

Statement of Interest

The mere mention of meteorology often stirs up images of people chasing tornadoes in the plains and flying into tropical cyclones aboard specially outfitted and equipped “Hurricane Hunter” aircraft. I admittedly do not desire to participate in either activity, and rather trace my keen interest in meteorology to my childhood in Hawaii. Growing up surfing, fishing, diving, hiking, backpacking, and camping, I developed a deep appreciation of weather and weather’s impacts on everyday life.

With regard to weather and culture, Hawai’i is one of the most diverse areas in the world. Generally known for its pleasant climate year round, the topography, prevailing winds, and location in the Pacific foster a wide variety of weather related hazards, including blizzards atop the summit of Mauna Kea (14,000 ft), tropical cyclones, tornadoes, fierce Kona Storms, flash floods, and extremely high surf. With no clear majority group, the population of Hawai’i, attributed largely in part to immigrant workers on sugar plantations through the mid 1900s, is now supplemented by people from across the Pacific and throughout the World.

The integration of social science in meteorology fascinates me and applies to nearly all aspects of my current position as Warning Coordination Meteorologist for the National Weather Service and Central Pacific Hurricane Center in Honolulu, HI. I have conducted over 100 education and outreach events each year over the past two years. These events include helping emergency managers develop hazard mitigation plans, informing coaches how to keep their kids safe during lightning storms, helping tourism officials develop materials to educate tourists on severe weather in Hawaii, and conducting a tornado damage assessment with the Civil Air Patrol. Keeping people safe however, is merely one aspect of being a meteorologist. From the “little old lady in Mo’ili’ili” who calls most everyday to find out if she should hang her clothes out to dry to a bride planning her dream wedding in Hawaii, weather is an important element and reaches deep into society. The many different types of people, languages, cultures, and perceptions in Hawaii add to the complexity of weather’s roles and impacts in day to day life. I firmly believe WAS*IS will provide me with a greater understanding weather’s current and historical role in society, ultimately assisting me to do my part in fulfilling the NWS mission to protect lives and property.

The number of WAS*IS graduates continues to expand within and perhaps more significantly outside of the NWS. By developing partnerships with others, I hope to contribute to, advance and build the growing WAS*IS network in the future. Aloha.