

## **San Francisco Career Quest 2017: Lessons on Impact and Growth**

My Career Quest experience was valuable to me in ways that I had not expected before the trip. The site I had least expected to interest me ended up leaving the largest impact on my professional development and on my mindset towards entering the workforce. Lisa Sugar, the GW alumnus who founded what would become a fashion and marketing empire, Pop Sugar, put together a diverse panel of employees, who each (including herself) gave us a thorough relation of their individual career experiences starting from when they were in college. Most importantly to me, they explained where they were in college, where they dreamed of going, where the choices they made after graduation led them to, and how they arrived at their current jobs and positions today. Lisa's own story was particularly compelling because her story revolved around pursuing her passion by creating a startup. I learned that your college major can help you after graduation but does not limit you as long as you take the initiative to acquire the necessary skills for whatever position you are seeking.

Furthermore, I was inspired by the emphasis each organization placed on achieving impact, both in the mission of the company and in working with other people regardless of place or position. In Silicon Valley and San Francisco, there is an overwhelming spirit of impactful creation and a work environment that places emphasis on the most important factor of business: the employees. The more relaxed, open approach encourages effort based upon intrinsic motivation, effective collaboration, and an honest organizational culture. Employees support each other and seek to help each other grow so that everyone is more productive, and the investment in employees is evident everywhere, from the office amenities to internal mobility programs and education funding. Indeed, Google boasted about their "150 foot rule," whereby no desk within any of the company's global facilities may lie more than 150 feet away from a source of food. For me, the biggest takeaway at the end of the week is that I now understand the skills and knowledge I need to acquire for a position in data analytics and that I really want to work in a startup environment. Lastly, I now know that the most important keys in my career will be loving what I'm doing, who I'm doing it with, and who I'm doing it for. I'm confident that if I stick to those guidelines I will always find personal fulfillment and achieve both my short and long term goals.

