RADIOLOGY MANAGEMENT

November/December 2025
volume 47 number 6

The Journal of AHRA: The Association for Medical Imaging Management

Confidentiality Laws for the Imaging Technologist

ahra QUICK CREDIT

Savannah Blair and Jennifer Grace Clark

Essential Employer Qualities Sought by Radiography Program Students

ahra QUICK CREDIT

Ryan D. Williams, Heather Schmuck, and Joy A. Cook

How Casa Loma Tripled MRI Program Enrollment with ScanLabMR

Simone Quinto

The "Big Beautiful Bill": Impact on Radiology Departments

Anthony Todd Dotson







How Casa Loma Tripled MRI Program Enrollment with ScanLabMR

By Simone Quinto

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This article details a case study on Casa Loma College's utilization of ScanLabMR's MRI simulation program to improve the college's MRI Technologist Program and accelerate the development of clinically competent technologists, thereby increasing enrollment, improving graduation rates, and boosting revenue. Scott Sand, president of Casa Loma College said, "With ScanLabMR, we had one of the most successful terms in recent history. We tripled our lecture size with superior results."

Program Enrollment	Increase in Graduation Rate	Net Revenue
3x	7%	$280,000

Introduction

The healthcare industry is experiencing a surge in demand for MRI technologists and radiologic professionals due to pandemic-induced burnout and post-COVID-19 retirement boom. Employment of MRI technologists is projected to grow by 6% from 2022 to 2032, with an annual average of 15,700 openings. This puts educational institutions in the hot seat to quickly train the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Casa Loma College has been a nonprofit institution serving the professional healthcare community of Los Angeles since 1966. Our 22-month Associate of Applied Science Degree in Magnetic Resonance Imaging is a blended learning program encompassing general education, medical-focused topics, and clinical practicum through online and in-person classes.

In this case study, leadership at Casa Loma explore how the implementation of ScanLabMR dramatically improved our MRI Technologist Program. We will review how we leveraged this virtual MRI simulation tool to accelerate the development of clinically competent technologists, seeing a 7% increase in graduation rates and a 12% boost in job placements. All this occurred within one year while enrollment tripled, translating to an additional $280,000 in revenue without significant extra costs.

Background

The Traditional Education Model Is Broken

There are only 75 MRI technologist programs[1] in the U.S., equipping students with clinical-ready skills to fill those growing annual vacancies. By the end of their training, students must be ready to pass the American Registry of Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists (ARMRIT)[2] or American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT)[3] professional credentialing exam.

To qualify for the exams, applicants must achieve competency in 29 areas over 1,000 hours of clinical experience. Casa Loma's expectation for our students is to achieve 10 competencies in the first 500 hours of their externship and 19 competencies in the second 500 hours.

We had been following a traditional education model that begins with foundational didactic learning (teacher-centered presentation of abstract principles) in the classroom before in-person training at externships. But under that model, students were burdened with bridging the gap between theory and practice

while immersed in the fast-paced and demanding healthcare environment. This learning curve can be overwhelming and ineffective for many students, further impacting their training, as clinical preceptors don't feel they are prepared to start scanning.

One of the huge challenges I was having as a program director was the loss of productivity when students entered their externships. Students have 30 weeks in an externship setting, and because of their lack of training, clinical sites would have students wait four to 13 weeks before touching the scanner.

The Rising Costs of Education

The rising costs of MRI education have also become a significant concern for educational institutions. As healthcare technology evolves, MRI programs require state-of-the-art equipment, such as MRI machines, which can cost millions of dollars. This drives up operational costs, making it harder for schools to provide students with hands-on training using the latest tools.

