

MS Thesis
Department of Environmental Science and Policy
College of Science
George Mason University

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Title: “It Comes Down To Communication”: Science Communication Skills are Key for Scientists Supporting Evidence-Based Policymaking Through the COVES Fellowship

Thesis Director: Dr. K. L. Akerlof

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ABSTRACT

Virginia’s Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine’s (VASEM) Commonwealth of Virginia Engineering and Science (COVES) Fellowship program places scientists and engineers with state agencies, General Assembly member offices and committees, and non-profit organizations. As other states look to begin their own similar fellowship programs, assessments of models like COVES may be instructive. Through a narrowly focused, three-phase interview study, this paper establishes the program’s background, objectives, capabilities, challenges, and successes. Focused exclusively on Fellows placed in member offices and committees in Virginia’s General Assembly, it explores how Fellows felt in communicating evidence and what they understood their role to be.