

## Benefits (to the clinic) of being a Clinical Affiliate:

- The opportunity to **recruit top candidates** (you essentially get a 2 year job interview with prospective employees as they train in your clinic, so you know which students would make the best future employees). As a result, educational facilities have **Increased long-term staffing**
- **Reduced costs** associated with staff recruitment. Even if you are not in need of employees now, you still have the opportunity to “grow and groom” someone that might want to fill any future vacancies.
- **Also, reduced costs** associated with prospective employee interviews
- **Reduced orientation/training**. New hires already have a significant amount of experience working at your facility (they’re already well oriented to the hospital/staff/etc.).
- historical tendency for **reduced employee costs** (starting salary/benefits etc.) due to supply/demand influx of local graduates (and graduates often willing to take lower salaries in order to stay closer to home, and happier to be staying close to home!).
- In addition to the above, **higher employee retention** rates at educational facilities due to geography: Graduates that grew up in your local area typically prefer to stay closer to home.
- Students can’t replace staff therapists, and while they do take more time and attention early on, overall they provide a **net benefit with respect to workload**. By the time they’ve completed only ¼-1/3 of their clinical hours, they are typically acclimated enough to routines to provide a net benefit with respect to workload.
- Research indicates overall **increased job satisfaction among staff** in teaching institutions that is related to the teaching environment (while this may seem counter-intuitive to some at first glance, and it is not uncommon that clinical staff may grumble at times with respect to working with students, research that controls for variables actually indicates that teaching facilities have staff with higher levels of job satisfaction, and that the increased satisfaction is directly related to working with students). Staff might sometimes rather balk at the extra responsibilities, but in this case, research indicates that the extra responsibilities tend to increase overall job satisfaction. *As an analogy: The “easy” choice (not working with students) is not always the most rewarding choice. If I give my son the choice of practicing his French Horn (he’s a music major in college) or playing X-Box, he’ll play X-Box! But playing his Horn gives him more long-term satisfaction in spite of the extra effort—indeed, in no small part, because of the extra effort involved. Similarly, while staff may at times not outwardly embrace working with students, they DO have a tendency to have higher levels of job satisfaction as a result of sharing their knowledge with students!*
- **Reduced staff burnout** (students providing fresh faces and relationships, resulting in lower levels of burnout). Staff can get in a rut over time doing the same kinds of procedures over and over. Students bring fresh faces into the clinic, which (research indicates) can help reduce stress and burnout for staff, and help them appreciate their positions. Additionally, responding to student questions can help staff hone their own critical thinking skills by continually evaluating why they use the techniques they use, and even create new ways of improving upon various techniques.

**There is also a certain public recognition attached to the teaching function (professionalism).** Playing a role in the education of radiation therapists can enhance the image of the facility within the field of radiation oncology, the broader health care community, and among the citizens and population of the region. Being recognized within the community as a teaching institution is always a plus for any institution.

***Food for thought:*** Professionalism, in no small part, means that we actively engage in activities that enhance and further the profession. It’s not something we vote on, it’s something we simply do because guiding/educating (literally) the future of our profession is perhaps the most direct and meaningful way in which our practitioners can sustain and advance our profession. Thus, education is a cornerstone of professionalism, as it safeguards and directs the very future of our field!