there is a lot of variety to the daily life of a doctor. After my internship, I know that I do want to be a doctor, but there is still much more I need to learn until I know what type of doctor.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

On a daily basis, I encountered people of many different backgrounds, whether it be a nurse or a patient. I do not think our different backgrounds made it difficult to communicate with each other. For the most part, I was not dealing with patients that had backgrounds that would make it difficult to communicate. Most patients were from the Birmingham area and spoke English. I only encountered a few Spanish speaking patients, but they always had a relative with them to translate and communicate. I learned that the different background of a patient can affect the way in which he or she is treated. This could be due to an illness or treatment they have had or their insurance for a certain medication prescription. I learned that a patient must be treated with many factors in mind and the varying backgrounds is one of them.