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Reflective Essay

I have always been involved in sports; from flipping as a gymnast, sprinting as a track athlete or passing the ball as a back row defender in volleyball, my life has been sports. I have also always been interested in the human body because my dad works in the medical field as a physical therapist. This semester I did my internship at Western Slope Orthopedics. Each morning I would shadow one of their orthopedic doctors, Dr. Bagley, Dr. Albrecht and Dr. Dwyer were some of the most impactful ones! My task was to retain as much information from them as I could! Throughout my semester I learned to go out of my comfort zone, ask questions, be confident and observe to the best of my abilities. This internship helped reinforce my drive and passion towards my future career in healthcare.

As an orthopedic doctor you are tasked with many difficult decisions and in order to make these decisions they utilize many technical skills as well as technology. These doctors perform “special tests” to assess ligaments and they gain background knowledge on their patient by asking important questions! This information along with x-rays, MRI’s and CT Scans help the providers make the best decision for their patient. A typical day for the doctors in our clinic include patient evaluations as well as an occasional steroid injection to help alleviate

symptoms. As a doctor in orthopedics, you are tasked with evaluating multiple x-rays and MRI's throughout the day. In order to become an orthopedic surgeon you must earn your bachelor's degree, these doctors typically earn a Bachelor of Science (BS) in biology, chemistry, engineering, or a pre-med track! After this degree they enter medical school and complete an additional 4 years of schooling in order to become an MD. After medical school, they will continue their learning in orthopedic residency, which is usually in a hospital setting! After this, some doctors proceed to do a fellowship, which is ultimately a specialized residency to enhance their knowledge on a specific portion of the body. One of our doctors did a foot and ankle fellowship, so he is now considered our foot specialist. Embarking on a fellowship would be considered an advancement in the workplace. The key certification and licensure includes passing all three steps of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE)! Many also become certified through the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery (ABOS)! Orthopedic surgeons are among the highest-paid physicians, with average total compensation often ranging from (\\$564,000\) to over (\\$800,000\) annually, depending on experience, subspecialty, and practice setting.

As an intern, my daily routines and responsibilities would consist of lots of observing as well as asking questions whenever I got the chance! Each day I would shadow a new doctor and would get to sit through multiple patient appointments. These appointments vary from post-ops to pre-ops, from sprained ankles to total hip replacements. Each day was different and I always felt like I learned so much after! I also got to observe many steroid injections which were quite interesting. My goal for this semester was to get outside my comfort zone and I feel like I definitely accomplished that. The doctors were extremely welcoming and as time went on I feel

as though I made real and honest connections with them. Some days in the clinic were slower than others and on these days especially I was able to get to know the doctors on a deeper level than medicine. Though nothing was hands-on I learned many new skills such as reading x-rays as well as observing common symptoms related to specific injuries.

This internship helped shape me in so many ways. This internship did not come without struggles, it can be difficult to speak up when in a clinical setting but I pushed through that initial feeling of uncomfortability in order to advocate for my own learning! At first it was also hard to not feel out of place in the clinic but as I learned the routine and daily schedule of the clinic, it became easier for me to feel like I was part of the team and I was meant to be there. If I could redo any part of this internship I would try to be more outgoing my first couple of days just so I could get the feel of things earlier on in my internship.

College is just months away and this internship taught me so many lessons that I will forever be grateful for. This experience had such a positive impact on me, I genuinely loved everyday I was in the clinic shadowing these doctors. The hours I spent in the clinic not only molded my passion but my character. I am very proud of my overall growth as well as my knowledge in relation to the human body. A major takeaway from this is that each day is beneficial as long as you work hard and advocate for yourself. I am so grateful that I was given this opportunity. I gained confidence in myself and learned SO much!

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