

New Environmental Science Degree  
at Mount St. Mary's University

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Mount St. Mary's University is offering its students a new and innovative Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science. The program, which is wrapping up its first year, is designed for students with an interest in a career protecting and restoring our environment. Associate Professor of Environmental Science, Dr. Jeffrey Simmons said, "I'm very excited about this program. It's going to be a very popular major because there are so many rewarding careers in the environmental field." According to Dr. Patricia Kreke, Associate Professor of Chemistry and Chair of the Science Department, "The Environmental Science major offers our students a unique way to explore the responsibilities scientists have to society. It strengthens both the interdisciplinary nature of our department and the university's mission."

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, demand for environmental scientists is expected to grow faster than average for all occupations through 2012. This projected increase is due to heightened awareness regarding the need for monitoring and mitigating the impact of human actions on ecosystems as the human population increases and expands to occupy more environmentally sensitive habitats.

Dr. Rosie Bolen, one of the members of the Science Department involved in designing the program, is pleased with the curriculum because it "draws upon our strengths in biology and chemistry, and provides students with interdisciplinary and experiential components that reflect the nature of environmental science. Students completing the major will be well-prepared to pursue an environmental career or graduate education in the field," said Dr. Bolen. The major provides a solid foundation in the natural sciences with twelve courses in biology, chemistry, mathematics and applied environmental science. In addition, students choose two environmentally-focused courses in the humanities and social sciences (e.g., philosophy, history, psychology, etc.). The required experiential component provides students with hands-on experience in the field of environmental science through a research project or internship.

"We are fortunate to be surrounded by a wonderful natural laboratory—the Catoctin Mountains. Our low faculty-to-student ratio allows students to work closely with a faculty member on his or her research," said Dr. Bolen. Possible internship sites include non-profit organizations such as Strawberry Hill Nature Center, ThorpeWood Environmental Center, the Monocacy & Catoctin Watershed Alliance, or government agencies. According to Dr. Simmons, "These internships will help students solidify their career plans and provide them with a network of professional contacts. It also gives students a chance to apply what they have learned in the classroom."

The Environmental Science major is not the only opportunity for "green" students on campus. There is an interdisciplinary minor in Environmental Studies in which students can choose from a wide range of courses taught by eleven University faculty in eight different departments. The student Environmental Club has sponsored a variety of events, speakers and fundraisers that have increased awareness of environmental issues on campus and promoted recycling. There is also a

vibrant Outdoor Adventure office that offers low-cost or no-cost trips every weekend like hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, caving, skiing, and rafting.

For more information about the new Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, please visit [www.msmary.edu/envsci](http://www.msmary.edu/envsci) or contact Dr. Jeffrey Simmons (301-447-5820 x4863; [simmons@msmary.edu](mailto:simmons@msmary.edu)).