

Statement of Interest for the WAS*IS Program

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My interests in meteorology policy and the goals of the WAS*IS program could not be more aligned. While my undergraduate peers were exploring numerical models or practicing their skills in front of the green screen, I spent my junior and senior years asking professors and anyone who would listen, "If the sole goal of meteorological research is to improve forecast accuracy, aren't we missing the link between forecasts and the people they serve?" Although few of my peers or professors really understood what I was getting at, I knew that my career connection to meteorology would not be spent improving a forecast model, but rather investigating how meteorology impacts people's lives beyond skill scores of 500mb heights.

Based on my integrated interests, I wrote an undergraduate thesis about a broadened research focus within meteorology and then came straight to Boulder to begin my graduate science policy studies with Roger Pielke Jr. at the University of Colorado. I am starting my third and final year in the dual M.S. Environmental Studies program (focus on meteorology and policy) and MBA program, and throughout Roger proved to be a tremendous advisor and friend, asking many hard questions while steering my brain in sometimes orthogonal (but good!) directions. I've learned a lot of the theory behind the policy studies from Roger, and I've also learned a great deal about developing metrics and survey's to assess metrics from my business classes.

I am a weather weenie at heart, and a dreamer at all times. Thus, I will never lose my love of and focus in meteorology, but I will always ask others and myself the bigger questions: 'How can the science of meteorology communicate effectively?' 'Why doesn't the public see the enormous strides our science makes on an almost daily basis?' And most of all, 'With something so engaging and always-on like the weather, why is the science of meteorology struggling to make ends meet, between research and operations, and between operations and getting information to the public?' These are the questions I want to understand, and these are the questions that the WAS*IS program begins to address.

At the recent AMS Weather and Climate Enterprise meeting in Boulder, I sat frustrated for the better part of three days. I asked the entire group a question on the first day: "Everyone wants to improve the enterprise, but what are we improving? Skill scores? Fewer deaths? Bigger budgets? What are the metrics we will use to develop our goals?" I didn't really get an answer, and this is the state of our profession in my eyes - people realize that maybe something needs to be done, but for 50 years nothing has changed.

Changing the way of thinking in an entire scientific field is not something that will happen overnight, but **my number one priority after the AMS meeting and within the WAS*IS program is to start developing a set of metrics to understand the societal value of weather.** Not metrics measured once in a while when a grant is awarded, and not macro-metrics that point to \$x trillion of U.S commerce that is affected by the weather. I'm thinking of metrics measured year-after-year, that our science can use as a basis for goal-setting and prioritizing action, and that congress and the taxpayers can look toward to see our successes and shortcomings. This is what I want to start in the WAS*IS program.

Since my junior year at Penn State in 2001, I have been on the weather and society track. I hope it continues within the WAS*IS program!