Tips for residency applications and interviews

General

1. Letters of recommendation are important.
   a. One from the Carilion Department Chair (set up a meeting in the summer and send your personal statement and cv).
   b. At least one from a person who knows your skills well. For the surgery specialties, letters need to address your skills.
   c. Waive your right to review the letter.
2. Do a mock interview with people from your specialty. OB-Gyn, EM, Surgery, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, and Orthopaedics departments were very helpful. Neurosurgery residents helped.
3. Personal statement is crucial!
   a. Personalize
   b. Tell a story
   c. Be prepared to address things you mention
   d. Consider personalizing letters to specific programs (especially those you think will be your top programs).
4. Highlight your research, the VT Certificate, and be prepared to talk about your research.
5. Send your application, even if it is not complete, on September 15.
6. Apply broadly. “It makes no sense how interview offers are made”
7. Interview with the “sweet spot” number of programs.
8. Apply to and interview at least one “lower tier” program.
9. Know answers to common questions:
   a. What are your strengths?
   b. What are your weaknesses?
   c. What will you do with your training?
   d. What are you interviewing here?
10. Be prepared for questions that don’t seem pertinent:
   a. What is your favorite book/what book are you reading?
   b. Tell me about a time when...
11. Have a good answer to the question about a new school ("Forced me to take ownership of my education", “Gave me an opportunity for growth”).
12. If you are applying to more than one specialty:
   a. Write individualized personal statements.
   b. Get your letter writers to be specific as to which specialty they are writing in support of (you might need the Chair to write 2 letters)
   c. Be prepared with an answer to a question about that.
13. If you are going to cancel an interview, cancel early. The residency world is amazingly small.
14. Research the program
15. Remember, this is a job interview
16. For couples:
   a. If one partner gets an interview, contact the program director/coordinator of the corresponding program and inform them that you are a couple and that your partner got an interview at the institution.
   b. Remind program directors after the interview of your couple status
17. Write a thank you note or email within 48 hours of your interview.
18. Communicate later in the season with your top programs. You can tell a program they are number 1 but only tell one and they need to actually be your top ranked program.
19. If you are in a competitive specialty, consider applying for a preliminary year spot as this is a better option than having to go through SOAP.
20. Use Priceline for tickets.

Away rotations:

1. Get your immunizations and titers now (even if updated list has not yet been posted as they are unlikely to change) and get only those immunizations and titers you need.
2. Purposes for aways:
   a. To get a LoR (EM, Ortho).
   b. So that you can say you’ve rotated at a place that has a residency (Radiology, Anesthesia).
   c. To see and be seen by a particular program.
3. Aways can be as negative as they can be positive. Each year, we have many students who did not get interviews at places they did an away.
5. Necessary for some (Anesthesia, Radiology, EM, Neurosurgery, Ortho)- see below.
6. The MCC has to approve all away rotations. You may be asked to assist with creation of goals and objectives, etc.
7. The Assessment form completion is your responsibility. Make sure to remind the attending when you leave. You don’t want to have to bug them after you have gone.
Specific specialties:

1. Radiology
   a. Do an away at an academic center.
   b. Sherry, Keyes, and Garcia were helpful and write good letters

2. Orthopaedics
   a. Carilion faculty are willing to make phone calls on your behalf.
   b. Apply to a lot of programs (maybe as many as 80).

3. Surgery
   a. Apply broadly and apply to some mid and lower tier programs.
   b. Have a case presentation as you might get asked to present a case.

4. Psychiatry
   a. Expect behavioral questions (How do you deal with frustration?, etc).
   b. Enlist the residents here to assist you in preparing for interviews.

5. Neurosurgery
   a. Neurosurgery residents were very helpful in assisting.
   b. Apply to all or nearly all of the programs.
   c. Definitely need an early away elective (interviewees asked about aways).

6. Plastic surgery
   a. Be prepared to draw an anatomical picture.
   b. Has a standard LoR format.
   c. Dr. Moyer is very helpful.

7. EM
   a. Use the SLOE as the LoR and you need two of them, meaning you must have an early away rotation.

8. Anesthesia
   a. Do an away at an academic center that has a residency. It doesn’t have to be in time for a LoR, but you can tell interviewers that you did an away at ______.

9. IM
   a. Get letters from faculty members who know you (Whatley, DeMott, Kroker-Bode, Kerkering, Sweet)