In addition to the costs of equipment, MRI programs must maintain physical infrastructure (classrooms, labs, etc.), provide clinical placement opportunities, ensure student support services, and offer professional development for staff. Moreover, qualified faculty members need competitive salaries and accreditation requirements, which adds another layer of cost. These expenses are often passed on to students in the form of higher tuition fees, making MRI education less accessible, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

To stay competitive, schools may decide to cut corners in certain areas (for example, student support services, clinical placements), affecting the quality of education and student satisfaction. Like most educational institutions, Casa Loma College has struggled to find a balance of offering high-quality, up-to-date training and keeping tuition affordable without compromising educational standards.

Remote Learning Offers a New Approach

When the pandemic hit, Casa Loma College had to find a way for students to get scanning experience remotely. We had experience with other MRI simulators and knew this was the best option, but we did not have great experiences with other platforms that were available on the market. None met the high standards we had for our students by offering a realistic scanning environment, training, and assessment features, until we discovered ScanLab.

Specifically, we implemented ScanLabMR, ScanLab's virtual MRI scanning and training application, along with ImagingU, the didactic counterpart. We immediately recognized that ScanLabMR offered a more advanced and comprehensive learning experience—far beyond traditional simulation tools.

I've used other simulators in the past, in teaching positions and personally, and I was amazed at the differences with ScanLabMR. I hesitate to use the word simulator because ScanLabMR provides so much more.

With ScanLabMR, users are able to practice and assess their skills in prescribing slice angles and adjusting protocol parameters across various MRI exams. ScanLabMR offers a risk-free environment for learners to hone their scanning techniques, make mistakes without patient impact, and accelerate their mastery of MRI fundamentals and hand-eye coordination for slice manipulation (see Figure 1).

ScanLabMR also provides scoring and valuable feedback for improvement, making it an excellent resource for both education and practice. This makes ScanLabMR an essential asset in MRI education, remote training, and professional development.

Moreover, ScanLab's software is accessible from anywhere, providing a cost-effective tool for learning. With

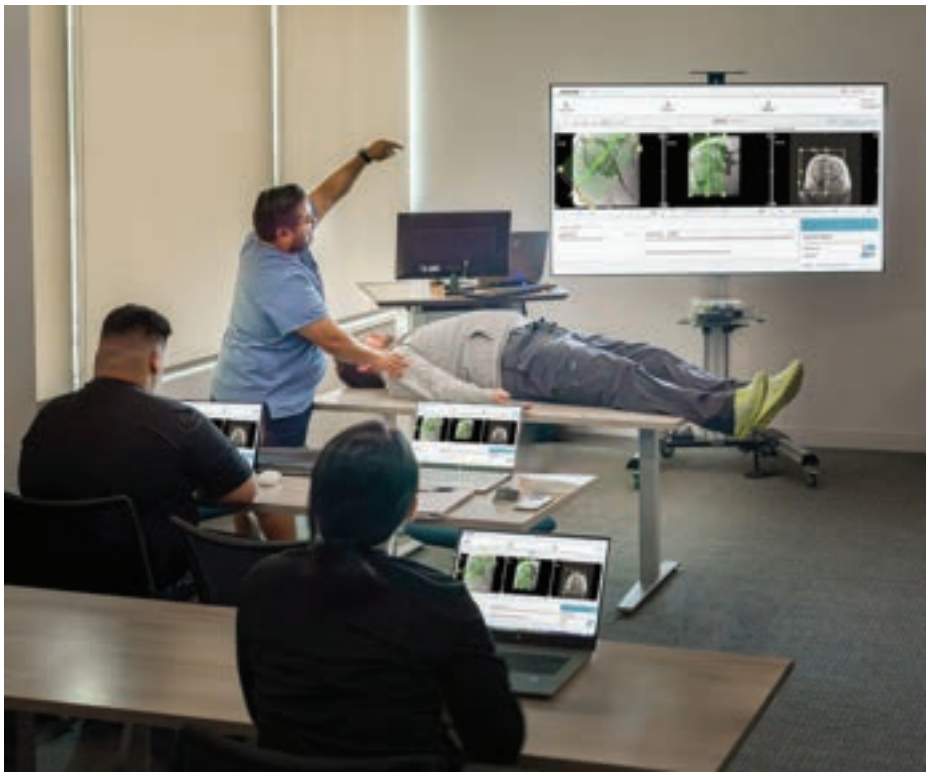


Figure 1 • A Casa Loma College Professor teaches students about patient positioning using ScanLabMR simulation software.

