

Prompt: What did you learn and how has it been significant for you?

Audience: First-year BSHS students

Throughout my experiences at the University of Minnesota Rochester, I knew I was going to be a physician assistant, and I worked very hard to become a competitive applicant for physician assistant programs. I did well in my classes. I volunteered and gained leadership experience in the clubs I participated in. I got involved in research opportunities, and I had a postgraduate five-year plan. I was happy with my plan, and I did not think that it would change. Then came my capstone. The internship I had in London did not go according to plan, and I realized that the medical setting I encountered was the last one I ever wanted to spend my life in. The physicians and nurses that I shadowed had become unsympathetic to their patients plights and were suspicious of the people that they took care of were only seeking medications. This is something that I had also observed in my time shadowing physicians at Mayo Clinic, but to a lesser degree. The realization that I didn't want to become that way made my perfect five-year plan fall apart. I started to have panic attacks, my health took a nosedive, and I felt as though I could not let anyone know that things were not going the way that I had planned. I essentially had failed myself on colossal level. I stewed over the wreck that I felt my life had become while continuing my capstone, focusing on aesthetics and patient care, which I greatly enjoyed. At this point, I knew I was never going to be a physician assistant, but I would not admit it to myself. I shut the door on becoming any other profession for so long that I did not realize that there were other doors with equal opportunity. I eventually grasped that the amount of anxiety that I was feeling was due to my career choice to be a physician assistant and once I started exploring other options, I felt better. I realized I did not fail, I was just choosing a different path for myself. I am no longer worried that I am going to fail, because unless I close myself into a room again, I knew that I would always be moving forward.