Summer Internship Report 2017

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

TriStar StoneCrest Medical Center serves Rutherford County (TN) and the surrounding communities. I assisted the CEO of the hospital and Sewanee alumnus, Lou Caputo; he created an administrative internship that is catered directly to the student's interests. In my time at StoneCrest, I was assigned a number of administrative tasks such as creating expansion proposals for the hospital and gathering data for the purpose of staffing decisions. Outside of the admin office, however, I did extensive shadowing of doctors in specialties that I was interested in, often for several days to a week at a time.

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?

I was able to assist in the creation of a substantial hospital expansion project, coordinate a women's health show that entertained almost 800 guests in the hospital, and spearhead a project to acquire several new physicians. More than anything, my interpersonal communication skills developed substantially this summer. These projects required a fair amount of organizational skills and tech savvy, but the greatest task at hand was always getting in touch with the right people and getting accurate information you need from them in a timely manner. This was especially true in regards to hiring new physicians, when I had to reach out to four different departments to get the metrics I needed to complete the proposal.
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?

There was a problem with dust around air vents that raised concerns about hygiene, especially for patients with compromised immune systems. When I asked about it, I was told that the plant ops and custodial service had been in a stalemate over whose responsibility it was to dust the vents. Ultimately, the job wasn't getting done. I reached out to both departments and voiced my concern for the clinical consequence of something as seemingly harmless as dust in air vents. Eventually I realized that both parties were reluctant to do the job because it was honestly a huge pain in the neck. So I went to the COO and had a piece of equipment ordered that day that would make the job much less of a hassle. Now the vents are clean, the employees are happy, and the patients are safe. Sewanee develops students with these kinds of people skills and problem solving abilities.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

I spent the summer working alongside an administrative fellow who had just finished his master's degree in healthcare administration. He and I were basically attached at the hip on any assignment thrown our way. We were able to sit down and divide and conquer a number of tasks that were unfamiliar and would have been overwhelming alone.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

Because of this internship, I have never been more certain that I want to be a physician.

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?

The population of a hospital is about as diverse as it gets. Watching doctors communicate with patients, both effectively and not so effectively, was eye-opening. Doctors spend decades perfecting their craft and specializing in highly advanced fields, but ability to communicate in layman's terms in a compassionate manner is a constant and invaluable need.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?

It is SO much easier driving against the flow of traffic, especially when driving to Smyrna. I would advise any intern to try to live closer to downtown Nashville and commute out to Smyrna. The rent is higher, but the experience is worth it.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

Lou is the perfect example of what a Sewanee graduate can become.