Environmental Sciences and Studies

Applying problem solving skills to contemporary environmental issues

The Program
The environmental sciences and studies program is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the state of the environment and serious environmental problems that the world faces. Through a series of academic courses and co-curricular activities, students will learn how human activity impacts the environment and will obtain the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary to productively contribute to solutions.

Housed in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, this program is supported by the Dalton Endowment for Environmental Sciences and Studies. These funds provide unique opportunities including campus programming and support for research projects. In addition, endowment funds are regularly available for students and faculty to attend national and international environmental conferences.

The Majors
Environmental sciences majors tend to approach environmental issues from a technical perspective. The B.S. in environmental sciences requires students to broadly understand a variety of scientific disciplines including biology, chemistry, geology, and physics. In addition, students take a selection of environmental social science and humanities courses.

Environmental studies majors tend to focus more on people in the environment. The B.A. in environmental studies requires students to take a broad selection of social sciences and humanities courses, complementing these with some basic science courses and a minor.

Both majors begin with ENVS 101 (Introduction to Environmental Issues) and students finish their programs with ENVS 520 (Senior Seminar in the Environment).

Careers
Both the majors prepare students broadly for careers and post-graduate studies related to the environment. Graduates might consider careers with environmental groups, consulting firms, governmental agencies, or industry. Students are encouraged to participate in experiential learning such as service learning projects, sustained volunteer activities, undergraduate research projects, or environmental internships, as these will strengthen their resumes.

Internships and Undergraduate Research
Internships often serve as stepping stones to employment and entry into professional careers. Although internships are not required for graduation, they are encouraged. Students can earn up to three hours of credit toward their environmental degrees. Internships are available at a variety of institutions and corporations in the area.

Many students augment their academic program and receive valuable experience and/or academic credit by participating in undergraduate research. Research is carried out and initiated in many ways. Some students are encouraged to expand on a class paper or project, while other students participate in ongoing research initiated by faculty. Many of these students present their work at professional conferences.

Faculty
This interdisciplinary program draws on the strengths of dynamic faculty from all across campus. Students may take courses within the departments of biology, chemistry, economics, philosophy, and political science, just to name a few. The program is led by the Dalton Endowed Chair in Environmental Sciences and Studies and each environmental program student is assigned a knowledgeable advisor who is very familiar with the environmental program.

The Minor
The minor in environmental studies provides students with a broad background on how environmental issues are approached and deals primarily with the impact of humans on their environment.