

When I was told that people on the west coast have a more relaxed approach to life, I didn't believe it. People wearing jeans to work in corporate offices? An urban legend I thought. Having been born and raised on the east coast, I grew up knowing only the east coast culture. Career Quest has given me the opportunity to branch out and explore what the opposite side of the country has to offer. The companies we visited were diverse in nature and while some sported jeans on the daily, that was not the case for all of them. Each company had its own way of doing things, which I thought was cool. This was my first exposure to anything and everything corporate and I loved it. The word "corporate" occasionally has a negative connotation attached to it, but their goals are greater than just making money and circulating the economy. I found that within each company they had a plan to better help society overall.

This opportunity is truly like no other in the way that I was able to make personal connections with employees at the companies we visited. It was a bonus if the employee was a GW Alumna(e), but nevertheless I was able to talk to people that worked in these big companies and hear their stories. The thing I learned that impacted me the most was the fact that most people's career paths are non-linear. Having grown up as a first generation American and my mother having been a teacher all her life, I didn't know that was even possible. Having been given the opportunity to talk to GW Alumni within my field gave me hope and excited me for the future. Hearing about the occasional "leap of faith" some people took in moving from east coast to west coast reassured my ideal that if you want something, go for it and don't look back. I learned a lot from this trip, what company culture is, how certain companies run, and what it's like to work and live in San Francisco.

The way the trip was structured we were also given free time in the afternoon to explore the city. It was the perfect way to allow us to explore what it's like to work and live in San Francisco. I managed to see some of the famous sites, The Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39, and a west coast staple In N Out Burger. I was able to roam the city with other members of my cohort and because of our diverse majors and years its likely to say that I probably would've never met these people if I wasn't on this trip.

Overall, my Career Quest experience was great and jam-packed. I expanded my network and got a sense of the industries in San Francisco. I am honored to have been apart of the cohort, as the experience was truly special, and I am thankful that GW has opportunities like these. I learned more about myself through this trip and it helped me find some direction for my future. I'm excited for my non-linear career path and am thankful that Career Quest has exposed me to the people and stories that is has.