

**Howard University**

**CapComm Lab**

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**Podcast 1 Transcript - John Moore**

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:00:00] Hi, I'm your host, Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree, professor in the Cathy Hughes School of Communications at Howard University, a long-time member of NCAS-M and initially NCAS grant. My role within the grant is to communicate the various activities of the center, showcase what we do, how we do it, and share our success stories. Today we're excited to sit down with an alum of the NCAS, NCAS-M grant to hear his story since 2000. So we're celebrating almost 25 years of what we do. We have changed the scientific landscape by fostering a culture of fellowship, collaboration, and interdisciplinary studies through our multiple partnerships with minority-serving institutions, which are MSIs, historically black colleges and universities, which are HBCUs, across the country as well as the support with NOAA, who we cannot do without. Today, we are welcoming John Moore. He is the policy advisor to NOAA's deputy undersecretary for operations, and that is a mouthful. I know you must have a lot of responsibilities. He was with us in 2010, hailing from Jackson State University, where he earned a BS in meteorology. How are you today, John?

**John Moore:** [00:01:22] I'm doing fine. And thank you for the invite. I am very, very passionate about NCAS, NCAS-M, and NOAA, and the mission and how it all comes together. So I'm excited to be here and share my story with you.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:01:33] Thank you so much. A big part of what we've been doing as a part of this podcast is to try to get voices of all the individuals who are part of this larger puzzle and alum are a big part of it. So let's start first with how did you get attached to the grant? That's the big question.

**John Moore:** [00:01:54] Yeah, so as an undergraduate student, I was looking for ways to get funded through the Meteorology Department in Jackson State and Dr. Quinn Williams at the time, who was the head of the physics department in Jackson State, who I think is at Howard now in a capacity introduced me to the NCAS program. My professors at Jackson State introduced me to the NCAS-M program, as it was called then, and I entered the program as a sophomore at Jackson State. After my sophomore year, I went on a summer, I spent the summer with the NCAS program at Howard, doing an internship at the facility out in Beltsville, Maryland, and that's how I was exposed to it, doing research during the summer. They really exposed me to a career. My first exposure to a career in meteorology outside of academia, so very, very fortunate for that.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:02:41] So tell me a little bit more about what your experience or how it differed from maybe another student within your department because you are attached to the grant.

**John Moore:** [00:02:54] Yes, I got more, well back then, sophomores didn’t get a lot of internships. So I experienced being the only sophomore student to be able to go out and be exposed to not only work as an atmospheric scientist, but work as a meteorologist overall. And I really enjoyed that summer and it laid that groundwork for me early on in my career to let me know what I wanted to do and that I wanted to work for NOAA. Over that summer, I actually worked on a research project, which was a joint research project between Howard, Penn State, and NASA, it was called an NARSTO campaign, which sampled the boundary layer in the DC area. I was able to put together a research paper, a paper that I was able to present as a poster at the AMS conference. I was the only sophomore to have that experience in my program. It really started me early and gave me an early groundwork in building on my career. It let me know that's what I wanted to do with my career.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:03:49] And that's exceptional because you're right. So many students across the country usually graduate with one internship, one they usually do in their senior year. And it's great to hear that you were able to get exposed and have some real-world experience. So let's talk about that on a personal level before we get back to the big question of the episode, which is how you got attached to NOAA when you finished your studies. But what was that like leaving, I guess, Jackson State's campus and hanging out at Howard University for that summer as an undergrad and how long did you stay?

**John Moore:** [00:04:24] Yeah, it was definitely a really big experience for me coming from a small town in rural Mississippi. I had never really lived outside of Mississippi before and being able to come up and live in the city for a summer. I think I started early May, and my internship lasted through late July. I had to get back to Mississippi for football camp, as I played football at Jackson State, so I ended up leaving a week early to get back to football camp. But just being exposed to Howard University and being exposed to things outside of Mississippi very early on as a 19-year-old kid, it was really eye-opening for me. It even prompted me to know that I wanted to live in the DC area one day, which I do now. So that really laid the groundwork, not only for me exposing me to Howard and exposing me to the DC area. I always tell people, if I would have had the experience of I would have known more about Howard as I became an undergrad, I probably would have considered going to Howard as an undergrad student. The NCAS program definitely gave me that experience and just to experience being free to explore the city every weekend when I was not on the research opportunity and meeting the people or the rest of the students who were along with me, some I still know to this day who work for NOAA.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:05:40] That's incredible, and that's a big part of what many people don't know about the grant is that, at this point we have nine partnering institutions across the country, but at some points we had many more, and that allows you to, as an undergrad, fold into a larger group of diverse and dynamic students who are trying to do exactly what you're doing and learn from them. So let's talk about the big question. You graduate from Jackson State University. How did you make your way into NOAA? Because many people don't know, but that's one of our pillars. That's the reason why the grant exists is to make sure that we diversify the NOAA workforce. So tell me how you did it.

