Collaborations between the NWS and the University at Albany before and after our move to the ETEC

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The National Weather Service Forecast Office at Albany, NY and the University at Albany Department of Atmospheric Sciences (DAES) have a long history of working on collaborative projects that have benefited both the University and the National Weather Service (NWS). Examples of projects include NOAA-funded research grants via the Collaborative Science, Technology and Applied Research (CSTAR) program, which involve collaborative research between Master’s degree students, their advisors and NWS meteorologists. Another successful endeavor has been the NWS student volunteer program which allows several students from the DAES each semester to work regularly scheduled shifts at the NWS, allowing them to gain experience in many facets of NWS operations. Finally, a NWS operations class has been organized where undergraduate students attend a weekly course focused on forecasting and warning activities and taught by NWS staff. These activities have benefitted the NWS by providing a pipeline of graduating students with useful skills for entry level meteorologists. Likewise, these activities have given students a broader and more complete learning experience, benefitting both students and the university.

The NWS and DAES have both moved into the Emergency Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex on the U Albany campus during the fall of 2021, with offices separated by just a short walk down the hall on the 4th floor. Due to this increased proximity, plans are in the works to enhance the already close relationship between the NWS and DAES. A case study program has been initiated this fall, with several undergraduate students working closely with NWS staff members on reviews of significant weather events that have affected the NWS Albany forecast area. Regularly scheduled map discussions are also being planned involving participation of both the NWS and DAES, along with event-driven discussions prior to expected significant weather events, and post-event reviews after major events. Labs in our NWS operations class will be enhanced by more easily incorporating both NWS and DAES resources. These activities will continue to benefit the NWS by keeping the NWS in touch with cutting-edge science ongoing within the DAES, and by continuing to promote a culture of science within the forecast office. The university will benefit by more directly observing the operational challenges faced by the NWS, which will help to direct their research efforts in ways that can provide maximum improvements in NWS forecasts and warnings.