ScanLabMR, we can offer our students as much practice as they need without significant expense.

While there were some anticipated challenges in adopting a new learning solution, our faculty and staff, in collaboration with the ScanLab team, developed a formula for success. Students were introduced to ScanLabMR before clinicals began, and the platform quickly became an integral part of our curriculum. Anchoring the virtual platform as part of the official curriculum through the following components was critical:

- **Introduce new technology early:** Provide students access to ScanLab for use in sandbox mode[4] at least one week before clinicals start. This allows students to get comfortable with the user experience and basic elements.
- **Test and measure:** Make ScanLab a graded portion of the curriculum, with a requirement of 10 examinations per body part.
- **Align with classroom learning:** Correlate ScanLab sections with what is being taught in classroom lectures to reinforce knowledge.

ScanLab is now used to reinforce what's being taught in the classroom (see Figure 2). After lecture, everyone opens ScanLabMR and follows along with what is being projected onto the screen in the room. I have to tell my students that their scan might not be the same one that's being shown. This is part of what makes the system so great: students get access to different patient profiles and must use critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

After working with ScanLab's material, we recognized gaps in our own curriculum and have revised it several times to include new courses such as MRI Pathology. The new curriculum that was augmented to mirror ScanLab has contributed to making Casa Loma more competitive.

As learning shifted back to in-person, we were able to compare results to what we had witnessed previously. With a new learning tool in hand, we were able to improve the experience for our students.



Figure 2 • Casa Loma College Professor teaches students about MRI brain scans using ScanLabMR simulation software.

Deeper Clinical Engagement Means Greater Success for MRI Students

Because a virtual training platform offers a realistic but risk-free environment in which to practice, students engage in practical exercises earlier and more often, enhancing their readiness for clinical rotations. More exposure to anatomy and medical terminology has increased our students' communication skills and depth of understanding. The enhanced student experience accelerates their competency, confidence, and employability.

Led by and paired with the expertise and experience of our faculty, ScanLabMR has transformed outcomes for our MRI students.

- **More equitable clinical experience.** With diverse patient scenarios, slice prescription, image contrast parameters and spatial resolution, and exams that focus on safety and critical thinking, our students' clinical experiences are no longer solely dictated by facility placement.
- **Earlier scanning onset.** Students were able to begin scanning in a clinical setting 60% earlier than previously occurred.
- **Improved competencies and exams.** Within the first 500 hours of their externship, 100% of students mastered 10-25 competencies. Students also experienced improved performance on both ARMRIT and ARRT exams.
- **Increased job placement.** Not only are students being sought out for clinical site placement, but we have also seen a 12% increase in job placement rates. This is the ultimate measure of success for our students.

Institutional Growth and Market Competitiveness

Improvements in clinical preparedness and job placement have solidified our



Figure 3 • Casa Loma College students use ScanLabMR software to replicate brain scans.

institution's reputation as a leader in MRI education. The program has seen gains across key performance indicators, including enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

Stronger applicant pools and increased selectivity. We have transitioned from a 100% acceptance rate for our MRI program—previously necessary to meet minimum enrollment—to a more selective admissions process. Applications now exceed available seats by 1.5 to 2 times, and prospective students come from increasingly diverse backgrounds, including professionals with advanced degrees.

