

The VSRT: A Student Intern Perspective

It was the summer of 2005 when the Chair of the VSRT Board of Directors approached me to tell me about a new program offered by the VSRT. She approached me with such enthusiasm and her eyes lit up when she finally revealed the name of this new program to me, the VSRT student internship program. She extended an invitation for me to join this highly prestigious club that selects only four students from the entire state of Virginia each year. Who was I to say no to the Chair of the VSRT Board of Directors and besides; she was my clinical instructor and wanted to be my mentor as a VSRT Student Intern.

To be considered for the VSRT Student Intern Program, I had to be a VSRT Student member, complete an application, provide a letter of reference from my educational program director, submit an essay which included: Why I chose Radiologic Technology for a career, my career plans after graduation, and most importantly explain my beliefs as to the role of a professional organization in my chosen career. To be honest, I found it easier applying to a four-year university or doing my own taxes. But, I understood that the VSRT is serious about this program and want to select those future technologist's who are serious about the future of their profession. I applied.

As a student intern, I was required as part of the VSRT experience to attend VSRT Board of Directors meetings in Charlottesville, VA which were held once every 3 months. Did I mention that the price of gas at that time was close to \$3.00 per gallon and that I was a student? I also received free registration at a VSRT One-day Seminar that was held in March 2006 at Virginia Western Community College in beautiful Roanoke, VA, my school. What a break! I am also required to attend the VSRT Annual Meeting, which is held May 4-5 this year in Staunton, VA to experience how educational meetings are structured and presented. Did I mention that gas is \$3.00 per gallon and that I am a student? As a VSRT Student Intern, I am provided lodging for the VSRT Annual Meeting and I receive reimbursement of up to \$20.00 per day for meals during the Annual meeting. Now that is what I'm talking about, as a student, I am always looking for a free meal.

Now I present my true confession about my experience as a VSRT Student Intern. My first VSRT Board of Directors meeting was August 27, 2005. As with all first times, I didn't know where I was going and what to expect. Once I found my way and the meeting was called to order, I became surprisingly captivated by the issues that affect or will affect the Radiologic Technologist's in Virginia being tossed around the table. It seemed like for every issue there was always someone who presented one aspect and another to give you other things to consider. The dialogue was cordial and sometimes tense but all with only one thing in mind; how to help the Radiologic Technologist's in Virginia gain strength in their districts and gain strength as a state professional society. I learned that nationally the state professional societies for Radiologic Technologist's are in decline but am happy to learn that Virginia has one of the strongest and the best newsletter, "The Electron". I was also delighted to learn that a student intern got a free lunch at the Board of Director's meeting. Again, anytime I can get a free meal is always

a good thing. As the meeting was coming to an end, I began to develop an admiration for the members serving in the VSRT. They put in many hours to develop and keep a financial plan, keep track of all of their members in Virginia, put together educational seminars including finding speakers for CE credits, put together a wonderful newsletter for all of their members and maintain a VSRT website. They also take time on a Saturday, their day off, to travel from all parts of the state of Virginia to attend the Board of Directors meetings every three months in Charlottesville, VA all while juggling their family commitments and regular job responsibilities. And the issues they must address as a professional society are tough issues with no easy answers. All I could do was to admire their commitment and the time they spend to try to help me, a future Radiologic Technologist from Virginia.

I participated in as many opportunities that the VSRT Student Intern Program allowed me to participate in. Not only did I attend the VSRT One-Day Seminar in Roanoke, VA, but also I set up a table and sold VSRT t-shirts, badge pulls and window decals. I also helped to pick up and deliver lunch for this seminar and did anything that my mentor asked me to do to assist. I also got to sit in on all of the lectures presented that day, a big bonus for a student. I am also attending the VSRT Annual meeting in May where I will be working the registration table, helping set up for seminars, and selling VSRT memorabilia in addition to anything my mentor asks me to do.

So, you might ask me, what did you get out of all of this? Well, I will tell you. I got a new respect for what it takes to run a state professional society. I developed an admiration for those who serve the VSRT to tackle very tough issues with tact and grace only to help me as a future Radiologic Technologist. I also met some wonderful technologist leaders from many places in the state of Virginia. My VWCC radiography class attended the student seminar in Atlanta, Georgia in February of this year. In a sea of Radiography students from across the United States, over 2000 were there, it was a nice surprise to see and talk to people that I have met as a student intern with the VSRT. All the way down in Atlanta, Georgia were VSRT Chair-elect Ms. Jan Clark and VSRT Recording Secretary Mr. Nick Gimmi. It was wonderful to see and talk to people I knew from outside my immediate classmates. What was even nicer was the fact that they actually knew me! So begins a bonus for a student intern with the VSRT, networking with perhaps a future employer. I feel that if I ever came on hard times and couldn't find a career as a Radiologic Technologist, I could call on those I met during the VSRT Board meetings to find out if there were any openings at their hospital or clinic. As a VSRT student intern, I feel that I would have an edge and an "Ace" card in my pocket.

As my tenure as a VSRT Student Intern comes to a close, I graduate this July 2006, I can only conclude one thing; it was worth every \$3.00 per gallon of fuel that I ever put in my truck to make the trip to Charlottesville, VA every three months. Thank you for a wonderful experience VSRT!

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