

**Health Career Connection
Internship Case Study**

Please contact jjain@healthcareers.org if you have any questions.

About You	
1. Name	Melanie Napier
2. College	Harvard University
3. Year in School	Recent graduate
4. Major	Biochemistry
5. Career Objective	Undecided. I would like to do something that combines science with its effect on society, so I'm currently looking into careers in public health.

About the Host Organization	
6. Organization Name	The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
7. Department	Pioneer Team
8. City	Princeton, NJ

About the Internship	
9. Learning Objectives	To observe and learn how a large healthcare research organization is run, what things RWJF does well and what things it needs to improve on; To learn what different kinds of work are conducted at RWJF, and the skill sets of people who do those kinds of work; To obtain a broader picture of the current healthcare field to be a more informed contributor to discussions; To learn to think more creatively when I approach projects;
10. Major Project Description	One of my major projects was to update a database of all the projects that had been submitted to the Pioneer Portfolio, and create a set of preliminary reports about the projects. This was especially needed because Pioneer was a new Portfolio, and it was important for the Team to be able to assess how well the incoming proposals matched their objectives and set up internal indicators for themselves to be better at responding to grantees in a timely manner. After meeting with members of the IT department for a crash course on Microsoft Access, I located and updated all the proposal information from 2002 until the present. I was also responsible for setting up a series of reports that would automatically update as they added in new projects to the database. I had free reign to update it any way I wanted. This project was a tremendous learning experience in organizing and managing information, in using Microsoft Access, and assessing data and explaining trends. It gave me an insight into all of the projects Pioneer had considered since its

	<p>inception. Thus I got a good idea of some of the cutting edge ideas out there that have the potential to improve health care.</p>
<p>11. Minor Project Description</p>	<p>I worked on a Team Learning project which allowed me to research any topic I was interested in and present my findings to the Team. The goal was to educate team members about a subject I found interesting. I got the idea to research issues surrounding FDA reform from my preceptor, and I was responsible for conducting the background research, preparing the presentation and writing a short report on my findings. In the act of researching and writing the report, I came up with ways to relate FDA reform to the team's objectives. In doing so, my presentation was much more relevant and well received than it otherwise would have been. The experience also taught me to consult people who are knowledgeable about topics you are researching as a supplement to literature searches. I met with another Program Officer who was also a Pioneer team member for her thoughts, and she left me with some really interesting ideas that I hadn't come across.</p>
<p>12. Typical Day</p>	<p>Typically, I worked eight hour days, starting at 9. During the summer, the dress code is business casual. Since I interned with the Pioneer Team, I attended all of the Pioneer Team meetings, as well as the staff meetings, which team members from all teams attended. At the staff meeting, a few teams present a project they're considering and everyone would discuss it; in this way everyone gets an idea of what other Teams are doing. Both of those meetings were weekly and lasted about two hours each. In addition, I had weekly meetings with my preceptor to discuss how my progress was going and any concerns that I had. Every so often there would also be an outside group that would have a presentation on an interesting topic, so I attended most of those talks as well as part of my learning experience. All other meetings I set up myself; I made appointments to talk with senior and junior staff members about their roles and career choices, and with other interns to talk about our experiences over lunch.</p>
<p>13. Benefits of HCC Workshops</p>	<p>I think the workshops are what will make the summer more than work experience; they provide life and career training that will aid you in the future. From the Career planning workshop I learned the importance of planning my life first, then choosing a career that fits in with my stated values and priorities. It's an important distinction that I hadn't thought of before attending the workshop. At another workshop, we went through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and discussed how knowing our preferences and those of the people we interact with can help us communicate better. The knowledge of different personality types is something I can apply to any number of situations, from tailoring future presentations to suit my audience's preferences to being able to understand the way my future boss processes information.</p>
<p>14. Internship's Connection to</p>	<p>I applied to HCC partly because public health seemed like a good alternative to lab research that would incorporate my scientific</p>

Career/Academic Goals	background. Through the life planning exercises and from speaking with staff members who had worked in community health, social work, management, medicine, and nonprofit health centers, I came to the conclusion that I wanted to pursue public health further and have resolved to get a job in that field over the next year.
15. Long-Term Benefits of Experience	I am thankful to HCC for its commitment to placing students in positions in which they can be mentored. The benefits of my internship had as much to do with the relationships I built with RWJF staff members as it had to do with my exposure to the grant-making, program-management, and policy aspects of health care. Both are positive, affirming experiences I will take with me as I move forward and plan my career.
16. Suggestions for Future Intern	I highly recommend that future interns take advantage of their position to interview as many senior staff members as possible. The information that people you admire in the organization can provide is highly valuable; they will be able to show you and tell you things that you would not have considered. I also recommend making a small portfolio of the projects you worked on, their importance to the organization, and your career goals to help you when you ask preceptors for recommendations. It is much easier to approach them when you can leave them with evidence that documents how much you've done during your internship.
17. Comments	