



# Technical Translator

WHETHER MAKING AIR TRAVELERS COMFORTABLE OR CONVEYING COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS, **KATERI GARCIA** STILL RELIES ON THE SKILLS SHE LEARNED AT NORTHWESTERN.

As an undergraduate in industrial engineering and management sciences, Kateri Garcia ('00) learned about efficiency, analysis, and best business practices.

She also studied Spanish, and in those courses, she was exposed to students who saw things from a different perspective. Both tracks helped launch her academic and professional careers.

"Those experiences helped me communicate scientific information and convey value to any audience," Garcia says.

Garcia's first job after Northwestern Engineering was as a corporate planning analyst at JetBlue Airways, then a startup airline. Garcia was responsible for designing and managing data collection projects and presenting results of data analysis to company executives. There, she also pursued her dream of working as an inflight crewmember, which helped her develop strong customer service skills.

"It was an invaluable experience that put me in a lot of challenging situations," she says. "When you're in the air there are not a lot of options to make people comfortable and happy. Instead, you have to find unique solutions with the space and tools at hand."

Following JetBlue, Garcia received a Boren Fellowship to study in Uruguay and earned her master's degree at the University of New Mexico in Latin American studies. She then landed at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, which operates under the US Department of Defense to deliver geospatial intelligence to policy makers, intelligence professionals, and first responders.

Garcia leads a team of image scientists who support the advancement of three-dimensional remote sensing capabilities like Lidar—Light Detection and Ranging—in order to describe, assess, and visually depict physical features and human activity on Earth. Making new technology accessible is complicated. It must be done through constant collaboration and communication, and with a deep understanding of organizational dynamics and their effect on decision-making.

To do so, she uses skills she picked up at Northwestern and honed during her career. "It's been critical in my career to take highly technical and scientific developments and translate that into language people understand so they can make well-informed decisions," she says.

BRIAN SANDALOW

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