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“Seizing the opportunity” – that’s the mantra that I live by. It’s that state of mind, that has gotten me where I am today - standing here before you. I’m very happy to be here this evening, and already looking forward, to my future with plenty of excitement. I will be the first in my family - to graduate from college.

I feel fortunate to say that many doors have opened for me in the last few years, because I’ve taken the risk - and knocked.

- The FWA was the first door,
- the second door – The Estee Lauder Companies,
- and the third, Study Abroad.

1. I became affiliated with the FWA at Murry Bergtraum High School. Once I became a mentee, I realized the benefits of the FWA, and their opportunities. Upon graduation, I received the FWA scholarship, which was very valuable. Fortunately, the FWA also had their program at Baruch—there was no doubt in my mind, that I was going to join again. My mentor, Pat Jaquay, has been very supportive in answering many of my career-related questions.

2. My second door was at The Estee Lauder Companies. I’ve worked there throughout college. My first interaction with the company was at their career day. I instantly wanted to know what it was like to work for the company (unfortunately, I was only, 14 years old at the time). I eventually found the opportunity to volunteer with The Estee Lauder Companies in their community outreach efforts, headed by Sue Grundfest. When I graduated from high school, I received a scholarship from the company for my community service, and soon after was offered to work part time in their Corporate Archives department, and later participated in their incredible summer internship program.

3. While attending Baruch, I lived at home, but still wanted that “away from home experience” so - I opened my third door, Studying Abroad — In Greece! I took it—who wouldn’t? By ‘seizing’ this opportunity, I:

- traveled to Europe for the first time,
- introduced myself to a new & different culture,
- and - learned so much about myself. . .
- What have I learned?
- That I am: focused, opportunistic, AND a good listener. *Listening*, my most important asset - has allowed me to learn so much from the FWA. I learned from the luncheons at Baruch, which hosted women, who spoke about how to gain balance between work, and personal life. I learned from the meetings, which broadened my professional network, supported my personal goals, and answered so many of my career questions. Words cannot express how much I’ve learned.

I do want to say a special thank you to: Alyce Mayo, Wendy Liebowitz, Francoise Jeanpierre, and Ellen Cahill for coordinating all these events and always making themselves available.

I’d also like to thank my parents. Without them, I would not have been able to ‘seize’ so *many* opportunities to further my growth. So, thank you Mom and Dad, thank you FWA - and thank you Everyone!