

## FINDING THE RIGHT MATCH

### Tips on the Job Search and Application Process

ERIK R. NIELSEN, STACEY M. HITCHCOCK, ARYEH J. DRAGER, JOSHUA J. ALLAND, AND KRISTY C. CARTER  
(AMS STUDENT CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS)

The job search and application process can be stressful and, at times, overwhelming. Young members of the weather, water, and climate enterprise who are looking to enter the job market often struggle with finding available jobs and standing out in the applicant pool. In an effort to provide an open forum for discussion on strategies for future success, AMS's 16th Annual Student Conference in January hosted a session on "Preparing for Your Future." In this session, Valerie Sloan, from the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR), gave her perspective on the job-hunting process in her talk, "Finding the Right Match: Tips on the Job Search and Application Process."

As part of her presentation, Sloan elucidated her "little, secret tip" about the entire job search process: "You all are energetic, you're curious, you're detectives in your world. If you want to find something out, you will. The web is an amazing resource; use it to your advantage." She went on to say, "For example, you are in Seattle for the AMS Student Conference, and let's say you like it here. So you would love to find a job in the area and you're kind of interested in transportation and how that relates to weather. Go on Google and you type in keywords like 'Seattle,' 'city,' 'weather,' and 'transportation.' Now, the tip is to go to the 'news tab,' not the 'all tab.' It pulls up the recent news stories. Read those stories." The story was from local newspapers about a project where the mayor

## ON-AIR METEOROLOGY

### 10 QUESTIONS WITH...

*A new series of profiles celebrating AMS Certified Broadcast Meteorologists and Sealholders*



**Meredith Garofalo**  
Meteorologist, WeatherNation

**How do you want to be remembered?** For being an inspiration to young women, someone who faced adversity and setbacks but never gave up going for her career goals. Also as someone who had passion every time she stepped on TV to make someone's day, whether it was as simple as adding extra sunshine to the forecast or giving lifesaving information during a storm..



**What's been your most difficult moment on-air?** When we hear about lives lost during storm coverage. We do our best to prevent that but unfortunately not everyone heeds the warnings and advice we provide.

**What is the best thing about what you do?** Knowing I've impacted someone's life and being able to serve as a role model in the community. It's really gratifying to hear how much people appreciate what we do.

**What's the biggest weather event you've reported on?** Back-to-back major hurricanes, Harvey and Irma.

tasked Seattle's information technology department to develop new tools to communicate during winter weather emergencies.

"Take a few seconds to read that paragraph and look for names or information that you think might be useful in your detective search," Sloan continued. "Learn more, contact these people. Say, 'I read about your cool project, and I'd love to find out, how you did XYZ.' That's how you build connections. Next thing you know, if your resume shows up on the pile, they will say 'oh yeah, this person called me.'"

Another key tip of Sloan's was "really tailoring your application" to whatever job you are applying for: "Your resume needs to include words that are in the job ad. There is software that is used to skim off all of the resumes that don't have the key words. In your cover letter, you can say 'I see you are looking for a team player. In my project on such and such in my course, I was the coordinator and I did this and that.' Speak to what they are looking for in that job ad, and for the interview prepare by researching the organization and looking at questions that people use for interviews. Prepare some questions for them,

and then, of course, show up on time, be courteous and professional."

In her final tip, Sloan encouraged students to "keep contacting these people over time. The ones that are interesting to you, keep contacting them, especially if you are involved in a job search."

She left students with the encouragement that if "you keep networking, and keep doing what you are doing today at this conference and beyond you will have many branches and connections that will become your opportunity for finding the right match. You go, you're doing great, and you can do it!"

This valuable, real-world advice was combined with a series of additional professional development tips<sup>1</sup> used by the students during their time in Seattle and, hopefully, beyond. Armed with this new knowledge, students left the session more confident in their ability to pursue avenues that can help them develop a competitive advantage in today's job market.

<sup>1</sup> The full recorded version of Sloan's talk can be found online in the Annual Meeting conference program (<https://ams.confex.com/ams/97Annual/webprogram/Paper317327.html>).

**Who has been your biggest role model?** The late Rich Apuzzo, who helped me through some of the toughest times in my career, and Ginger Zee, a fellow Valpo graduate who had advice for me from TV broadcasting to dancing!

**What types of weather or weather phenomena do you get most excited about?** Even though they can be catastrophic, I love severe storms and hurricanes. Not only because we get to geek out, but also because it's at a storm's worst that we have the opportunity to be our best, keeping people informed before, during, and after the storm.

**What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?** I am an accomplished singer and actress! I've performed our national anthem more than 100 times for professional and collegiate sports as well as nonprofit and community events. In 2013, I played one of my favorite roles as Rizzo in *Grease* for a local theater production. I've also competed in two local *Dancing with the Stars* competitions, taking first place in 2016 with a foxtrot routine.

**What was the most important way to prepare yourself for this job?** Being in the public eye and a very competitive field can be difficult. Grow a thick skin, talk to your mentors during the tough times, and never give up no matter what anyone says or thinks. Go for what you want and do it the best you can.

**What music should be the soundtrack for your job?** A little bit of everything, from "Stormy Weather" to "Walking on Sunshine."

**What has been your proudest moment on-air?** It's not weather related, but I was able to raise millions of air miles for the Make-A-Wish Tri-Counties "Wishes in Flight" campaign!

*Meredith Garofalo received her CBM in 2016. For more information on AMS Certification Programs, go to [www.ametsoc.org](http://www.ametsoc.org).*