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BAFI 210 - Wall Street Trek Spring 2021

Professor Scott Fine

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Trek Alumni Interview: Gabrielle Wallach

I interviewed Gabrielle (“Gabby”) Wallach, who graduated from Case Western Reserve University with her bachelor’s degree in Finance in 2019 and her master’s degree in Finance in 2020. We spoke about her previous experiences, her goals, and how she navigated the recruiting processes. She also provided very valuable advice for me moving forward.

Gabby went on the Wall Street Trek in Spring 2018 and is currently a valuation analyst at Stout in New York City. Her previous experiences were as a private equity intern at Energy Capital Partners and as an investment banking summer analyst at KeyBanc Capital Markets. She thoroughly enjoyed her time in private equity and liked the work of investment banking, but she wanted to prioritize work-life balance in her younger years, which led her to recruit full-time for valuation roles rather than continue with investment banking.

Gabby mentioned how her long-term goal is to go into the private equity space full-time and she saw the valuation role as a steppingstone that would help her fine-tune her technical skills and prepare her well for private equity. Her main responsibilities as a valuation analyst include purchase price allocation valuing goodwill and other intangible assets post-acquisition, providing fairness opinions, and working with DCFs.

I also asked Gabby what led her to Stout and how she navigated the networking aspect going from banking to valuation. She mentioned how the two biggest things that drew her to Stout were the firm reputation as a leader in the valuation space as well as the people being great. She also alluded to how her coworkers make the work itself more enjoyable. In regard to networking, Gabby stated that she did proper due diligence on the firm and then cold emailed Vice Presidents to connect for a quick 15-minute phone call to build those relationships that later solidified her desire to join Stout.

After hearing about her networking, I asked about how she prepared for both investment banking and valuation interviews. She expressed the importance of going through the M&I 400 Question Guide as the minimum, followed by a book from Rosenbaum and Pearl that goes into further depth about investment banking and modeling. Gabby mentioned how the book helped her to really understand how modeling actually works. Another technique she said she used that helped was to practice behavioral questions every day to build comfortability and confidence.

I then shifted the call to focus on her experience at Case and her time on the Wall Street Trek. Gabby mentioned that coming into CWRU she did not initially want to do something finance related. That mindset shifted and she joined the Wall Street Trek which provided her a first real attempt at a networking event. Gabby mentioned how it was a fantastic experience for her as it exposed her to all areas of a career in finance, allowed her to meet many alumni who helped her through recruiting, and the trek gave her the opportunity to grab as many business cards as she could. Something unique that she spoke to was how after the trek, she wrote all her ‘Thank You’ notes by hand rather than just emailing them. She said this made it more personal and made her more memorable.

I finished the call by asking for advice for things I should be doing to better prepare myself as well as general advice she wishes she got as an undergraduate student. The biggest thing she expressed to me was that it is not enough to just go through the motions at CWRU. We aren’t an Ivy League school and can’t afford to just do the bare minimum. She said a few ways to really succeed and be as knowledgeable as possible is to read the Wall Street Journal every day, stay up to date on things going on in the world whether that be M&A activity, the stock market, really whatever interests me, utilize all external resources, be a sponge and absorb as much as possible from each class and each experience, as well as asking for feedback on things I am doing well and areas where I can improve. Gabby tied all these things back to one point, having a chip on my shoulder and realizing that coming from Case, I will have to put in a lot more work to get to the places I want to be at.

My conversation with Gabby was very insightful and she provided a very candid view of her experiences. She concluded the call by saying how CWRU alumni were critical in helping her and she is looking to give back and to not hesitate if I have any questions or need any help.