

Despite a detailed orientation, I was not sure what to expect from Seattle. However, I was quite certain that the trip was going to be a fun-filled learning experience that would prepare me for all that senior year has to offer, i.e. the stress of figuring out life, applying for jobs and planning for graduate school. Indeed, the trip not only met, but also far exceeded those goals.

Over the course of three days, I got the chance to have an insider's peek into some of the world's leading companies (all thanks to our generous alumni), and also experienced and immersed myself in the wonderful city of Seattle. The things that I learnt, especially from my interactions with GW alumni, were invaluable, educative, honest, and myth-busting. In particular, my impression of certain industries and certain types of positions at specific firms was quite radically altered during the trip, both for good and bad. However, I am all but thankful for it, since I feel prepared to make wiser career decisions (hopefully) in the next few months.

A pleasant surprise along the way was Starbucks. I had never thought of the company as being anything more than a coffee house with a global imprint. However, candid interactions with alumni revealed a company that is heavily invested in ALL the stakeholders it interacts with viz. customers, employees, and farmers. From training employees at any level in the firm (including baristas) who want to move up to any rank to providing crop insurance to coffee farmers to also helping them produce better coffee with R&D to caring about the neighborhoods Starbucks takes it enterprise to, the company seems to be doing an awful lot to truly live up to its mission of "inspiring and nurturing the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time".

Moreover, the city of Seattle and its laid back (yet hyper-productive) attitude really won the case for me. I hope to be able to get back there sometime, and enjoy its amazing wonders.