My daily schedule in the surgery department is usually from 5:30 am to 6:00 pm. At 5:30 am in the morning, I arrive at the department, visit my assigned patients and prepare the daily presentation. At 6:00 am, I join in the morning conference of surgery department, and then follow the chief resident with my group in the morning round to present the conditions of my patients. Then I go to my cases in the surgery rooms. Usually, I have two to four cases assigned to me. During the cases, I help to prepare and send the patients, and provide minor assistance in the surgery. At 4pm, I join in the evening round to make presentation and check our patients. Among the cases and rounds, I make my presentations to my supervisor PA or site evaluator, join in the conferences, record my notes and go to ED to visit our new patients.

I learnt a lot from my rotation. Firstly, I learnt a lot of knowledge about pre-op and post-op patient care. I also learnt a lot of knowledge about surgery, such as indications, different procedures, possible damages in the surgery, and possible complication after surgery. When I made a presentation about diverticulitis, I was asked to answer some detailed questions, such as how big an abscess needed to be managed by surgery and colostomy types and important differences. I did not prepare for them. It is a difficult time for me. I had to say that I did not know, but I would find the answers. After I found not only these answers, but also a lot of related knowledge, I made a presentation again. I answered not only previous questions, but also many other related questions. Through this experience, I realize that when I study or present a topic, I should learn not only the major points of this topic, but also many other related topics. It will benefit me not only in this rotation, but also other rotations and future PA career. I realize that we need to always learn during our whole life as healthcare providers. I saw some attending physicians still studied about multiple-choice medical questions with residents. As a healthcare provider, I will learn new knowledge during my life. Secondly, I learnt about the manners and attitudes with which we should to communicate with patients and our colleges. For example, before every case, as my supervisors told, I went to the waiting room to visit the patient, introduced myself and asked for the permission to observe the surgery. When I saw other healthcare providers in the surgery team, such as surgeons, residents, PAs, RNs, anesthesiologists, and nurses, I introduced myself and asked for their permissions to observe. So they were very nice to me and taught and helped me a lot in the cases. In other rotations, I will keep the manners and attitudes. Thirdly, I learnt from all healthcare providers, including nurses, nutritionists, and case managers. Here are some rules in the surgery departments. Be nice to the nurses, and they could save you. Listen to the orders of your anesthesiologists before you help to clean patients after surgery. Do not do anything without orders if you are not very sure. Fourthly, prepare presentations and cases well and carefully ahead not to waste the learning chances. During an early morning surgery case, I did not prepare for the related knowledge since the day before I went back late due to a long surgery case and slept soon. The surgeon asked me many questions that I could not answer. In my next cases, I prepared carefully and things went well. It was a memorable experience that I’ll carry with me. In other rotations, I will prepare for my cases or presentations carefully. Fifthly, always be confident and aim high. When I was in a laparoscopic surgery case, there were no residents, only surgeon and me. This type of surgery was totally new for me and I had to be his assistant. The surgeon told me that believe yourselves and you could do it. Behave like a proud surgeon! I tried and the result was great. I did it! It appears to find a new “me”. Another experience is when I presented my patients, in the beginning I was timid due to my oral English. But later I forced myself to practice among people. One day, after my presentation, the chief and other residents applaud to say that I did a great job. It was a really excellent experience. It made me realize myself again. In my other rotations and PA career, I will keep confident. Finally, I found that there are two types of surgery PAs. One type of PA takes care of pre-op or after-op patients. The other type of PA take care of the patients in the surgery rooms and sometimes do simple surgery. Depend on what types of surgery PAs you want to be, you can focus on your assigned patients or cases in the rotation. There are so many things you need to learn that you must arrange your schedule wisely. No matter what types of surgery PAs you want to be, you must prepare for the hard work, 12 hours of work plus evening studies and frequent exams. Some residents told me that they only sleep 2-3 hours during weekdays.

In conclusion, my experience in surgery rotations is interesting, happy and busy. I learnt a lot and love it. The happiest time is when I talked with one MD student about our future, he told me that my English is much more improved. In my other rotations, I will improve myself. When I study or present a topic, my learning is not only limited to the major points of this topic, but also many other related topics. Keep the manners and attitudes with which I communicate with patients and my colleges, and learn from all healthcare providers. Prepare for every case or presentation carefully not to lose any studying chance. Always be confident and aim high. Study and work hard and try my best.