

## Dietetic Internship Graduation

Before I started the internship at Stony Brook, I was confident that I would do well. I mean, if I could do a phone interview in the buff—and get into the program—I was already off to a good start.

A few days before orientation, I felt a weight of apprehension clouding my confidence. What if everyone remembers more from undergrad than I do? What if I get potassium confused with vitamin K and everyone thinks that I am an intern destined to be just a “nutritionist”? What if the other interns’ idea of a good time is chatting about vegetables over a bowl of lettuce leaves spritzed with dressing from a spray bottle?

These thoughts followed me to orientation, when I was introduced to my peers. These people have experiences that look real good on a resume: some have lived abroad; some have already been in the work force; others have had their contributions to a research article published; some already have their Master’s degree; some people speak different languages. One intern showed that she has a sense of humor and announced that she likes bourbon. One intern is a pharmacist, for crying out loud. How can I compete with these people? Then I walked the internship director, who dresses better than I do. I thought, this is going to be a long 9 months.

During the next 7 rotations, we acquired the tools we need to ace the RD exam and become successful dietitians. We worked in hospitals, schools, and nursing homes. We traveled to places I didn’t even know existed on Long Island, transporting display boards and tote bags filled with sugar packets, Hawaiian punch, and fake rubber blobs of fat and muscle. We explained the difference between plain milk and Nesquik; we discussed why probiotics are good for our immune system; we rationalized why guzzling soda is not the best way to gain weight; we preached the benefits of omega-3s till we were blue in the face; we advocated for Trader Joe’s; we established that no, we are not health freaks (as one person put it) we just like talking about healthy food; we instilled mini-riots against the food industry, revealing that partially hydrogenated oils are indeed trans fats, and that you must check the ingredient list for this product; we gave a big fangul to the American Dietetic Association for partnering with Coca-Cola; we increased the stock prices for natural peanut butter. We went to health fairs, attended presentations, and clenched our fists during PTA and wellness meetings. We learned that a cupcake isn’t just a cupcake when you try to take it away from someone. We memorized the Bull’s Eye Food Guide, an image that is so ingrained in my mind, I will never look at a dart board the same way again.

Now that the internship has ended, I am met with both feelings of excitement and melancholy. I have greatly anticipated this day, marking the end date of my last rotation on the calendar before even beginning my first rotation. Now that this day has finally come, I am sad to leave this experience behind. In some sort of masochistic way, I will miss going to class. I will miss Lorraine telling us to speed up our presentations because she wants to get a slice of pizza from the cafeteria. I will miss hearing Josephine frantically clicking in her heels halfway down the hallway.

I will especially miss the people I have grown to call my friends. People who have challenged me, people who have inspired me, people who have supported me. People who I initially viewed as my competition and my bosses, and now view them as uniquely gifted women who can teach me something I never knew,

and I could sometimes teach them something in return. If it weren't for the venting sessions before and after class, the impromptu office hour drop bys, I would have had about seven and a half nervous breakdowns by now.

So I want to thank everyone here for keeping me sane, keeping me focused, keeping my spirits high, and also letting me know when I should just relax and have a cocktail or two. As one intern said, I'm taking it one breath at a time. Now we can all breathe a little easier. I am so happy and honored to have worked you all. I'm not even going to wish you luck, because after witnessing what we can do, I know we are all destined to be the most successful dietitians Stony Brook has ever pumped out of this internship. Congratulations, to the class of 2008!

Jax Hubbard

Graduating Intern 2008