

After the Harvest: Reflections on my time with Green City Growers

Wed, 08/27/2014 - 00:00

|

newcomb@tulane.edu

[View PDF](#)



My internship has been over for about two weeks now and I am finally able to look back a bit more objectively on my time there. I will be honest, the last couple of weeks of my time with [Green City Growers](#) seemed to drag on and on, mostly because I was getting lonely and Boston and was ready to return home to DC and New Orleans, but also because I had tired of the work I was doing. I spent the last month or so trying to secure funding for the schools that were interested in hiring us to install school gardens but didn't have the money to pay us. I was grant writing by proxy for these schools that I had little information on and who were very slow to

communicate with me because it was their summer vacation. Grant writing is definitely a valuable skill, but it became pretty tedious. Redesigning the website, creating a [Pinterest](#) page and making promotional [videos](#) are other skills I gained that I can use both at Tulane and in my career.

Working at an urban gardening company helped me to focus the things I am interested in and want to pursue both in my thesis this year and after in a job. I realized that while I am really passionate about food and nutrition, urban gardening is not the avenue with which I want to express that passion. Similarly, I sometimes felt disconnected from GCG's mission in terms of my own personal beliefs and opinions. The experience helped me to pivot and refine my actual interests, as they are not as general as I thought they were.

My advice for students interested in GCG or in working with agriculture or food in general is to make sure to clarify exactly what you are interested in within a field and make sure where you are working aligns with that. I am really happy I worked with GCG, but I think I would have been more excited working for a company that took a more forward-thinking approach to food and agriculture. GCG was much more about returning to the roots of farming, which I think is great but just isn't quite what I'm passionate about.

In terms of gender in the workplace, our office was entirely female except for the director of construction, so it was really interesting to look at the dynamics of a female-dominated company. The company founder and CEO, Jessie, is a really strong leader both within the company and in the community as a whole. I learned a lot about balancing work and play as well as long-term and short-term tasks in the workplace. She was always eager to discuss leadership and her struggles running the company with me. Her goal of bringing GCG from a small-scale Boston backyard gardening company to the premiere urban farming operation in New England is really inspiring and she has the determination to make it happen. It made me want to start my own business, despite seeing all the struggles and obstacles entrepreneurs face when starting their business.

I came out of my internship with a clearer perspective on what I am looking for in terms of mission, coworkers and office environment in my future job. I also gained some marketable skills, which has helped to ease my panic attacks about being unemployed for the rest of my life. And, I got to live in and explore a new city with my best friend. All in all, a great summer!