

### **Forecast consulting as an educational tool**

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All undergraduate meteorology students are required to take courses in weather forecasting (such as Synoptic Meteorology). These courses provide the students with the knowledge required to be able to forecast accurately after graduating, either for the government or for private industry. While these courses may provide the knowledge, they may not provide the experience necessary to provide reliable, and more importantly, useful forecasts for the end user. In order to help them gain this valuable experience, several Rutgers University students have the opportunity to provide daily weather forecasts to one of the local power utilities in the state of New Jersey, which includes the densely populated northeastern sector. Through student designed and maintained web-based forms and databases, forecasts are displayed on a secure website for the utility to access 24 hours a day. This program provides valuable forecasts to the emergency management officials at the energy company, who use the forecasts to aide in deciding if and how many crews to keep available for weather-related power outages. Additionally, this program provides undergraduate students invaluable experience in forecasting for a real-world user, and allows them to experience the demands and requirements of private consulting work.