

President of 180 Degrees Consulting

First and Last Name	<i>Ian Condon</i>
NCSU Student ID#	<i>200458357</i>
Type of Experience (select from assignment description)	<i>Leadership</i>
Date or Date Range (<i>e.g. Sept. 2, 2024 <u>or</u> May 6, 2024-August 6, 2024</i>)	<i>Jan 1, 2025 - Dec 31, 2025 (Involved in org from Sep 2023)</i>
Research and Service Categories Past this Point ONLY	
Average Hours Per Week	
Department/Organization that hosted experience	
Supervisor/Coordinator Name, Title, and Contact Information	

When I reflect on my time as President of 180 Degrees Consulting, I see it as one of the most formative leadership experiences of my undergraduate career. 180 Degrees Consulting is the largest university-based consultancy, providing real-world pro-bono consulting work for nonprofits and social organizations in the greater North Carolina community. At NC State, our branch partners with organizations to help them address anything from strategic, marketing, and operational challenges to web design and development. I first joined the organization as a Consultant, eager to use my problem-solving skills to serve the community. After a year of project work and serving as a Project Leader, I was encouraged by previous executive members to run for President. Their confidence in my ability to lead, combined with my own desire to make a greater impact, motivated me to step into this role.

What I Learned About Myself and Others

Leading 180 Degrees Consulting taught me a great deal about myself. I learned that I thrive when given the opportunity to create structure out of ambiguity. Our branch was at a turning point: while we had strong members, our project quality and recruitment process lacked consistency. I discovered my strength in setting clear standards and holding both myself and others accountable to them. For example, I introduced an invitation-only membership model, which raised expectations for consultants and ultimately improved the quality of our work.

I also learned how to balance empathy with decision-making. As President, I had to listen closely to members to understand their motivations, concerns, and aspirations, while also making choices that would best serve the organization as a whole.

Challenges and Memorable Experiences

This experience challenged several of my assumptions about leadership. Initially, I thought leading a team was primarily about setting a vision and motivating others to follow it. In reality, leadership also requires countless tiny acts of problem-solving: resolving conflicts, adapting when project scope changes, stepping in when a team is struggling, and a whole lot of emails.

One of the most memorable experiences was guiding a project for a nonprofit that provides after-school programs for underserved youth. Our team helped them redesign their volunteer management system to reduce turnover. Watching my consultants grow in confidence as they presented recommendations to the client was a proud moment. It reminded me that leadership is not about personal recognition but about creating an environment where others can succeed.

The most challenging element of the role was balancing my academic responsibilities with the time-intensive demands of being President. On average, I dedicated 10 hours each week to planning meetings, coordinating projects, and managing executive board responsibilities. Learning to prioritize and manage my time was essential, and it is a skill I will carry with me long after this experience.

Communication and Team-Building Skills

Serving as President significantly improved my communication and team-building skills. I became more intentional about how I presented information, whether in executive board meetings, Town Halls, client presentations, via Slack, or through email. I practiced tailoring my communication style depending on the audience: being motivational with consultants, collaborative with peers, and professional with clients.

Team-building was another crucial aspect. I introduced a mentorship system where more experienced consultants guided newer members. I also encouraged people to talk to each other outside of their project groups. This not only helped with skill development but also created a stronger sense of community in the organization. I realized that people are more invested in a team when they feel supported and connected to one another.

Career and Academic Impact

This leadership experience had a direct impact on both my career aspirations and academic growth. It solidified my interest in using technology and consulting to solve real-world problems. I realized I enjoy leading teams in high-impact projects, and it affirmed my desire to pursue a career where I can combine technical skills with strategic thinking. It also improved my project management abilities, which has strengthened my performance in team-based coursework. This role is on my resume, and I talk about it on every interview that I do.

Lasting Impact

Ultimately, being President of 180 Degrees Consulting has had a lasting impact on my confidence, independence, and vision for my future. I am more confident in my ability to lead organizations, manage diverse teams, and deliver meaningful results. This experience has shown me the importance of service leadership—placing the mission and people first—and I know it will guide how I approach opportunities throughout my career.