

ELC HONORS SYMPOSIUM BLOG RECAP

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2017 Award for Excellence in Business Commentary
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Reflecting on my experiences during The Executive Leadership Council's Honors Symposium and Annual Recognition Gala, I can't help but notice my growth over the last four years. I started my college journey as a freshman at Montclair State University and with the help of my Board of Directors, I soon transferred to Spelman College. I knew Spelman nurtured young women to maximize their potential but the benefits go well beyond that! With Spelman, comes the Spelman and Morehouse network — an unparalleled brother and sisterhood. So I must thank my family for giving me the tools to recognize my position, present myself well and fully maximize on the amazing experience afforded by The Executive Leadership Council.



I received the Award for Excellence in Business Commentary, which is sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company. ELC Scholars participated in a week-long series of events that connected us with leading corporate executives from major global corporations. To name a few, we were able to interact with Ken Chenault, chairman & CEO of the American Express Company; Ryan Williams, co-founder of Jopwell; Lisa Borders, WNBA President; Mark Tatum, NBA Deputy Commissioner; Jessica Isaacs, Spelman alumna and Chief Administrative Officer of the Environmental Defense Fund; Christopher and Janice Williams, co-founders of the Williams Capital Group; and Angela Guy, SVP of Diversity & Inclusion at L'Oreal.

During each office visit, we learned about our speakers' career trajectories, their firms, and we were able to ask them questions. When given the opportunity to connect with senior executives, I love to ask about their experience serving as mentors and/or sponsors because I realize those relationships are important to have and they are built differently with different people. I also asked the executives how they think about decision-making and taking risks.

The following key takeaways resonated with me most:

1. Appreciate the "GIFT of Feedback", receive it and respond in a way that will make people want to continue to gift you with feedback.
2. When considering a new opportunity, think about the company's values, community involvement, training and development, diversity and inclusion initiatives and if these areas are consistently demonstrated and supported by both junior and senior staff.
3. When building relationships with potential mentors and/or sponsors, realize that the relationship should be mutually beneficial. As a junior person, you may be able to add more value than you think so take the initiative to find ways to do so. Also, when people serve as a mentor or sponsor to you, your success and contribution of value is positively reflected on them. Make them proud.

In addition to learning from executives during the office visits, I was able to learn from the honorees at The ELC's Annual Recognition Gala. It was so inspiring to see these executives use their platforms for the greater good. Bernard J. Tyson, chairman and CEO of Kaiser Permanente, shared a story of his encounter with a homeless man in Oakland, CA. He ended by declaring that he will "no longer accept homelessness as a proposition in Oakland." Carla Harris, vice chairman of Global Wealth Management at Morgan Stanley, and my idol, encouraged



everyone to use their power to impact change. She said “if you have been invited to the room, you belong in the room. If you are in the room then you have a seat at the table. If you have a seat at the table then you have a responsibility to speak.” Although that message was more targeted towards the executives in the room, from what I know about Carla Harris, she said it for the young students in the room as well. As a future business leader, it is my responsibility to listen closely to the urgent call to action for black executives today so that I can structure my future leadership style with those lessons in mind.

Earlier in this post, I talked about the growth I have noticed within myself. I went from working as a customer service representative at my local gym to working as a Finance intern at Moody’s Corporation then an Investment Banking intern at RBC Capital Markets. In addition to the opportunities to network and learn from extremely accomplished black executives, I was able to interview for a position at JPMorgan Chase & Co. This was actually not my first interaction with JPMC or their leadership team. I participated in their Launching Leaders program during the Fall of 2016, and as a Sponsors for Educational Opportunity intern, I was able to actively participate in a Q&A session with Jamie Dimon, who is the CEO of JPMC and one of the leaders I admire most. My Interview during the Honors Symposium went well and as a result, on Oct. 31st I start my new position as an Analyst in JPMC’s Corporate Client Banking and Specialized Industries Analyst Program. Not only did I benefit from my experiences during The ELC’s Honors Symposium and Gala, but I secured my first full-time job post-graduation. And for the cherry on top, I will also have the opportunity to speak with my idol, Carla Harris. She agreed to schedule a call with me after I ran into her at the Gala.

Thank you ELC, for the experience of a lifetime!