Addressing climate adaptation through the UConn Climate Corps independent study program provided me with many valuable experiences that I will carry with me past graduation. As a team, we were tasked by the Rainproof NYC branch of Rebuild By Design NYC with evaluating each district in New York City based on stormwater risk, non-English speaking populations, and other factors that we may encounter through our research. The initial portion of the project was focused on gathering information from sites such as the languages of NYC map and the New York City stormwater flood map. Along with demographic data from the community district profiles site, we were able to form a decent understanding of our assigned districts (I covered all Bronx neighborhoods, Manhattan districts 1-6, and Staten Island district 1) and begin assessing risk levels. Although we were working together on this project, each member of the team had their own approach towards research and evaluation which was useful for stimulating new and original ideas. For example, I decided to evaluate each of my districts based on four factors: population density, percent of the population not proficient in English, number of languages spoken that aren't covered by New York City's "Notify NYC" program, and stormwater risk. For me, this systematic type of process makes most sense while for others it may not.

Something I greatly enjoyed was the flexibility of the project, especially in the second half of the semester, and how thought processes and results changed based on new findings. One major change was our project organizer Sabit getting hired at a new job, and adapting to working with our new correspondent. This wasn't necessarily difficult in any way, but it was interesting to experience what happens in a normal work environment and learn to adapt to changes in who you work with. Another major change in outlook happened through our conversations with

NotifyNYC. Prior to these video calls, our team and RainproofNYC had misconceptions about the organization due a lack of knowledge and communication with them. We spoke with Nicholas Narine, project manager of the public warning system, and learned that the program is actually doing quite a bit to reach out to communities. Through tabling events, outreaches at community halls and places of worship, and the Ready New York initiative, storm risk is communicated quite effectively to the population. The main roadblock towards progress, it seems, is funding. While the current NotifyNYC site covers ~98% of the population for languages spoken across the city, they would like to continue to expand coverage. Furthermore, our call with Joshua Rapp, NYC Emergency Management's meteorologist, informed us that the National Weather Service is the most accurate predicting model available and is continuing to get more precise as technology advances. He also made it clear that to provide better warnings, the organization needs at least two more meteorologists on the team.

One of the biggest challenges I often face in projects like these, is working cohesively with a team. Everyone has different goals, time availability, and work methods which can make it difficult to come up with a final product that everyone is satisfied with. It was vital for our group to remain in frequent communication throughout the semester, and meet with our project managers at RainproofNYC at least once every two weeks to ensure success. Personally, I tend to stick to my own way of doing things and end up taking on the largest workload in projects because I want to ensure something is done correctly. While I still felt myself leaning towards that tendency, I learned a lot about the importance of taking a back seat in working on group projects in a professional setting. Most projects I have worked on through my studies have been far more straightforward in their scopes, while this is a bit more convoluted. Acknowledging first and foremost the goals and values of RainproofNYC was something that kept me on task and

focused. I had to apply this same acknowledgement to my group members as well, and make sure I took their ideas and approaches into consideration. Instead of saying we should do something in a certain way, I learned to express my thoughts more as suggestions rather than directions.

Overall, the Climate Corps independent study program provided an experience for me that is incomparable with the rest of my time at UConn. It gave me the opportunity to work with a real organization that has their finger on the pulse and is making a difference in climate adaptation. I also learned valuable lessons on working with others, in both educational and professional settings. If I ever needed validation for pursuing the major I did, I think this is perhaps the best indicator so far that I have made the right decision. Although limited in scope and hands-on experience due to the physical distance between UConn and New York City, the weekly meetings with our class section as a whole, RainproofNYC, and my team made the project tangible. It truly felt like I was a component in the consulting process, engaging stakeholders and utilizing what I have learned up until now to best inform them on decisions. I hope that our findings will be valuable to RainproofNYC, and that our work this semester makes some sort of lasting impression in New York City stormwater flooding.