

In the middle of August I got the opportunity to travel to Seattle and experience what it was like to work for some of the major companies in the area. Being apart of this program, I was able to visit Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, Milliman, The Gates Foundation and Starbucks' headquarters. In addition, we were able to connect with GW alumni at each of the site visits, as well as have a formal alumni networking event and reception.

I was really excited to travel to Seattle, as it was a city I 'saw myself' in, but I had no idea how I was gonna gain the connections and resources to get myself there after undergrad. To start off, we went to Microsoft's campus in Redmond Washington, which is a suburb just outside of Seattle. Even through the haze from the wildfires, the drive still maintained an impeccable beauty. Microsoft's campus was massive and felt like a community right away. We were able to see the media center, as well as many other amenities that Microsoft employees had access to. It was especially interesting to hear from the panel of GW alumni, on how they ended up at Microsoft and how they made the move to Seattle. We followed our Microsoft visit by traveling to Amazon to have another panel discussion with GW alumni that worked there.

We started our second day by going to Starbucks. It was definitely my favorite among all the companies. The atmosphere felt warm and inviting from the minute we walked into the doors. The GW alumni that hosted us at Starbucks were extremely excited to talk to us and help shed some light on their journey to getting to the company. After that we went to The Gates Foundation, where we had lunch and another informative panel with GW alumni. We finished the day by visiting Milliman, where we were greeted by more than 10 employees who had a panel discussion, followed by a chance to socialize and network.

To start our final day, we headed to Facebook. We started by having lunch and a panel with some GW alumni, then we were taken on a tour of their huge building. To say that Facebook had the best view of Seattle, would be the understatement of the year. You could really sense the passion everyone had for their jobs and that there was a greater good that everyone seemed to be working together to achieve. To end our third day, we had a formal networking social. It was a good way to start working on our networking skills, as many of us hadn't ever been to a formal networking event before.

My only objectives I looked to get from my time in Seattle was to see what it was like to work for the top companies in the area, as well as see if I could truly envision myself in the city. My expectations were more than surpassed. In addition, I was able to connect with fellow students that I otherwise would have never met. I was also able to get an authentic view of Seattle, that most people would not be able to experience if they were just visiting. And possibly the most important takeaway, I left feeling inspired and euphoric as I made my way back to D.C. to start the new year. I can't thank the Career Quest staff enough for this incredible experience.