

March 21, 2006

Dear Ms. Demuth,

My name is Brenton MacAloney and I would like you to consider me for inclusion in the July 2006 Weather and Society Integrated Studies program.

As a meteorologist within the National Weather Service's (NWS) Performance Branch, I am extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work closely with my organization's performance and verification databases. I believe these datasets, which grows hourly with every forecast and warning product issued, hold an abundance of information crucial to improving the value and accuracy of our products. In order to assess the value of the products though, it is essential to understand what impact those products have on the general public. That is something that has never been looked into with much effort by the NWS. That is why the topic of your workshop intrigues me.

Coming out of this workshop, I would like a basic set of tools and understanding so I may start giving the NWS feedback on exactly where we need to improve. Sure the verification numbers that my group generates show trends and biases which we may improve our products on, but the real value comes in complimenting that data with better understanding of exactly what impact weather events, forecasts, and warnings have on the general public. If I could then display my findings on along side the verification data, the NWS might then be able to shift effort and resources towards areas in which public service is lacking.

Now as recent as a year ago, if someone would have asked me what my career goals were, I would have said I wanted to become a Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) with that NWS. In my limited opportunities, I really enjoy the one-on-one interaction with the public in educating them about beauty of weather and the hazards that come along with it. Recently though, I have found myself becoming more interested in educating the forecasters on, not just the verification side of forecasting and warning, but the "overall" performance of how the NWS is doing in issuing its products. So whichever career avenue I take in the future, I think the skills and understanding I take out of this workshop would come in extremely useful.

Finally, I would like for you to know a couple things about myself. First, without sounding too corny, I'd like you to know that weather is something I'm truly passionate about. I have been this way since I saw my first tornado at the age of 6 and rode with my father and the town fire department to the scene of the damaged homes. Ever since that day, I have had this life long goal to be a meteorologist. Now here I am, happy as ever, working my dream job with the NWS. Second, I love to learn. Whether it's taking up a new hobby (I am currently taking curling lessons), visiting a museum, or striking up a conversation with someone on the airplane en route to one of my many presentations, I am always trying to learn more. I think attendance in this workshop would blend my two passions perfectly, as well as help my with my career goals. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Brent MacAloney