

Walyn Napper

Professor Milne

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### Final Paper: Internship Reflection for E-portfolio

This past year as I sit here and reflect on the highs and lows, I find myself realizing it's been a joy to attend this university. Academically, it's been intense but fulfilling. All of the major projects, big exams, and now graduation closing in this journey have been nothing but sweet. I have seen so much growth since my freshman year which feels amazing, it's the journey that makes it even more special. All of the classes in the sociology department shaped how I think and approach challenges. Beyond academics, senior year has been nothing but personal growth for me. Through all of the chaos it was a period of self-discovery, I learned so much more about my interests, passions, and values much deeper. Whether it was through my internship in the ATR, extracurricular activities, or just simply stepping out of my comfort zone, I've learned to embrace new opportunities and learned so much more about who I am and what I want for myself in life. This year would not be complete without the bittersweet realization, that as the journey ends I will be saying goodbye to teammates, coaches, friends, mentors, and the campus life which is heartbreaking. This year was more than just completing requirements and earning a degree, it was preparing for the road ahead and embracing the fullness of the college experience. This place has been my home for the past two years and I show nothing but gratitude for the opportunities this institution presented me with, that will prepare me for the adventures that lie

ahead. It may be coming to a close, but my internship taught me lessons and gave me so much memories that will stay with me for a lifetime.

During my internship, I was able to learn many things about what the training room is all about. I learned the ins and outs of what trainers do on a day-to-day basis which is working with the athletes but it is more to do with what they do on a regular day and game days. It is not easy work but I was able to do work they do when not working with athletes which are restocking inventory, helping refill water, making heel and lace pads for ankle taping, and even a fun activity such as “wii hab”. Wii hab is another word for rehab where athletes who have lower body injuries have to play either bowling, tennis, or baseball on one leg working on strengthening the muscles where they were injured. This was maybe the funniest activity I was able to do because not only was I working but I was able to interact with all athletes who come from different cultures and ethnicities. Also helped with game day setups, seeing how they set up and what all went into these particular days. I was able to gain information on trainers, what they do, and how they do it. I learned a new appreciation for them and was able to learn many skills involving the training room and working there has been a great experience thus far. Throughout the 120 hours I learned so many valuable skills that I will be able to apply in the workforce. I became more vocal, a leader, a better organizer and the best skill I gained from the experience was time management. All of these skills are what I added on to the list of skills I already have but I know more about myself and what I can bring to the table.

Working with the Athletic Training Staff here at Longwood I have been able to see a connection between the knowledge that I have changed throughout my major as well as the

sociology course. I have learned how to apply what I have gained in a professional setting and environment. Throughout my internship, I was able to apply sociological concepts to be able to help understand and address different issues and scenarios that would arise within the athletic training environment. One of the concepts that was seen in a lot of sociological imagination. This concept helps to be able to understand the context that shapes people in their decision-making as well as the decisions of others. During my internship, I was able to see how the athletic trainers approached different injuries as well as the different cases that they would see. I would also see the decisions and ways that the athletes would approach their injuries during rehab. I was able to shift my perspectives and think about the different sports and athletes that were coming in to be able to see why and how the trainers were caring for and treating the athletes. Not only their physical needs but also the overall well-being of their student-athlete.

During my internship, I was also able to see the concepts of roles and status in the athletic training room. As an intern, I had to learn how to observe and serve the role that I was assigned. Being able to find my role within the internship took time but in the end what helped me the most was being able to communicate my areas of concern or when I felt like I needed to. I also was able to learn how to navigate the different teaching styles of the trainers. Some trainers used different approaches when teaching me how to do things as well as when we all were working together there were different roles that were being played out. Learning the ins and outs of roles and status helped me as a student intern to know how to feel the room and be the best learner and listener that I could be.

Another thing that I saw during my time at my internship this semester was the inequalities that are in the athletic training room here at Longwood. I encountered this as I was the only male working there. I think that having different backgrounds, ethnicities, and genders represented in a training room is important. The staff there seems to be doing a good job of addressing the inequalities as they are looking to hire a male for their next open position but as of right now, it is not like that. Even though all females work there they did a great job of making me feel included and giving me all of the same opportunities. Also regardless of your background or what you look like as long as you are giving equal care to the athletes I don't believe that it is a huge issue.

Throughout this journey, I've been blessed to work alongside great mentors, gaining nothing but wisdom and knowledge to better help myself in the near future. Everyday there was a new challenge I had to face which I tackled head on with grit, creativity and with commitment to be excellent. However, I thrived in this culture that wants everybody to be heard and do great things in life after college. Working with such supportive people only enhanced my productivity but also made us all feel like we belonged and made everything so much more successful. In all, my internship experience has been transformative for my professional development. I come out of this experience provided with skills and accomplishments but also with resilience, confidence and passion to make an immediate impact at my future job. This journey has been one to remember and by far my internship was the highlight of my year.