

## **Externship at North Shore University Hospital-Jessica Shui '09**

Every sophomore should participate in the Career Development Center's Externship Program because the exposure to one's aspired professional field is invaluable. I was matched to Dr. Alan Hartman, Cardiothoracic Surgeon and Chairman of the Cardiothoracic Unit at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, NY. I anxiously looked forward to this priceless opportunity. Dr. Hartman took his role as my sponsor seriously and requested I should experience the notoriously long doctors' hours by having a 7AM to 7PM shift. I even had the opportunity to wear the same scrubs as the physician assistants (PA). I met the excellent doctors, PA's, and nurses in the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (ICU). They guided me through rounds, which are visits to every patient in the ICU for the purpose of monitoring the patients' condition and updating the patients' dosage. Patients who reside in the ICU require critical care such as those who recently had heart surgery. I was able to interact with the patients and learn about their specific medical needs. The doctors and PA's patiently answered all of the questions I asked ranging from explaining procedures and reading charts to why they chose their profession and how they balance their career with their family.

In addition to the invaluable lessons I learned in the ICU, Dr. Hartman generously permitted me to shadow him during an open heart surgery. This was an incredible experience. My eyes must have been as large as saucers as I tried to take in as much as I could. He performed a double bypass and aortic valve replacement which required skill and intense concentration. While Dr. Hartman concentrated on his patient, the patient's anesthesiologist helpfully explained the concepts behind each procedure which allowed me to understand and appreciate the surgery.

As Bucknellians, we are fortunate that professionals like Dr. Hartman, a Bucknell parent, generously donate their time. The experience and knowledge I gained during my externship was immensely valuable. In addition, I had formed relationships with other doctors. Furthermore, my sponsor welcomed me back to the hospital for additional shadowing when I returned home for spring break. This externship experience has inspired me and has become a huge motivator to continue the long and challenging path of becoming a doctor.