

My experience with Career Quest was among the most educational and professionally beneficial experiences I have ever had, as I learned about the professional landscape in Boston, unknown opportunities that exist in large multinational companies, and the best ways to tailor my own experiences and interests in my future job search. I was especially struck by the myriad ways in which larger companies and organizations have an incredible number of positions that fill roles beyond their advertised mission. For instance, Google, known for its technological innovation, requires a huge number of staff in business, administration, and other roles that are available to people like myself without a significant background in computer science. Additionally, companies like Skyword—a marketing firm—need people trained in finance, data analysis, and research, things I am qualified and experienced enough to do. I found this encouraging, as it broadened my frame of reference in considering potential employers and career paths, and I felt affirmed that the skills I am developing at GW are applicable in any field.

Additionally, I benefited from the program's focus on evaluating company culture and how to best integrate into the professional world. As one of our site visits highlighted, the 'job search' is just as much about the applicant evaluating the company as it is the company evaluating the applicant. Previously, when I considered my job search after school, I did so with the mindset that I would go to almost any place that would have me. However, by seeing so many companies in such a short amount of time, I was really impressed by the need to evaluate the best opportunity for myself in terms of career trajectory and other goals that go beyond immediate employment. In a sense, I feel like this trip and our visits gave me permission to more thoughtfully and intentionally craft my future job search in a way that is geared towards my long-term goals in addition to my short-term search for a job.

Finally, I grew more confident in connecting with other professionals and learning about their careers and positions. My past networking experiences have been somewhat lukewarm, but I was able to get a better sense of how to properly ask questions of those with interesting jobs and establish connections to educate myself about what is out there. I have a much better sense of how to build and maintain a professional network after such a short time because of the exposure I had to professionals I met through Career Quest. I also have a better appreciation for the part of networking that is solely educational, that helps one explore one's own interests free from the pressures of also looking for work at the same time. By meeting GW alumni and hearing about their work, I was better able to reflect on my own goals and desires, and evaluate the things I should prioritize for the remainder of my time in school.