Wrapping Up My Time at the Trinity Center
By: Grace Polur

As summer comes to an end, so does my internship at the Trinity Center. I have spent a wonderful couple of months at the center; reflecting on my time there, I realize that, in addition to meeting the expectations I set for myself, I enjoyed a great deal of professional and personal growth.

As a reminder, my expectations were: to develop an understanding of Epic, the computer system the medical center uses for nearly any activity; to understand how the Trinity Center works to create the best experience possible for patients; and to sit in on as many procedures as possible. I believe that each of these expectations was realistic, although some were more easily attainable than others. For example, developing an understanding of Epic was perhaps too easily attainable. Although Epic seemed to be difficult to understand at first, I picked it up quickly after some training. In a sense, I am glad Epic ended up being low-hanging fruit for me because it allowed me to make a immediate, tangible contributions during my internship (e.g., getting my hands dirty with clinicians’ schedules).

Sitting in on procedures was also easier to do than I had anticipated; within the first couple of weeks at the Trinity Center, my supervisor scheduled me to spend a week in GI. The week that I spent in GI was my favorite week at the Trinity Center. It was likely my week in GI that allowed me to fully realize that I would like to take part in the clinical aspect of health care. While telling family and friends about the numerous colonoscopies and endoscopies I had observed, many seemed to be grossed out, yet I never felt this way about procedures. Rather, I was fascinated and grateful to have the opportunity to see inside the human body. Overall, my experience in the GI department truly left a great impact on me.

Because I did not realize how much goes into creating the best patient experience possible, this was the most difficult experience to pursue. Initially, I had assumed that simply smiling to patients and giving them prompt service would be enough to create a good patient experience. I was wrong. Prior to starting this internship, I never considered how much more goes into creating such an experience. For instance, in order to ease the difficulty of prepping for a colonoscopy or endoscopy—which involves fasting for hours prior to the procedure—I made sure not to put cooking magazines in the GI waiting room. As silly as this seems, it really helps patients out because those who are fasting do not want to look at pictures of food before their procedure. Another way to create the best patient experience is simplifying the check-in/check-out process at the front desk. One of my tasks was to rewrite instructions for registration and the check-in/check-out process for the individuals who work at the front desk. I made the instructions simpler and easier to read, which made the process smoother.

Prior to starting this internship, I did not know what I wanted to do career-wise. I knew that I would like to work in the healthcare industry, yet I did not know if I was more interested in the clinical or administrative aspect of it. While interning, I recognized that I had a real interest in the clinical aspect of healthcare. While I did enjoy working on administrative tasks, I realized that I was most excited on days where I worked with the clinical staff, which included physicians, nurses, medical assistants, and phlebotomists. After researching a variety of careers within the clinical aspect of health care, I decided that I would like to study to be a Physician’s Assistant (PA), as this seemed to be the right fit for me. I will continue to research this career and I will also try to keep in touch with the Trinity Center's PA, as she offered to give me insight
into the profession. This has impacted my academic trajectory as I will have to take classes such as physiology and statistics in order to prepare myself for a PA training program.

Interning at the Trinity Center has also taught me a great deal that I will be able to use in other settings. This internship has taught me the importance of time management and setting priorities. Time management is something that I often struggled with prior to this internship, as I would often leave too little time to complete schoolwork. Now, I have a better understanding of how much time is needed for certain tasks, and I will be able to allot the proper amount of time to completing assignments and I will prioritize my schoolwork over meeting with friends. This internship also taught me to be a go-getter and to make the most of my free time. For instance, when I was unable to reach my supervisor and didn't have a project at hand, I would walk around the center and check in with nurses and medical assistants to see if they had any work for me to do, which they often did. This kept me busy and, not surprisingly, in my colleagues’ good graces. I hope to continue with this go-getter attitude, as it will likely allow for me to stay productive and continue to make good impressions on my colleagues in the future.

For any HSSP majors interested in this sort of internship, make sure you are ready to be on your feet at all times, to stay sharp, and to be creative. You will often be given complex tasks that you will need to figure out using your own ingenuity. You must also be attentive and know how to collaborate well with others. Always be open to working in departments that you may not necessarily be interested in at first. Lastly, be courteous and smile to everyone you see, as this will make for a pleasant atmosphere.

Overall, I am so grateful I was able to intern at the Trinity Center. I made amazing memories and learned a great deal about the healthcare industry. My hard work at the Trinity Center certainly paid off, as I am proud to say that I have been invited to intern at the Trinity Center again during my winter 2015 and summer 2016 school breaks. Being invited back to the Trinity Center is certainly one of my biggest accomplishments, and I am eager to intern at the Trinity Center in the future.