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Dear Ms. Demuth,

I am extremely interested in attending the Summer 2009 WAS*IS Workshop, and I hope you will consider my application. I am currently a Research Associate in the Department of Geography at the University of Minnesota, where I study high-impact weather events and climatic regimes. I am also currently working closely with a group of Federal, state and local emergency managers to develop a severe weather disaster workshop and training exercise for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. I became aware of WAS*IS several years ago and have been following it from the margins ever since. I fully support its objectives, and I am quite excited at the prospect of participating in the workshop and becoming a “WAS*ISer” for life; WAS*IS covers exactly the kinds of topics and issues I would like to address in my own career.

Although my expertise is in climatology, I was trained in a Geography department composed mostly of social scientists (“human geographers”), and so I am comfortable thinking about how people are affected by, and respond to, the weather and weather information. I have become especially interested in understanding inequalities in access to critical weather information. For example, in a dangerous weather situation, having access to information may be the difference between finding safety and being exposed directly to the hazard, yet access to such information is not equal across the population; groups with poorer access are therefore more at-risk to a given event than those with better access. The WAS*IS workshop, I expect, would be a big step towards gaining some of the requisite ability to investigate these issues, and it would awaken me to many possibilities for incorporating social science-based inquiry into meteorological and climatological investigations.

To me, the value of WAS*IS is obvious: we forecast and study the weather because it affects us, and thus, the weather’s importance to us hinges on the fact that it plays out in a humanized world—*our* world. It makes sense, therefore, to build a weather research and forecasting infrastructure that utilizes the vast array of information from the social sciences.

I am most interested in the workshop for what I can learn from it, and for having the experience of listening to and collaborating with others who are dedicated to integrating social science into the weather enterprise. I generally thrive in workshop environments, and I believe I would make a valuable participant in this one.

With this letter, I am sending a résumé detailing my relevant experiences and accomplishments, and I have asked for a letter of recommendation from my former adviser and current research collaborator, Professor Emeritus Richard Skaggs, who is familiar with my experience and my interests. I hope my application compels you to include me in the WAS*IS workshop, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Most sincerely,

Kenneth Blumenfeld