

Career Quest NYC: So very grateful
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If I could describe my reaction to Career Quest New York in one word, it would be "grateful." Being a first-generation college student, I could not have imagined being able to have had such an amazing experience during my time at university. I have had so many experiences that I am so grateful for, and Career Quest NYC is one of them.

Growing up in New Jersey, I was fortunate enough to frequently visit New York. I quickly fell in love with the city and knew that I wanted to live there one day. Being able to visit companies in my dream city to learn what it would be like to grow there both personally and professionally was an unforgettable experience.

On our trip, we were able to visit eMarketer, Bloomberg, the NBA, Facebook, Spotify and Bustle (six visits in just two days!) and also attend a networking event with GW alum working in the field. It was interesting to see how each company had a different culture, being that they were all so diverse. As well as that, each company had different values, which we were able to ask about during our visits.

One of the biggest takeaways I left New York with was to become okay with asking questions. I had always struggled in interviews with coming up with questions to ask about the company and had never done an informational interview. I always thought that I didn't want to take up any more of the person's time, so I assumed asking questions was prodding into someone else's life. I learned that asking questions does just the opposite – it is a way to express your interest in the company. While I still felt as if I was being a burden on each person's time, I realized not to focus on being afraid to ask questions, as they can show how grateful you are for their time. Yes, these people were taking the time out of their days to show us what it was like to be a part of their companies, but instead of being hesitant and feeling guilty because of that, I learned to feel grateful.

Another takeaway I came away from this trip with was that networking is key. I have always hated networking, and I thought that I was terrible at it. I don't like talking about myself or my accomplishments, and again, was afraid of wasting someone else's time. Through the alumni networking event, I learned that networking was a key part to the job search for many of the alum that were there. They talked about how they worked with their professors to capitalize on their experiences at GW and then to use networking as a way to foster connections. In this overly-connected era, I am fortunate that it is so easy to talk to alumni, whether that be through LinkedIn or GW Career Connect.

Being in New York, I grew both personally and professionally. I learned about myself, and my ability to get a job. I became confident in using my previous experiences to help instead of hindering my abilities to start a successful career path. I learned that I no longer needed to be afraid of asking for help, because hopefully one day, I'll be able to pay it forward and help someone else just the way that all of these great people are helping me.

I am so very grateful for the GW Career Center and the University itself for all the great opportunities it has provided me. I would like to thank the Shenkman family for donating to the Shenkman Career Fund to make this trip possible. After looking back on the past four years I have spent at GW, I can now begin to look forward with the good faith that I will live a successful life.