

My original view of California as a whole was a state people traveled to when they wanted to live a carefree lifestyle and/or follow dreams that did not lead to Corporate America. However, as I soon realized once I landed in the Bay Area, there was much more to California than what I was giving it credit for. Besides its beautiful weather and positive environment, it was a place that was inhabited by genuine people with an authentic desire to get to know who you are as a person. They weren't concerned with what position you held, how much money you made - even though you need a significant amount to keep up with the high costs of California - or the kind of connections you had. Instead, they were more interested in who you were, what activities you like to do in your free time, and your personality overall. The vibe was definitely different from the east coast where you can't tell sometimes if a person wants to get to know you for who you are, or to use you for their own personal gain or agenda. That is a trait that I very much appreciated and found myself gravitating towards. It was the kind of environment I believe people would be more likely to enter and thrive in. It was the kind of environment that I could see myself living in and achieving success.

In addition to the lifestyle of the Bay Area, there was a surplus of opportunity and career development present as well. The Bay Area may be the hub for tech companies, but it also has multiple fields of work in which people could venture. These include microloan companies, non-profit organizations, and business-oriented corporations. Not only is San Francisco the home of some of the best and brightest talent, it is also constantly growing and progressing. This means that the job opportunity is there as well. This was one aspect of San Francisco that stuck out to me because coming from the east coast, it is very apparent how difficult it is to find work, much less in a field that you enjoy or in which you are passionate. Despite it being an expensive place to live, it is evident that people would find the area attractive to visit and possibly live. I know that this was a major contributing factor in my decision to want to find employment on the west coast in the near future because I want to be in a place where I can make a difference and flourish doing something that my heart is in; not just working to make ends meet.

Overall, the trip was not only eye-opening and beneficial, it was also memorable. From the connections and relationships I was able to develop - both inside and outside of the companies we visited - to the eccentric areas I found myself in, the Bay Area never seemed to disappoint. I think it's safe to say that my perspective has definitely changed to a more positive outlook. Not only was I able to grow personally through Career Quest and team-oriented tasks, but I was able to improve myself professionally as well with the various networking opportunities and research assignments. Sometimes, there are just some things that have to be experienced in person to fully

grasp all it has to behold. San Francisco may not be described fully with words, but I think one word comes pretty close - sensational.