Graduate recruitment fall 2019 for student to begin in August 2020

Subject: Graduate Assistantship: Strategies for changing environmental policy

I am recruiting a new graduate student who will work with me to study what strategies are most effective in changing environmental policies and develop effective teaching methodologies for training policy advocates. The goals of this research are (a) to understand the conditions under which different advocacy strategies are effective for different kinds of actors, and (b) to develop training programs within the university and beyond that enable public servants, scientists, activists, and ordinary citizens to engage more productively in the policy process. There are literally hundreds of techniques used by political actors to influence policy-making at different levels of government. I wish to understand empirically when different actors select particular strategies and why, and how that interacts with the broader political environment. Although research on social movements has long been concerned with what makes a social movement effective, social movements are hardly the only actor in the environmental policy arena – other important actors include scientists, business people, and policy elites. This research will thus draw on an interdisciplinary mixture of research and theories from across the social sciences, and will produce results that will be useful to a broad range of society. Although I intend to publish this research in conventional scholarly journals, a significant focus of this graduate assistantship will also be on developing materials to train people to apply the lessons of this research – both within the college classroom and beyond.

The student will be responsible for conducting qualitative case study research examining strategies used by policy advocates, social movement actors, scientists, government officials, and ordinary citizens to achieve policy change, supervising undergraduate researchers assistants, and preparing scientific publications and educational materials deriving from the research. The focus of the case studies will be on forestry and climate change related policies within the state of Minnesota, with a particular focus on underrepresented and newly emergent groups (for example tribes, immigrant communities, new climate advocacy groups). Climate change policies may include both rural (e.g. agriculture & forestry) and urban (e.g. transportation & housing issues). There is some potential to develop comparative studies with neighboring states and/or other parts of the world, as well as with other related policy topics, and there may be some opportunities to develop quantitative comparisons. The student will have a substantial opportunity to focus on case studies and topics of their interest within the broader research program, as well as to develop a dissertation that might specialize and/or branch out from the topic or regional specialization, although the degree of independence would be dependent on the ability of the student to obtain funding for their proposed project.

The student will be enrolled in the graduate program in Natural Resource Science & Management (https://www.nrsm.umn.edu/) at the University of Minnesota, a highly ranked and well regarded graduate program in the middle of a diverse and dynamic city and state which is a national leader in many areas of environmental policy and boasts plentiful opportunities for outdoor recreation. The University of Minnesota is one of the largest universities in the US, and has one of the largest graduate programs, offering a very large and diverse set of courses and resources. Students will take courses and be trained in interdisciplinary environmental social

science research and methods, particularly drawn from political science & public affairs, as well as courses focused on the natural science of the environmental topics they are studying. I prefer to hire a PhD student but will also consider research-focused MS students if there is a good fit. Funding will be through a mix of Research and Teaching Assistantships, and will be available for 3 years (2 years in case of an MS student), with additional years dependent on progress of the student, the project and the availability of grants. Students will receive training in grant-writing. Assistantships cover tuition for graduate coursework and a stipend. Teaching assistantships will be in classes that I teach and are focused on environmental policy change. I, Forrest Fleischman, will be the supervisor/advisor/mentor for this student – you can read more about my past work here https://www.forestry.umn.edu/forrest-d-fleischman.

I am looking for students who are strongly self-motivated and self-directed, and interested in learning how to improve their research skills. The ideal student would have experience & training in conducting environmental social science research, experience studying and/or participating in political advocacy, experience in education related to citizenship and political advocacy, and an interest in developing independent research focusing on the effectiveness of environmental advocacy. Students who do not have all of these experiences are encouraged to apply and describe the experience they do have. The student will be expected to be comfortable working in both urban and rural areas in Minnesota, and working with diverse stakeholders ranging from legislators and government officials to activists from diverse backgrounds across the political spectrum.

This position has a 2 stage application procedure. To apply, email the following in a single pdf file organized in the order below to Forrest Fleischman (ffleisch@umn.edu) prior to November 15:

1. A letter of application of 1-2 pages explaining your background and qualifications, as well as your motivations for applying to this position and the research questions you would like to pursue in graduate school. The most important factor in my review of applications will be the way that you articulate research questions related to the proposed topic. The ability to frame research questions relevant to the broader topic is more important to me than background or experience, as it articulates "fit" with my research program.
2. Your CV (for ideas on how to make an academic cv, see https://gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-progress/pathways-to-success/prepare-for-your-career/take-action/resumes-and-cvs/)
3. Copies of your GRE score report and academic transcripts (Also English Language Proficiency if required – see https://grad.umn.edu/admissions/international-student-resources/english-language-proficiency) Unofficial copies are fine.
4. Names and contact information for 3 references, at least one of whom should be a university faculty member, and at least one of whom should be a person who has experience working with you in a professional context outside of a classroom (for example, a job supervisor, your advisor for a thesis you wrote, etc.)

5. In addition, some additional funding is potentially available from the university for students who bring diverse views and experiences to the graduate program and/or who come from diverse backgrounds: see https://grad.umn.edu/funding/program-requests-nominations/nominations/diversity-of-views-experience-fellowship-dove and https://drive.google.com/file/d/14AnnA5SQU3qUJfbs_NgosTP6AIn2xDQj/view. If you think you might meet the criteria for these additional funds, please send an additional statement of 1 page describing how you meet the criteria. Note that this is not a requirement, but potentially a student who is eligible for one of these fellowships would have additional funding so please include this if you believe you meet the criteria.

I will select which students from this initial applicant pool I am likely to be able to support no later than Dec. 1, and will encourage them to make a formal application to the NRSM program (https://www.nrsm.umn.edu/prospective-students/admission-requirements). The formal application deadline of the NRSM program is December 15. This application will require official copies of university transcripts and test score, as well as written reference letters. As final admissions decisions are dependent on the admissions committee, funding availability, and decisions made by other students, I cannot guarantee that students I encourage will be admitted to the graduate program.