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Trent University and PRHC Announce New Internship in Medical Sciences

Trial course offers exciting opportunities for student experience

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Trent University's Department of Biology, in partnership with the Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC), announces the arrival of a new internship course in medical sciences now underway as of January 2012.

"In conversations with physicians within the Peterborough community, we found that a new internship structure could be tailored to the highly specific form of teaching that they could use," explained Dr. Craig Brunetti, professor of Biology and coordinator for the course at Trent. "With this in mind, we proposed to create a specialized internship course where students shadow a physician/surgeon. This course fits in very well with the biology department's view of the importance of health within our curriculum."

"This program provides the students with a unique experience that they would not normally get at this stage," said Dr. Bharat Maini, the PRHC anaesthesiologist who has been instrumental in establishing this formal internship program with Trent. "It's rare for students to come into a clinical environment so early on in their education. By participating in this placement, they can start relating real-life hospital experience back to what they've read in their textbooks."

The course emerged as a specialized extension of an existing biology internship in Health Sciences that has a broad set of learning objectives from the social aspects of health (health promotion, health policy) to the very applied health sciences fields (veterinary, dentistry, and physicians).

For the internship, students will complete a placement in a hospital setting for the equivalent of three hours a week for 12 weeks. Students will also be assigned practical readings and background theory every week.

According to Dr. Brad White, professor and chair of the Department of Biology at Trent, "Enrolment in Biology programs has doubled at Trent in the last few years and over half of biology students are interested in health-related careers. This new internship will provide more opportunities for students to experience health careers as part of their degree,

complemented by the new teaching facilities in Block D of the Life and Health Sciences Building.”

The learning outcomes for the students will include the physician's role as a medical expert, effective communicator, collaborator, scholar, health advocate, professional and manager. The course would be capped based on the number of placement slots available, hoping for 10 internship placement spots for the first year, increasing the number of slots and students to 24 by the end of the second year.

“Developing mutually beneficial partnerships is an important focus for Trent University, “ said Julie Davis, vice-president External Relations and Advancement, “This partnership with PRHC will allow our students to interact with a potential employer in the community to not only build their skills and knowledge, but to bring awareness about potential careers they might pursue, especially within our community.”

The first student to participate in the new, formal program will begin within the week and it is anticipated that three or four students will participate in the program this semester. There is one Trent internship currently in progress -- this student has carried over from the previous, informal program last year and has been greatly successful in the intern role. Three PRHC physicians are currently participating, with more physicians anticipated to become involved as demand increases.

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