

OPPORTUNITIES THAT BUILT ME

MY GVSU ON-CAMPUS JOB JOURNEY

By Mariam Joseph

ARRIVAL

I landed in the United States with excitement, fear, and a determination to make something of myself.

Even though I had worked back home in India, earning and managing money here felt completely different.

Everything was new - the culture, the expectations, the independence.



MY FIRST JOB AT GVSU

My first job on campus was at Laker Food Co., a job I took out of necessity.

It was the first opportunity I found, and it helped me stay afloat financially.

But it also taught me something important: I wanted more than routine work. I wanted challenge and growth.



My Laker Food Co. uniform.

A TURNING POINT

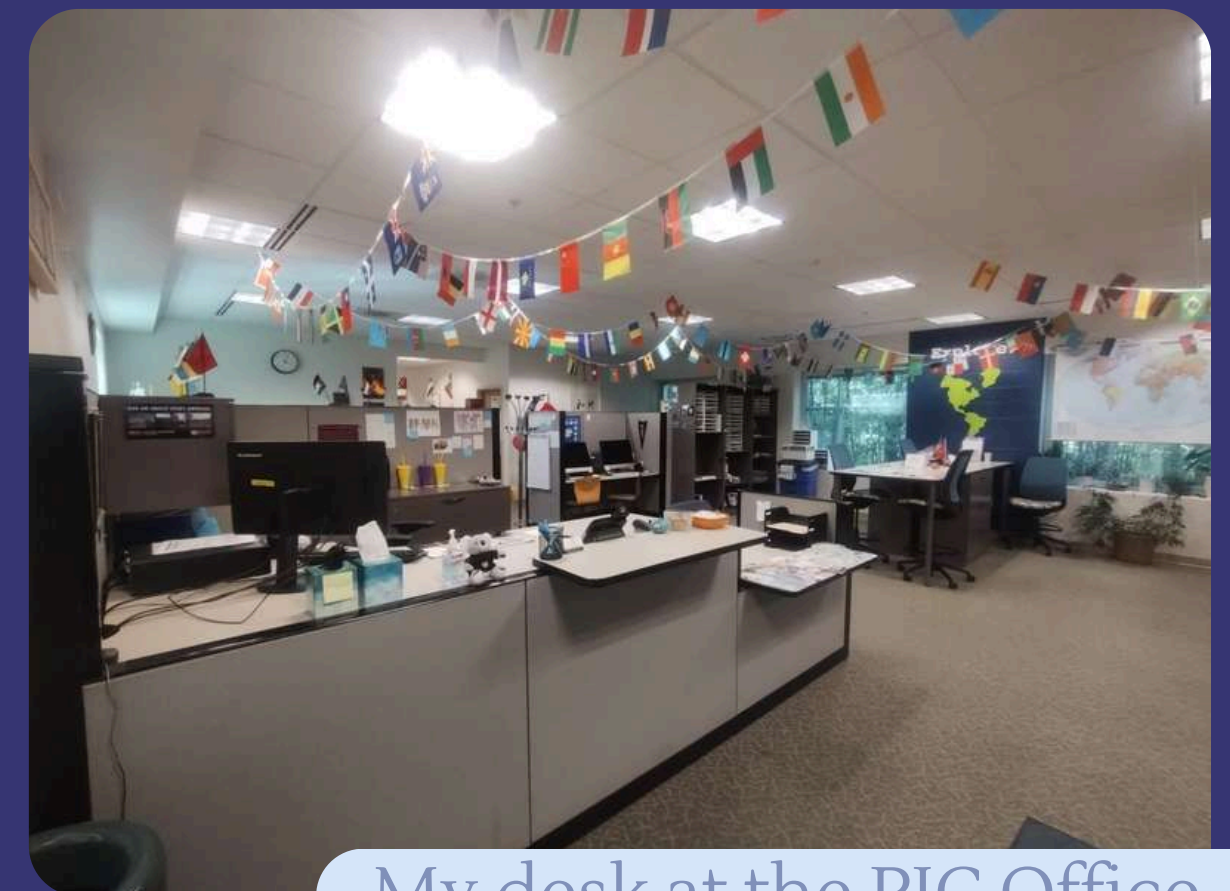
Everything changed the day I walked into the Padnos International Center with a friend.

I asked a staff member, “Are you hiring?”; a question that took courage I didn’t know I had.

That moment opened the door to my role as a Front Desk Assistant.

I worked with students from all over the world, learned to communicate across cultures, and found confidence in my voice.

The energy in that office pushed me to grow, to speak up, and to believe in myself.



My desk at the PIC Office.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Working at Padnos opened my eyes to opportunities everywhere.

When the Writing Center posted applications, I applied immediately.

This job pushed me to think critically, communicate clearly, and help students express their ideas.



Me!

Writing Center staff.



MARIAM J
Writing Consultant



Mariam J.

Pronouns: She/Her

Major: Finance

Likes to work with:

- APA & MLA
- Brainstorming
- Personal Essays

Mariam is a sophomore at GV and a member of the Honors College, majoring in Finance. An international student from India, she is also a first-year Resident Assistant (RA) and works as a Seidman tutor. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music, traveling, and spending time with friends. This is her first year as a writing consultant, and she looks forward to supporting students with their writing and helping them build confidence in their skills.

My badge

My writing consultant bio.

GRABBING EVERY OPPORTUNITY I SEE

Around the same time, I heard about the Tutoring Center in my accounting class.

I loved accounting, and I wanted to help others, so I applied.

By the end of my first year, I had two new jobs and a new level of confidence.



THE BIG LEAP

A coworker encouraged me to apply for the Resident Assistant position. I didn't know it then, but this would become the most transformative experience of my time at GVSU.

As an RA at NHF, I learned how to mediate conflicts, support students in crisis, build community, and lead with empathy.

It was challenging, emotional, and incredibly rewarding.

The RA position didn't just help me grow; it helped me survive. It covered my housing and meal plan, allowing me to save thousands of dollars and focus on my academics and leadership roles.



My RA dorm.



TAKING ON MORE

Soon after, I became a Desk Assistant at the Holton Hooker Front Desk.

I loaned keys, helped students locked out of their rooms, answered questions, and supported housing operations.

This job taught me how to stay calm when students were stressed, how to solve problems quickly, and how to support a community.

EVERY JOB BECAME A STEPPING STONE.

- Laker Food Co. taught me discipline.
- Padnos International Center taught me confidence and communication.
- Writing Consulting & Tutoring taught me professionalism and academic leadership.
- Being a Resident Assistant taught me leadership, empathy, and crisis management, and helped me save on housing and food costs.
- The Housing Operations Desk Assistant position taught me responsibility and problem-solving.
- Together, they shaped me into someone adaptable, confident, and unafraid to take initiative.

MY FAVORITE JOB

Resident Assistant at NHF.

It challenged me the most and rewarded me the most.

But I know the reason I succeeded was because of every job that came before it; each one prepared me for my next leap.

Me!



My RA Team.



**GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**

**HOUSING AND
RESIDENCE LIFE**

Mariam

My badge

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

Today, I still work multiple jobs on campus; the same ones that shaped me.

Balancing them has taught me time management, professionalism, resilience, and how to adapt to any environment.

These experiences have given me a toolkit of skills I will carry into my future career and beyond.

GVSU gives back what you put into it.

If you take risks, ask questions, and step outside your comfort zone, opportunities will find you.

You'll meet people who challenge you, jobs that shape you, and moments that push you to grow.

My on-campus jobs didn't just help me financially.

They helped me build a community, discover my strengths, and grow into the person I am today.

GVSU didn't just give me a place to study, it gave me a place to become.