ESS #MeetTheFaculty

Physical Sciences SciComm Fellow Bryant Pahl interviews new UCI climate scientist Jane Baldwin.

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UCI Department of Earth System Science's Professor Jane Baldwin's work sometimes finds her up in the air. But while she's here on the ground, SciComm Fellow Bryant Pahl caught up with her to chat about her work.

Picture Credit:
Grace Dickinson

In this “ESS #MeetTheFaculty,” Physical Sciences SciComm Fellow Bryant Pahl interviews Assistant Professor Jane Baldwin, who’s an atmospheric scientist and climate modeler. Professor Baldwin talks about her current research projects and what she likes most about UC Irvine's Department of Earth System Science.

BP: Who are you and what were you doing prior to UC Irvine?

JB: My name is Jane Baldwin, and I'm a new Assistant Professor in Earth System Science. I'm a climate modeler and atmospheric scientist by training — but I'm very interested in the impacts of climate and climate change on human systems as well. Prior to arriving at UC Irvine, I was living in New York City and working as a postdoctoral fellow at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, which is part of Columbia University. And before that I was a graduate student at Princeton University and NOAA's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory. I've lived on the east coast almost my whole life (minus a fiveyear stint in Tokyo, Japan when I was a kid). So, moving to California has been an exciting adventure!

BP: What's your research currently focused on?

JB: My research has three main branches right now. I'm working on understanding how mountains shape the regional distribution of precipitation on Earth, and related biases of climate models in simulating that precipitation. I'm also working to develop better models of tropical cyclone risk so we can in turn better project future damages from these highly destructive storms. Finally, I'm collaborating with epidemiologists and physiologists to understand how heat stress and its health impacts are changing with global warming. These sound like three pretty different topics, but they're all united by the need to understand and quantify the adaptation challenges presented by climate change.

BP: What's been your favorite thing about living in Irvine so far?

JB: I have two favorite things. First, all the brilliant and kind folks in the ESS department and their enthusiasm for interdisciplinary problems. ESS's broad perspective on what pertains to environmental change is both freeing and super exciting to be part of. Second, the excellent weather! It's delightful and kind of crazy to experience sunny, pleasant weather most days after growing up where it's either far too cold or too hot most of the year. (You'd think that as a climate scientist the weather would be less of a surprise!)

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