

Statement of Interest
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This statement of interest is written to explain why I would like to attend the Summer 2007 Weather and Society Integrated Studies Workshop in Boulder, CO. I received my Ph.D. in 2003 from the Department of Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. I am currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Western Illinois University (WIU), Macomb, IL. Since my arrival at WIU a year and a half ago, I have sought ways to integrate the department's specialty in physical and cultural geography, as well as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), with my own expertise in meteorology.

I am currently in the early stages of two projects directly related to weather and society. The first project is a service learning experiment that I am doing with my Introduction to Weather and Climate classes. I have about 130 students in my Weather and Climate classes and their task each semester is to come up with examples of how weather (plus humans) influences the environment then send these examples, along with ways that individuals can help minimize detrimental impact, to Earth Gauge. Earth Gauge is a part of Eyes on the Environment Initiative that sends environment information to broadcast meteorologists for use on air during weather discussions. By participating, my students help the community and learn how their actions plus weather can make a difference. I would eventually like to publish a write-up of this project so that other schools (even high schools) can participate as well.

The second project that I am working on is a survey project to determine how the public receives, interprets and responds to hazardous weather alerts. The first part of this project will focus on incoming students at WIU to determine what additional resources are needed to keep WIU students informed about weather hazards. The second part of this study will look at the community-at-large. I would like this project to cover as large an area as possible, so collaborators are a must. I plan to do a statistical analysis of the responses and also use GIS HotSpot Analysis techniques to analyze the demographic and geographic distribution of the responses. Both stages of this project are done in collaboration with Ray Wolf and Donna Dubberke the Davenport, IA National Weather Service. I am currently soliciting help from two Sociologists in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (Drs. Craig Tollini and David Rohall) and would like to include a Social Psychologist from the Department of Psychology (Dr. Kristine Kelly). As a new faculty member working on a project that integrates weather and social sciences, I believe I would benefit greatly from this workshop.

I am energetic, imaginative and enthusiastic in my approach to research and life. I also believe very strongly in the value of research approaches which integrate weather and the social sciences. As a faculty member in the Department of Geography, I am well positioned to benefit from and make use of contacts and tools that I would learn at the workshop. I hope you will consider me for attendance.