GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Mission Statement

The Department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability is a student-centered department having a three-fold integrated mission encompassing teaching, scholarship, and service. The Department offers programs presenting an integrative perspective on the relations among social, political, economic, and environmental phenomena occurring across space. The Department is committed to teaching the concepts and research methods that prepare majors for professional careers and/or advanced study. Non-majors who take classes in the Department are provided with the knowledge needed to understand the nature of the human and environmental patterns found in the world around them. Graduate student education is focused on preparing students for advanced professional careers and/or further graduate study. The Department is committed to excellence in both theoretical and applied research. Undergraduate and graduate student involvement in research is encouraged to develop student understanding, reasoning, and technical skills. Through scholarship, teaching, and service, the Department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability is dedicated to improving our communities and the planet.

About

The Department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability offers curricula with three principal objectives: to promote the understanding of the locational dimensions of human behavior in their environmental context; to offer courses of study through which concepts and methods are applied to understanding economic, environmental, and social problems at the local, regional, and global scales; and to promote sustainability through the interconnected lenses of social equity, the environment, economy, and aesthetics. Thus, the Department contributes an important dimension to the university student’s liberal education and provides practical training in important contemporary areas of concern as well as the background appropriate for certain vocations.

Graduates of geography programs have found careers in business and industry, in urban and regional planning agencies, in departments of federal and state governments, and in teaching. Job titles include city or regional planner, cartographer, demographer, resource analyst, land or economic developer, location analyst, and teacher. Many graduates find that an undergraduate degree in geography is an excellent foundation for advanced graduate work or professional training in planning, business, or law.

Graduates of environmental and sustainability programs go on to careers in non-profits, government, and the private sector as well as to graduate studies in a variety of disciplines. Career paths are numerous and include advocacy, agriculture, business, design, education, enforcement, journalism, law, nature and land protection, organizing for social and environmental justice, tourism and recreation, etc. Our students come from diverse backgrounds, participate regularly in internships and study abroad, and benefit from personalized advising.

Special facilities of the department include fully equipped laboratories in computer cartography, geographic information systems, remote sensing, and physical geography, plus a 130 acre field camp for instruction and research.

Graduate Programs

The Department of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability offers a M.A. in Applied Geography, a M.S. in Environment and Sustainability, a Ph.D. in Geography, a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Global and Regional Studies Geography, and a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Sustainability. The department also offers a a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Urban and Economic Development jointly with the Department of Political Science; for more information, see the program page at https://catalog.uncg.edu/arts-sciences/political-science/urban-economic-development-pbc/. The programs focus on the application of theory and methods in geography toward the understanding of problems related to economic development, environmental quality, population change, and social well-being in urban, rural, regional, and international contexts.

Environment & Sustainability Program

Aaron S. Allen, Director and Honors Program Liaison

The Environment & Sustainability Program is an interdisciplinary program that fosters understanding of the relationships between human societies and the natural, physical, and biological settings in which life on Earth exists. Our three majors and two minors integrate perspectives of the natural sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities.

The Program degrees build on the unique definition of sustainability at UNC Greensboro (http://sustainability.uncg.edu), where “Academics, operations, and outreach are conducted with careful attention to the enduring interconnectedness of social equity, the environment, the economy, and aesthetics.” Our degrees require electives in each of those four areas: society and equity, natural science of the environment, economics and development, and ethics and aesthetics.

Students work with diverse faculty and staff from across campus and community (1) to learn how to gather and integrate information about environmental and sustainability problems from multiple disciplines, (2) to think critically about the causes of environmental and sustainability problems, (3) to propose effective solutions and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and (4) to communicate their ideas clearly. Our students come from a variety of backgrounds and are eligible for internships and study abroad, and all receive expert advising from the Program Director. Graduates will be well prepared for roles as educated citizens who are especially well informed about the environment and for numerous career paths that require a broad range of knowledge about environmental and sustainability issues.

Requirements

At least 24 credits of related area electives must be at the 300 level or above, and many courses count toward General Education Core requirements. The required courses in all program concentrations will fulfill the GNS/GLS, GNS/GPS, and SI and WI in major (12-13 credits). In addition, depending on student choices, it is possible to fulfill GMT, GSB,
Students must fulfill the following General Education courses outside the Environment & Sustainability Program requirements: GLT (3 credits), GHP/GPM (3 credits), GRD (6 credits), and GFL (0-12 credits).

Students choose either the Environmental Studies concentration or the Sustainability Studies concentration, both of which emphasize the integration of the natural sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities. The core requirements for the concentrations are similar; they differ in the Biology core requirement (BIO 112 is required for Environmental Studies, while Sustainability Studies requires either BIO 112 or BIO 105) and in the distribution of related area electives. The Environmental Studies concentration has a greater emphasis on natural science, while the Sustainability Studies concentration has a greater emphasis on social sciences and the humanities.

The distribution of electives in the two concentrations compares as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electives</th>
<th>Environmental Studies</th>
<th>Sustainability Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity &amp; Society</td>
<td>9 credits</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics &amp; Development</td>
<td>9 credits</td>
<td>9 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics &amp; Ethics</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Electives</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students with a GPA greater than 3.30 in the junior year may choose the self-designed Environmental & Sustainability Studies concentration; this concentration is developed in consultation with the Director and allows the student to propose 39 credits of appropriate electives (with at least one course in each of the four related area electives). Students are required to maintain a 3.30 GPA.

Students in all concentrations should plan carefully with the Director because courses are continually added and removed from the list of area electives and because substitutes may be available. Some courses have prerequisites that do not count for credit in the Environment & Sustainability Program. No single course may count in more than one of the four related areas, none of the required core courses may count as related area or free electives, and no more than 12 credits from any one course prefix may count toward the concentration. Students can neither major in multiple concentrations in the Environment & Sustainability Program nor major in one of these Program concentrations and also be either a Sustainability Studies minor or an Environmental Studies minor. Students are welcome and encouraged to choose a second major and/or minor in other fields of study.

Professor

Rick L. Bunch
Keith G. Debbage
Corey Michael Johnson
Paul A. Knapp
Jeffrey C. Patton
Selima Sultana

Associate Professor

Zhi-Jun Liu
Phillip Daniel Royall
Roy S. Stine

Assistant Professor

Wenliang Li
Sarah J Praskievicz
John G. Stehlin

Senior Lecturer

Mary Bee Hall-Brown
G. Jay Lennartson

Senior Academic Professional

James A. Nelson

Graduate-level faculty

- Sustainability Undergraduate Minor (https://catalog.uncg.edu/arts-sciences/geography-environment-sustainability/sustainability-undergraduate-minor)
- Geography Second Academic Concentration (https://catalog.uncg.edu/arts-sciences/geography-environment-sustainability/geography-second-academic-concentration)
- Geography, Ph.D. (https://catalog.uncg.edu/arts-sciences/geography-environment-sustainability/geography-phd)