**John Moore:** [00:06:22] So it goes, you know, I went to DC to work for Howard that first summer, but the next summer going to my senior year, I was going to do an NCAS internship again. But this time I was going to do it at the Weather Service forecast office to see the operational side of meteorology because last summer NCAS exposed me to the research side, so I wanted some exposure to the operational side. My NCAS mentors set up an opportunity for me to do a summer internship at the National Weather Service Office in Memphis, Tennessee. In discussions with the leadership there at the National Weather Service Office in Memphis, Tennessee, and some NCAS mentors, they actually got that internship converted into a NOAA, it was then called a SCEP (Student Career Experience Program) position, which is student career opportunity position, but it later became Pathways, the Pathways program. They got that position or that internship converted to the SCEP or Pathways program. How does the Pathways program differ from a regular NERTO or a regular NCAS internship? The Pathways program at the time was the only certified way to be hired after you graduate. My NCAS mentors and the National Weather Service got together and converted me from that NCAS internship to an unofficial Pathways position. Thanks to those mentors, I was able to go up to Memphis that summer and showcase my ability in operational forecasting and was able to learn a lot at the National Weather Service office in Memphis. By then that summer, I knew that's what I wanted to do with my life. They thought it was a good fit as well. They told me once I graduated, we would welcome you back at the National Weather Service Office in Memphis, Tennessee. Thanks to NCAS for exposing me to that office. Thanks to my NCAS mentors for helping set up a high-level opportunity to be hired after that internship experience. NCAS is the reason why I'm in NOAA to this day.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:08:20] So that's incredible. So many students across the country graduate not knowing what they're going to do. It's wonderful to hear that you were able to say or know that when you walked across the stage, you were landing at an incredible place. But let's talk about your time between that moment of graduation to now. You've been with NOAA the entire time?

**John Moore:** [00:08:45] I've been with NOAA the entire time, you know, actually my service, the computation date or the date when you officially start, is the summer before my senior year. So it goes back to 2012. So I've been in NOAA for 12 years now and I'm officially employed for 12 years.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:09:02] Incredible, incredible. So if you could, if you could give us one line that explains like, all of your positions. So how many positions have you had? And what did you do in those positions because what you're doing right now sounds incredibly important as a policy advisor. Can you walk us through, you know, the moment that you're graduating and you're coming in and then where you are now?

**John Moore:** [00:09:27] Yeah. It's been an awesome journey. And if I could give you one line to discuss my experiences on the jobs I've had across NOAA, I would have to say diverse. And it's unbelievable. Like as I walked across the stage, I knew I wanted to be a meteorologist and that's all I ever wanted to be with my life and, you know, started out being, started out working as an operational meteorologist at the Weather Service Office in Memphis, Tennessee for three years. I got promoted to become a general forecaster at the Weather Service Office in Jackson, Mississippi. While I worked closely with the NCAS program and Jackson State University to give more students experience so I worked there as a meteorologist for about three or four years and after that, through contacts I made in the NCAS program and through mentors that I was exposed to in the NCAS program, I was able to learn about a position up in DC at National Weather Service headquarters as an emergency response meteorologist. So I applied for that position and was promoted to become the emergency response meteorologist for the National Weather Service headquarters in Washington, DC. Like I said that was all through some of my NCAS mentors at the time that I met when I was an undergrad. So I served in that position for two years. Then an opportunity came, you'll be proud of this one, an opportunity came for me to join the National Weather Service, the Office of Public Affairs, working for NOAA communications.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:10:49] Yes!

**John Moore:** [00:10:50] So I work as a public affairs specialist and the National Weather Service spokesperson for a year, for, you know, pretty much gathering media interviews and setting up media interviews and serving as a spokesperson doing live TV interviews and helping prepare leadership for talking points for leadership and things along that nature that, you know, deal with public affairs. So I worked in that job for about a year as well, then another opportunity came for me. You know, when you really work hard and get exposed to a lot of people, someone else who I was exposed to through the NCAS program, let me know of an opportunity of an opening, my current position, which is, you know, policy advisor for NOAA's Deputy Under Secretary. I didn’t even apply for the position, they came asking if I was interested in it and you can't turn down the senior leader of the agency, so of course I was. That’s why I am today, working as policy advisor to Ben Friedman who is the senior career official in NOAA. So from the National Weather Service to now I'm at NOAA headquarters.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:11:53] You know what listening to that tells me and hopefully tells our listeners, there's something to be said about working hard, being committed and being open to new opportunities. The fact that you were able, yes, to journey through NOAA in different aspects, in different career ways, different positions that allowed you to really learn and grow enough to be, you know, promoted to a place where you are right now. And I think the biggest thing to note, too, is that networking and mentorship is such a critical thing in undergraduate studies that we often talk to students about, but we wonder whether they're listening and they can do it well. I think you are a shining example of how networking even inside of the company in which you work can be incredible. So one last word, I think, for a student who might be listening to this and wondering what NCAS is and what it could do for them and how applying could be beneficial to them. What type of advice would you give?

**John Moore:** [00:13:13] Definitely apply and take advantage of all the opportunities that NCAS has to offer. The biggest part is the connection and connect people, connect with people who are involved with NCAS, with the NCAS mentors, even though they may not be in your specific discipline, or you may not even have ever met them before, but if you're interested in a field and you see someone who was an NCAS alum who is currently in that field, send them a message, send them an email, reach out. All of us, we're very tight in that community, and we stick up for each other and we try to pass it down and bring up the next generation. So everybody's open to talking and discussing their careers. Everybody's open to helping you. We're one family, we still get together in NOAA. A lot of us are involved within NOAA's diversity and the professional advancement working group. It's kind of like the NCAS-M, or the NCAS group within NOAA. We make sure that all the NCAS mentors are involved and all the NCAS alum are involved in that working group and that ERG. And we all stick together and we all, like I said, try to bring up, you know, the next generation of scientists within NOAA. So definitely take advantage of every opportunity that NCAS-M provides you.

**Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree:** [00:14:26] Well, with that, I want to thank you, John, so much for joining us. It's been a pleasure to hear your journey, to see your growth at NOAA and to know that you are still there, you know, planted strongly with probably so much more to do in your future there. Again, thank you all my listeners for joining us today on another episode of Student Scientists and Stakeholders. To learn more about NCAS-M and the grant, visit our website at [www.ncas-m.org](http://www.ncas-m.org). Also, if you are a student and you want to be a part of the grant, be sure to check out the apply page on our website. You can also stay connected and keep up with our latest updates by following us on our socials, on Twitter, and Instagram at NCASNews. Until next time, thank you so much for joining us.