

Why I chose to participate in an externship

I have always been interested in learning about the drug development process including fundraising, FDA approval, clinical trials, quality control, etc. I believe understanding this process will help dermatologists understand how innovations go from the lab/bedside to FDA approved medications or devices. In addition, it will let us play an active role in helping pharmaceutical companies develop safe and effective drugs for our patients.

My externship experience

I worked with Novan, a small pharmaceutical company based in North Carolina. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, my externship was entirely virtual. Although I really wish I could have met everyone at Novan in person, I had an absolute blast! Tomoko at Novan is a great mentor. She designed 2 projects for me that utilized my dermatology clinical skills and made me feel I could really contribute to the team, instead of just “shadowing”. She also introduced me to almost everyone at Novan and arranged 30 min -1 hour meetings with each one of them, including the CEO, to learn about their experience and specialties. For example, I learned about each of the costs related to running the current molluscum trial, including those related to recruiting patients, FDA submission, and working with 3rd party research coordinators. Another formulator taught me how to read the medical insert that comes with any medication and infer how the trial which led to the approval of this medication was run. Additionally, I had the opportunity to hop on any relevant company meetings that I found interesting.

I felt extremely grateful that everyone at Novan was so generous and taught me so much! I also really appreciate that AID helped me set this externship up.

Final thoughts

No regrets at all! This was full of learning opportunities and connections beyond my imagination! I highly recommend this experience to anyone interested in clinical research, pharmaceutical industry, FDA approval process, and entrepreneurship.

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