Higher retention and financial impact. Traditionally, students drop in terms 1, 2, or 3, meaning that retention beyond Term 4 directly impacts

STUDY SNAPSHOT

Challenge

Casa Loma College was challenged with providing high-quality and cost-effective MRI education to prepare students for ARMRIT and ARRT exams. However, under the traditional education model, which begins with foundational didactic learning followed by in-person training at externships, students struggled to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

As a result, students were often required to wait four to 13 weeks (during a 30-week externship) before touching a scanner. This impacted student confidence and success and led to a substantial loss of productivity at clinical sites.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the problem even further, requiring an alternative method to provide hands-on scanning experience remotely.

Meanwhile, the rising costs of education created an additional burden for offering high-quality instruction and training while managing costs and growing revenue.

Solution

Casa Loma College adopted ScanLabMR, a virtual MRI simulator, along with ImagingU, its didactic counterpart.

The hybrid learning model, which combines didactic instruction and experiential learning, provides students with access to a hands-on virtual environment for MRI scanning, prior to clinical placement and graded assessments, to track progress and competency development.

Unlike other simulators, ScanLabMR offered a more dynamic learning experience. Instructors projected live scans during lectures, while students worked with diverse patient profiles, reinforcing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Results

The integration of ScanLabMR and ImagingU led to measurable improvements:

- 3x increase in class size
- 7% increase in graduation rate (from 54% to 61%)
- $280,000 in additional revenue with no significant added expenses

Students also reached competency milestones faster, with 75% mastering 10-25 competencies within their first 500 hours and beginning clinical scanning 60% earlier than before. The improved preparedness also strengthened relationships with clinical sites, leading to a 12% increase in job placement rates.

institutional revenue. Between 2020 and 2021, enrollment tripled, and the graduation rate rose 7%, from 54% to 61%, generating an additional $280,000 in revenue without significant added expenses. This was one of the most successful terms in recent history, and it validated ScanLabMR's role as an ROI-positive initiative.

Enhanced clinical relationships and job placement. The improved confidence and preparedness of our students have strengthened relationships with clinical sites. Coordinating clinical placement of students across the 60-72 clinical sites we oversee used to be a burden. Now, our students are making an immediate impact, and sites are looking at our students on a different level, both for training and employment.

Sustained institutional growth. With higher job placement rates and growing employer interest, the program has been able to expand student cohorts and strengthen its market position in MRI training. These outcomes reinforce the institution's long-term competitive advantage.

Scott Sand, our president at Casa Loma College, said, "More placeable graduates means that more employers are coming to us versus competitors. As a result, we can expand the size of the cohorts and increase market share."

Conclusion: How Educators Can Revolutionize MRI Training and Boost Program Success

Casa Loma College's integration of ScanLabMR exemplifies how virtual training software is reshaping MRI technologist education. This technology-driven approach not only enhances student competency but also redefines institutional success—accelerating clinical readiness, improving graduation and job placement rates, and driving revenue growth.

With students beginning clinical scanning 60% earlier, graduation rates increasing by 7%, and job placements rising by 12%, all while class sizes tripled and revenue grew by $280,000 without added costs, the impact is undeniable. This underscores the power of immersive learning to produce more skilled, confident, and market-ready technologists. Other MRI programs can look to Casa Loma's formula for success when deploying new training technology for the next generation of healthcare professionals.

References

[1]College Tuition Compare. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Technology/Technician Program 2025 Average Tuition. https://www.collegetuitioncompare.com/majors/51.0920/magnetic-resonance-imaging-mri-technology-technician. Accessed June 19, 2025.

[2]American Registry of Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists Inc. https://www.armrit.org/certified.php. Accessed June 19, 2025.

[3]The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). https://www.arrt.org. Accessed June 19, 2025.

[4]ScanLab demonstration of Sandbox Mode on Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=392921292128625. Accessed June 19, 2025.

Simone Quinto *is an associate professor and chair director of magnetic resonance imaging, and director of clinical education at Casa Loma College.*

Learn More:

SCANLABMR.COM

Book a Demo:

Questions?

questions@scanlabmr.com

ImagingU ScanLab