

## 2018: YEAR OF THE (WEATHER?) WOMAN— DISCUSSION OF EMAIL RESPONSES TO PERRYMAN AND THEISS (2014)

2013 was a great year for me—I was 27, progressing through the initial stages of my doctorate program in atmospheric science, and about to become a first-time mom—when I received confirmation that an article I’d authored with a colleague for an independent research course was accepted into *BAMS* (Perryman and Theiss 2014). Being published in *BAMS* was a major academic goal I didn’t think would be accomplished until *much* later in my career, much less so while I was still a graduate student, so I was ecstatic and proud of my accomplishment—that is, until I received an email response a few months after the article printing from a male, self-proclaimed veteran broadcast meteorologist (who is currently still working in the profession). The email was an angry, sexist, racist, anecdotal-based rant that called into question our education and life experience, in addition to our research findings and the research findings of other studies that our work is grounded in. (The email author also implied that female weathercasters were equivalent to strippers—“pole workers”—and decried the unfairness of women extorting their physical appearance to achieve career goals, in addition to putting down people of color and those in the teaching profession.)

Receiving this harassment via email as a young, female graduate student undermined my self-confidence and made me doubt myself as a researcher and woman in science. I sought advice from a few male academic advisors in my field, who told me to save the email but to not respond in any way. Looking back, I think that while this advice was well-intentioned, it did a disservice to other women in my position, women who are currently seeking a graduate degree in a male-dominated field and who most likely have also been sent harassing emails in response to their research but were told to stay silent rather than respond.

Thankfully, this wasn’t the only response I received to our article; two female professors who have

also published on the gender gap in the meteorology field reached out and expressed appreciation for our work. This email had a much larger, *positive* impact on my self-esteem and gave me the courage to keep pursuing this topic in my dissertation.

2018 has been deemed the “Year of the Woman” (Kamarck 2018)—with marches on Washington, D.C., and the most women ever elected to Congress in the midterms—but what about in academia? What about in the meteorology field? By sharing this experience with readers, I hope to shed some light on the experience of women in science-based graduate programs but also stress the importance of communicated support from female academic leaders in the field, especially with the growing mental health epidemic in academia (Evans et al. 2017). My hope is that one day, we’ll reach a point where stereotypes are not only acknowledged as existing but also *changed* to allow *ALL* women more equal access to the meteorology field.

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(Note: It’s been over 2 years since original publication of the article in 2013/4, due to the author being told not to act on the email at the time it was first sent.)

## REFERENCES

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