

Taking off My Blinders (André Gonzales)

When looking back at my time at Career Quest in New York City, I consider it to be a major turning point in my undergraduate career. As a student from Southern New Mexico, and the first one in my family to venture out of state for college, most of my time at GW has been focused on getting the best grades possible, while trying to stay involved on campus. Early this semester, I realized just how quickly graduation was approaching for me, and how I hadn't even begun to think about specifics about life after my time at GW. It was almost as if by magic that the next day I received an email about Career Quest New York. I had heard so many good things about the Career Quest trips, so I decided to throw my hat in the ring and submitted my application.

After our orientation briefings and doing research on the companies we would be meeting with, I was so excited that we were visiting some of the biggest names in media today, like Facebook, NBA, and Bloomberg. As a Political Communication student, these three companies are the biggest names in helping to connect consumers with content, and each has become part of larger conversations about political discourse in the United States. As a music student and a part of GW's student radio network, visiting Spotify was like me visiting my own *nerd-vana* where I got to see how Spotify has gone through significant growth within the past year.

However, there was one company that I was so amazed by after concluding our site visits, which was eMarketer. On paper, eMarketer provides media analysis to clients, and helps them plan their marketing strategy. However, after talking to an entire panel of employees, hearing from their campus recruiting specialist, and touring their facilities, media analysis is just the tip of the iceberg. These were professionals who knew the media industry, who were proactive in providing the best advice possible to clients, and who put in an incredible attention to detail to make their product effective. I was blown away by the depth of what the company does, how they value their employees, and the environment that they try to create for employees every day.

What CQNY did was help me figure out exactly what I want in a career, and the factors in a workplace that I feel are most important to me as I think about post-college life. Every single site visit helped me learn more about my professional priorities, and how employers can help me to make my goals a reality. If it wasn't for Career Quest, I would still have my blinders on and not be thinking about my life after graduation, and I wouldn't know about the vast amount of support and resources out there for me as

a student wanting to find a workplace that I can feel empowered and valued in. I'm incredibly grateful to the Career Quest team for helping to create these opportunities for students, this has been an eye-opening experience that I know will help me for years to come.