

Only the Shadow Knows: Students Glean Valuable Insights by Walking in the Footsteps of Alumnus



Dr. Michael McAdam '99 (left) poses with Nick Saenz '14 during a shadowing experience at McAdam's clinic in Seattle this summer.

The Alumni Association is committed to enriching the educational experience of our current and future medical students. One of the best ways we can accomplish this is by providing students with shadowing opportunities. That's what Dr. Michael McAdam '99 did this summer when he allowed two first-year medical students to work with him for a week.

After earning his medical degree from the Health Science Center, McAdam completed his residency in orthopaedics and sports medicine at the University of Washington followed by a fellowship in sports medicine at Palo Alto Medical Clinic. Today, he is team orthopaedic surgeon for the NFL's Seattle Seahawks and

a consultant to the U.S. Men's National Rugby Team, specializing in sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery of the shoulder, elbow, knee, and ankle.

In May, Todd Walker '14 shadowed McAdam for a week. Among the many things McAdam taught Walker was the importance of the physical exam. "As Dr. McAdam went through physical exams with his patients, you could tell he was actively thinking about all the possible causes and outcomes at the same time," Walker said. "He drew upon an impressive amount of anatomy, which made me feel good about all the hours I've spent studying that subject."

For Walker, who played wide receiver at Texas Tech University, working with elite athletes and being part of a professional sports team for a week was a dream come true. "That week of shadowing was probably the best experience I've had in medical school so far," he noted. "It gave me the motivation and encouragement I really needed after my first year. The experience helped shape my vision that hard work is the most important factor in succeeding in medical school, and it was really nice to see someone who truly loves his job and goes above and beyond in

caring for his patients. I would love someday to be in a position like Dr. McAdam is.”

In June, Nick Saenz '14, an Academic All-State football player in high school, also had the opportunity to shadow McAdam in his Seattle clinic and help out with some of the hands-on clinical exams. “I was able to apply the anterior and posterior drawer test when patients appeared to have an anterior or posterior cruciate ligament tear,” Saenz said. “Dr. McAdam taught me countless other techniques on how to test nervous and musculoskeletal function of the upper and lower extremities.”

During the weeklong experience, Saenz felt a strong sense of camaraderie as he kept pace with McAdam and his staff. “It was great to feel like I was an important part of the team and to be able to contribute in such a unique way,” he noted. “Also, being able to work with elite athletes in such an exciting environment is the ultimate adrenaline rush.”

The Alumni Association sincerely appreciates Dr. McAdam’s efforts to advance the educational mission of the School of Medicine! If you are interested in letting a medical student shadow you in your clinic, please e-mail us at medalumni@uthscsa.edu.