Alumni Spotlight: Sophia Branden '17 – Engineering a Life of Impact

Sophia Branden, a 2017 graduate of VCHS, has built a life defined by resilience, growth, and a passion for making a difference. Her journey is anything but conventional, blending a love for science, a gift for teaching, and a talent for connecting with people. From studying biomedical engineering to working alongside surgeons in the operating room, Sophia has embraced her life with curiosity and determination, proving that success isn't about following a set path but about forging your own.

Sophia initially started college on a pre-med track at Baylor University, but the COVID-19 pandemic made her reconsider her path. She wanted a career that let her connect with people more directly while still making a difference. During her junior year at Baylor University, she gained valuable experience working as a medical scribe at Robin Healthcare, documenting procedures for orthopedic surgeons, and teaching anatomy and physiology at a local community college in Waco, Texas. These experiences opened her eyes to other possibilities in the healthcare field. In December 2021, Sophia earned her degree in Biomedical Engineering from Baylor University.

After graduating, Sophia explored working with her mom as an interior design assistant but knew her heart belonged in healthcare. A conversation with Dr. Prevencher, an orthopedic surgeon at the Steadman Clinic in Vail, introduced her to the field of medical sales, especially in orthopedics. It turned out to be a perfect fit: combining science, teaching, and working with people. Not long after, Sophia joined Arthrex, a Denver-based sports medicine company known for developing advanced, minimally invasive orthopedic products and surgical techniques that improve lives worldwide.

Today, Sophia spends her days teaching surgeons how to use specialized devices for procedures involving the knee, hip, spine, and more. She often joins them in the operating room, where she feels part of the action without the stress of being the one performing surgery. "I get to contribute to patient care in a meaningful way," she says. The role has allowed her to blend her engineering background, love for teaching, and desire to help others into one fulfilling job. Looking back, Sophia credits Vail Christian High School with giving her a strong foundation. The school's small classes and tight-knit community made a big difference. She remembers teachers like Mrs. Kristin Baker, Mrs. Camille Cooper, Mrs. Hochtl, Mr. Bruce, Mrs. Whitley, and Mrs. Melinda Carlson, who went above and beyond to support her academically and personally. "They pushed me in ways I didn't expect and believed in me more than I believed in myself".

For current students, Sophia shares advice that her father once gave her: "It's not about getting into the highest-ranked school; it's about making the most of your education and surrounding yourself with the right people." She encourages students to talk to current college students and

think beyond rankings when choosing a school. Her last piece of advice? “Don’t just stick to the plan. Get out there, try things, and find out what truly excites you.”
Sophia Branden’s story is proof that following your interests, staying open to new opportunities, and forging your own path can lead to a fulfilling and impactful career.