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Career Quest San Francisco was a wonderful opportunity, and I recommend it for all those who are interested. Growing up in Queens, NY, I pursued internships in which interns were treated poorly. Initially, my thoughts about the West Coast were not thorough. I believed that it prioritized technological advances and was more laid back than the East Coast. However, I did not know how to contextualize these thoughts. Going on Career Quest allowed me to experience this for myself.

It was clear from the first day that California was more employee driven than bottom line focused, as opposed to the East Coast. On day one, we visited AirBnB, Milliman and CBS Interactive. The architecture of the Headquarters of AirBnB and CBS Interactive was intriguing. AirBnB had a green wall, while CBS Interactive had a game testing room. I also took note of the kitchens and game rooms in both for employees to relax. On the contrary, Milliman, an actuarial company, resembled a corporate office similar to many of the internships I had in New York. The architecture and rooms were aimed at creating a relaxed environment for employees.

Similar to the first day, the companies that we visited on the second day were diverse. The companies included KIVA, US Bank and GAP, Inc. We started off the day by taking the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) which allowed us to gain exposure to the localized transportation system of the Bay Area. Navigating on the BART was interesting because it helped me understand that transportation in the Bay Area is very expensive. It also helped me understand that I need to have a good financial foundation if I move to the West Coast. In terms of KIVA, US Bank and GAP, Inc., it was interesting to learn about how the lending and borrowing process worked from the representative. GAP, Inc. was the company that I researched, so I understood a bit more than the other companies about it. Although the representatives in KIVA and GAP, Inc. made the presentation more collaborative than US Bank, I found it interesting how the representative from US Bank talked about how her international experiences assisted her. In general, all companies allowed me to process the different architecture and company culture of the Bay Area. At the end of the day, we had a student-alumni reception and dinner in which I found a previous Chief of Staff for Student Association. We talked about our experiences and I understood the importance of getting my Masters degree in International Affairs, which I had never considered before.

The third day was my favorite because we were able to briefly immerse ourselves in the atmospheres of three different companies. First, we visited the Genentech campus. We were able to learn about the history of Genentech briefly and take a tour of its cell culture plant. Although this is not my area of focus, I was familiar with some of the technical terms since my mother is a nurse. Also, the representatives used computational kindness to break down tough topics to the group. Next, we visited Facebook Headquarters. The representatives talked about the company benefits such as on-campus barbershops, game rooms, spas, etc. They also talked about a lax policy of working from home which I found convenient. Lastly, we went to Chan

Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) and listened to a panel of former GW alumni. They talked about their experiences and I became inspired. Everything that they said was authentic and they did not sugarcoat how hard work may get.

From the beginning to the end, this experience was once in a lifetime. I did not think I would be given the chance to attend San Francisco to help with my professional development. This experience gave me the opportunity to do and learn from a diverse set of GW students, faculty and alumni. Conversations with them allowed me to highly consider being the first one in my family to attain my Masters after I finish my undergraduate studies. This Career Quest was an experience that I will not forget.