About the Program

Students in the Slippery Rock University geology, geography and the environment department have six degree paths to study the earth and people’s relations to it. An interest in the physical nature of the earth system would lead to a bachelor of science or bachelor of arts degree in environmental geosciences. In the BS program, students can focus on geology or environmental science. The geology program is designed to prepare students for entry into the workforce or into graduate programs. The environmental science program involves an interdisciplinary approach and integrates knowledge from the geosciences, biology and chemistry in the study of the earth. The BA program allows more flexibility in choosing electives to complement the student’s interests and career goals.

An interest in spatial aspects of environmental, economic, cultural and political processes would lead to a degree in geography/environmental studies. The BS program in environmental studies and sustainability takes an interdisciplinary approach and integrates knowledge from the social and natural sciences in the study of environmental issues. In addition to studying the physical and biogeographic processes that shape the earth, this program has a focus on conservation, analysis and policy, as well as a variety of research methods. The BS environment and society concentration has a classic liberal arts approach, while the BS in applied geographic technology focuses on the fast-growing field of geographic information technology.

All of SRU’s programs emphasize the collection, analysis and representation of earth data at scales ranging from the local to the global. Opportunities abound for students to engage in fieldwork, internships and in the production of research with faculty members. Recent field trips, course travels and research expeditions have visited local and distant sites such as Costa Rica, Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Ontario, Newfoundland, New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, South Dakota, Maryland, New York City, Washington, D.C., Nicaragua, China and Death Valley. This list doesn’t include the numerous cities across the U.S. where our students have attended professional conferences. Those who enjoy learning about the earth and its peoples and landscapes, either in their backyard or far away, will find SRU’s programs offer a wealth of opportunities.

Majors / Concentrations
- Environmental Geoscience (BA)
- Pre-Masters of Education (7-12)
- Environmental Geoscience (BS)
- Geology
- Environmental Science
- Geography (BS)
- Applied Geographic Technology
- Environment & Society
- Environmental Studies and Sustainability

Minors
- Environmental Science
- Geographic Information Technology
- Geography
- Geology
- Geophysics
- Meteorology

Certificates
- Geographic Information Science
- Sustainability
A Student-Oriented Department

The department’s primary objective is high-quality education. A recent external review had this to say: “The faculty is well qualified and dedicated, providing excellent on-campus and field instruction. The students are articulate, enthused and vocal in their support for the quality of their educational experience.” We have two general-purpose geology laboratories, an upper-division geology lab, a rock preparation lab, a cartography/geographic information systems lab and an advanced cartography/GIS lab. We also have extensive teaching and research collections of rocks and minerals, state-of-the-art teaching and research microscopes, several dozen global positioning system units and a large map collection. Our department excels at providing professional and career opportunities that enable students to utilize the knowledge, skills and values developed in our programs. Professional development is fostered through internships, numerous field experiences, undergraduate research activities, capstone activities and attendance at local, regional and national conferences. In recent years, SRU students have had internships with dozens of private and public organizations. The external review of our department noted the criterion of providing opportunities for students to interact with professionals in the field was “met with strength.”

Student Organizations

Gamma Theta Upsilon - Honorary society for geography and environmental Studies students
Sigma Gamma Epsilon - National geology honorary for geology and environmental science students
Geography, Geology and the Environment Club - Open to all students in the department

Career Opportunities

Students in the geography, geology and the environment department are provided a base in liberal arts skills (critical thinking, writing and speaking) and in analytical skills such as data collection in the field, in the library and on the computer; the use of global positioning systems; the use of mapping, spreadsheet and database software; and knowledge of laboratory procedures. Our alumni webpage shows the variety of careers our graduates have pursued in the private and public sector as well as graduate schools. Students with degrees from our department are highly sought after, particularly in the fields surrounding natural gas exploration and development, including resource extraction, environmental monitoring and conservation planning. Many of our students have found work that allows them to address important environmental and social issues. Representative employment areas for our graduates include environmental consulting, pollution remediation, environmental law or public policy, outdoor education, resource management, geographic information systems analysis, nonprofit environmental organizations and sustainable planning.