

Ecology Action Centre: Written Report

Jack V. Rands

Department of Political Science, Dalhousie University

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Dr. Margaret Denike

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Introduction - About the EAC

For my practicum, I was placed with the Ecology Action Centre, a non-profit environmental organization based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The mandate of the organization is to help create a more sustainable and just society through a variety of different means. It was founded in 1971 by a group of Dalhousie students, but has since expanded considerably into a locally well-renowned and influential body on environmental policy and more, with thousands of members. It fundamentally believes in environmental justice, acting as a sort of community watchdog, and mobilizing local communities to take action, ultimately aiming to take a leadership role on numerous environmental issues and fronts. The Ecology Action Centre (or EAC for short as most people called it) is composed of several teams for its core organizational structure such as Energy & Climate, Transportation, Marine & Coastal and so forth. Upon the start of my own personal term, I was given a general welcome meeting on the third floor of their office space where most of the people worked in the North End of Halifax. There, and after a short discussion about their priorities and goals and how they reflected on my own, it was determined that I join the Fundraising team, which was a relatively small team of three at the time.

A Basic Rundown

My shift schedule ended up being Wednesday and Thursday in line with their four-day workweek of Monday through Thursday, and I considered it to be flexible. It allowed me to effectively work in-between other classes and responsibilities as a full-time student. As for arrangement, it was a mixture of remote and in-person, coordinated through Microsoft Teams/the

SharePoint suite, and was mostly structured but occasionally depended on the nature of what I was doing that day. They provided ample amenities on each office floor such as tea and coffee, had multiple interesting meeting rooms with lots of character each, and had a full kitchen and lunch room with its own (nicely signed) dishwasher and fridge. Our Fundraising team had its own office space on one of the floors with a door which gave the perfect quiet space for working and collaborating, though at times when it was full some of us worked in another room. They even had a kitchen on each floor! As for the colleagues though, more importantly, every relationship I had among them was amazing - and there were plenty to be had at the EAC, from the kind alternating front desk volunteers depending on the time of day to each passionate department/team. Last but not least was my supervisor, who was especially great and guided me through most of the days with a plan, while always being sure to respond quickly and answer any questions. It was just enough to allow me the leeway to take some initiative, without ever feeling overwhelmed by it. The workplace culture at this placement was communicative and overall I found it to be great.

Campaigns & Projects

As for campaigns and projects themselves, some of the notable ones I worked on were our Appetite for Action campaign (which was coined as 'AFA'), and the 'Renoversary' event to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of opening the renovated office space back in 2016. Of these, I likely did the most work on the Renoversary event. Some of the things I did included general brainstorming during our meetings/work hours and conceptualizing different ideas, creating Excel worksheets and Word documents, sifting through organizational resources for information,

conducting database work through a third party management software, and other general assistance items such as finding answers to the odd question from the team. A more specific example could be the time when I created a general planning document for the event's logistics for everyone to add to, or when I worked on a grand guest list of invitees for it on Excel, requiring me to carefully go through old media and use the third-party database to gather names of previous staff/board members, key business affiliates, and so on. During another shift, I emailed certain staff members asking for leads to invite that might have been forgotten, and during another I networked with other environmental groups to boost numbers for the Appetite for Action campaign by utilizing social media. A lot of the work felt directly impactful - the last one, for instance, directly contributed to more people attending a fundraiser for our mission, in which a substantial portion of the participating restaurant's proceeds were donated to us in the end. I helped out with cutting and laminating pamphlets that week too which was a lot of fun, among other things in between such as input towards a couple of ideas for the biannual E&A magazine.

Summarizing Thoughts

Overall, I felt the Ecology Action Centre to be a deeply welcoming and rewarding placement. I recall one time being impromptu invited for a lunch nearby with some colleagues, having deep discussions over lunches with people from around the office, and all of my extremely positive interactions with the Fundraising team the most. It can also not be underscored that I got to learn how to better use Excel, learn workplace terms that were unfamiliar to me, and got to be in an environment that hardened workplace habits, skills, and customs. The EAC provided me with

many opportunities such as these and even ones outside of my provided work hours, all while being intricately involved with current affairs which I found to be highly, highly engaging.

Leaving this practicum, I certainly believe it will benefit me going into the future.