

# Goals, Growth, and

## CDM'S CO-OPS EXPLORE FUTURE CAREERS

**It is no wonder** that for the past 60 years CDM has actively hired and retained co-op students majoring in engineering, sciences, and marketing—three of the firm's previous CEOs began their careers as co-op students. Since 2005, CDM has brought 250 co-op and intern students into the firm, and as the company continues to grow and diversify, it continues to advance the co-op program into a more centralized, nationwide program.

CDM began in Boston, Massachusetts, as an engineering practice specializing in water supply and water pollution control with clients primarily in the northeastern United States. Over the last six decades, CDM has expanded nationally and internationally across technical disciplines—from scientific, engineering, and management consulting services to full-service transportation, operations, information management, and geotechnical services capabilities. What began as a partnership of three brilliant



engineers has grown into a leading global consulting, engineering, construction, and operations firm of more than 4,000 women and men working in more than 115 offices throughout the world. CDM employees work alongside their peers to tackle some of the world's most complex environmental challenges.

CDM recognizes that co-ops desire to contribute real value during their time with an organization. We applaud our students' initiatives to bridge their academic knowledge

with real work experience in a fast-paced professional setting. Our goal at CDM is to help students achieve growth by broadening their exposure through meaningful and challenging work and by encouraging them to participate in a variety of projects. Students are mentored and supervised by some of the best professionals in the industry, and are quickly introduced to the dynamic culture of a consulting firm.

CDM empowers students to reach their goals by providing them with the atmosphere to develop and explore the valuable contributions that they can make to the

world. In fact, prior to joining CDM, all students must think about and identify their personal, professional, and academic goals. During a co-op's first week, students meet with their manager to discuss these goals and establish a plan to meet these key objectives. Additionally, students are encouraged to ask what expectations their manager has of them to ensure a successful working relationship.

CDM managers play an integral role in a student's work experience. Managers provide meaningful work, feedback on performance, and offer exposure to the field. In fact, 96.3% of all students polled in 2007, agreed that the work environment at CDM encouraged them to provide



# Opportunity

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by Vanessa S. Berman, Co-op & Intern Program Specialist

feedback and input. And, 100% of students reported that their coworkers and peers were available to help when needed.

Additionally, managers recognize the potential in our co-op students. As students grow and adapt to the consulting industry, they are given additional challenges and responsibilities. Thomas Brewer, electrical engineering co-op states, “The staff in the Architectural and Engineering division out of the Albany office

has been incredible. They are always very helpful, they encourage me to ask questions, and I never felt like I was burdening anyone with my questions. Although I am a co-op I don’t feel like one. I do all of the same types of work as the entry-level full-time employees, and I am treated as their equal. Overall, my co-op experience with CDM has been very rewarding.”

Throughout their experience with CDM, students work with a variety of other professionals—from other co-ops and to recent graduates and more experienced senior staff. Student

employees’ impressions of the CDM workplace are extremely important to us. CDM has implemented a final evaluation survey to help students assess their experience. The evaluations include a series of questions related to student’s workload, quality of work, work environment, amount of supervision, and overall impressions of CDM. We value students’ input and use the feedback from these assessments to improve and enhance our co-op program.

There are many ways for students to leverage their experience at CDM. At CDM, we challenge our students to take initiative. Students are encouraged to:

**Network** — meet at least five CDM employees outside of their immediate group and learn what they do

**Integrate into the culture** — get involved not just with their everyday job, but also find out what the local office activities and community services events are and join in

**Learn and grow** — continue to apply learning in the classroom to their work experience

**Ask questions** — remember, the more questions asked, the more there is to learn

**Explore career opportunities** — the co-op experience is the best time to begin to learn more about a profession at CDM that relates to your college major

**Have fun!**

We hope that our co-ops experiences spark an interest in CDM for future full-time opportunities. Cooperative Education offers students a unique opportunity to get a

firsthand look at what it is like to work for CDM and to further define their professional career path. It is never too early to start looking at full-time career opportunities!

Mike Conway an electrical engineering major in our Architectural and Engineering Services Division, conducts research at his desk before heading back out to the field.



Kate Allstadt, an environmental geology major in our Environmental Management and Planning Division, takes a short break outside of the CDM headquarters in Cambridge, MA.