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**2010 Domestic Corps Student Testimonial**

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Corporate sustainability advocates often hail energy efficiency as the classic win-win for business and the environment. Rocky Mountain Institute and other organizations have championed energy efficiency for decades as the cheapest and cleanest fuel source. More recently, McKinsey's oft-cited greenhouse gas (GHG) abatement cost curves indicate that many energy efficiency investments in buildings are actually cost negative. Yet, few companies are actively harvesting this "free money" that can be found all over their facilities.

Enter Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and its Climate Corps program, which places MBA fellows in leading companies for the summer to develop practical, actionable energy efficiency plans. The idea is taking off—the program has grown from 6 to 50 fellows in its three years of existence—and producing impressive results: in the first two years, Climate Corps fellows identified efficiencies saving \$90 million and GHG emissions equivalent to taking 19,000 SUVs off the road. It's the latest success in EDF's pioneering history of corporate partnerships.

In this context, my charge for the summer was to evaluate the opportunities for expanding Climate Corps to China and India. As is natural, this scope evolved from when the position was first posted with Domestic Corps—it originally focused on strategy for scaling up the program domestically. I found out about the scope shift near the end of my second-round interview, which provided a good test for answering unexpected interview questions. Even after completing my letter of engagement, the scope still felt somewhat daunting and ambiguous, understandable given that EDF had not (to my knowledge) previously attempted to "translate" one of its corporate partnerships for another country. However, I quickly became more comfortable with the project and even decided to expand the scope to touch on some broader strategic questions (e.g., *Should* EDF look to expand Climate Corps internationally? Are China and India the right places to look?). Learning to navigate these uncertainties was perhaps the most valuable and satisfying part of my internship.

The internship's focus on market analysis and strategic planning was exactly what I was looking for; the international component turned out to be the icing on the cake. The frequent interaction with contacts in other countries allowed me to challenge my assumptions, iteratively test my hypotheses, and sharpen my communication skills. I developed a newfound appreciation for that quaint piece of technology, the telephone (okay, it was usually skype, but close enough). I've never been much of a phone talker but in this project it was extremely helpful to just pick up the phone and call people in

China and India. Now I know more about energy efficiency and energy policy there than in the US.

After this summer, I better understand the mutual attraction between the Ross School of Business and EDF—the former’s strengths in pursuing social and environmental change through business are an ideal match with the latter’s emphasis on markets and partnerships for environmental progress. I was one of about a dozen or so interns from Ross working with EDF itself or as a Climate Corps fellow. We were welcomed into an amazing concentration of intelligence, passion, and professionalism, and invited to participate broadly in the organization. For example, I was able to attend EDF’s Corporate Partnerships retreat, during which a leading sustainability thinker challenged us to ensure that we are pursuing fundamental rather than symptomatic solutions to environmental challenges. I always felt that EDF appreciated my work and valued my perspective.

Overall, this Domestic Corps experience exceeded my high expectations. It was a fantastic opportunity to work on a challenging, high-impact project with an excellent organization. I couldn’t ask for more than that.