DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

UNDERGRADUATE HANDBOOK
California State University, Sacramento

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Welcome

Welcome to the Department of Environmental Studies at Sac State. We are very pleased that you will be joining us to complete your bachelor’s degree or a minor in Environmental Studies. This handbook will be helpful to you as you pursue your degree. Please use it, along with our website, www.csus.edu/envs, for information and guidance about our department and program.

Our Mission

The mission of the Department of Environmental Studies at California State University, Sacramento, is to prepare students to understand and address environmental problems in their political, economic, social, ethical, and scientific contexts. We use an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and research, and we encourage the development of strong writing, research, and quantitative skills that give students the ability to identify the causes and consequences of human influence on the environment and to work toward sustainable solutions to complex environmental problems.

Our Program

The Environmental Studies program provides an interdisciplinary understanding of such increasingly serious issues as environmental pollution, wildlife and habitat preservation and conservation, sustainable use of land, air, and water, threats to biodiversity, resource depletion, energy conservation, and global climate change as they are influenced by the interactions of humans and the natural environment.

The program offers Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees (majors) as well as a minor in environmental studies. The major is designed to provide students with an understanding of environmental issues in their political, social, economic, ethical, and scientific contexts. The strength of the curriculum is in its breadth and integrative nature, which ensures that students understand and address environmental problems from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Environmental Studies students find employment in research, analysis, and enforcement activities in local, state, and federal governments as well as in the private for-profit and non-profit sectors. Some of our graduates have created their own careers in areas such as organic farming, managing cooperatives, and social action. Environmental Studies students also go on to professional and graduate schools in law, ecology, engineering, journalism, economics, public health, political science, public administration, special education, and environmental policy.

The Program offers a variety of classes that balance scientific knowledge with understanding of the social and policy aspects of current environmental issues. The strength of the curriculum is in its breadth and integrative nature. The Program ensures that students must utilize concepts from the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities to succeed in their upper division courses. This interdisciplinary approach, coming from a broad liberal arts perspective, emphasizes the development of strong writing, research, and quantitative skills.

Our History

The Environmental Studies Program at California State University, Sacramento, arose at a time when concern was peaking with the deterioration of the natural environment. Rachel Carson had released her book Silent Spring, which highlighted the hazards of the pesticide DDT and questioned humanity's faith in technological progress. Carson's book influenced social change and served as the foundation for the contemporary environmental movement. Americans began
to recognize problems with air pollution, water pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, and resource limitations. Concurrently, many academicians found that their programs were too specialized to study and understand complex environmental problems. As a result, faculty and students began to explore approaches to curricula that could address the interdisciplinary nature of environmental problems.

A group of faculty members at California State University, Sacramento, took on the task of creating a curriculum to study environmental problems. Professors in Bioscience, Engineering, Physics, Sociology, and other programs created an interdisciplinary major by drawing on existing courses throughout the university. The Director of the new Environmental Studies Program was Dr. Wes Jackson, a young geneticist who had published the first text widely used in courses on environmental problems. In 1971-72, Dr. Jackson was joined by Professor Charles Washburn, a mechanical engineer, Dr. Angus Wright, a Latin American Historian, and Dr. Valerie Anderson, a biologist and human ecologist, to round out the program. A formal Environmental Studies Department, located in the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, was created in 1990 and today houses 10 full- and part-time faculty and over 180 undergraduate majors.

Be sure to visit the ENVS web site to learn more about our program, our students, and our exciting initiatives.

The Department Office

The Environmental Studies Department Office is located in Amador Hall, room 554A. During the academic year, office hours are generally Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., and 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. During the summer break, the office is open 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., and 12:30 – 4:00 p.m. You may contact the Department Office at (916) 278-6620, or by email, envs-sc@csus.edu.

Academic Advising

All students must meet with an ENVS advisor once per year, and it is recommended that students meet with an advisor prior to registration each semester. Identification of, and meetings with, an ENVS advisor are coordinated through the ENVS department office. The Department offers weekly, group advising sessions - call the Department office to sign up or sign up on the sheets outside of the Department office. Individual advising is available to solve complex problems by calling the Department office for an appointment; however, you must attend a group advising session before calling the office for an individual advising appointment.

Internships

To facilitate the transition from academic study to a professional career, our department partners with environmental agencies to provide student internship opportunities. The internship is an opportunity to transfer and apply the knowledge and theory gained in the classroom to an actual employment setting. In this setting, students can practice skills, apply knowledge, and test theories and concepts under the guidance and supervision of experienced professionals.

Internships can be paid or volunteer positions. Once a student obtains an internship with an agency or organization, the student is required to fill out internship paperwork and meet with a faculty advisor. The internship packet is available on the ENVS web site. You should read it carefully. Examples of agencies with which students have recently worked include the California Water Board, the California Air Resources Board, the California Energy Commission, U.S. agencies including the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, Forest Service, Park
Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, the California EPA, and many private for profit and non-profit organizations.

**Senior Thesis**

Each ENVS major is required to complete a senior thesis. Typically, Environmental Studies majors register for and complete the Senior Thesis course during their senior year. All majors must complete the Thesis course with a grade of “C-” or better. Students submit their final thesis electronically and each senior thesis will be posted on the ENVS web site.

**Student Portfolio**

Students are required to maintain a portfolio containing samples of their work. The portfolio should contain the following: the Senior Thesis, a reflective statement, three or four student work samples, and a departmental assessment. The portfolio will be reviewed during the Senior Thesis course.

The reflective statement should be focused on how an employer or graduate school might understand the student as an individual and the dynamics of the student’s activities and accomplishments. The departmental assessment is an internal document for assisting the department in developing and adapting its programs for student needs.

The purpose of developing a portfolio is to provide a framework for organizing and displaying achievements, competencies, and personal growth as a professional. It also provides the department with a mechanism to determine the extent to which students have demonstrated their skills and abilities in completing requirements for the major.

**Email and Technology Services**

Email is one of the most important means of communication among students, faculty, and administrative offices at California State University, Sacramento. Students are strongly encouraged to check their University email accounts regularly. Most faculty utilize SacCT for posting course readings and assignments. A list of computer labs on campus can be found at: [www.csus.edu/irt/acr/clsl/](http://www.csus.edu/irt/acr/clsl/). Students may also check out laptops from the Library Media Services Center, [www.library.csus.edu/services/lmc/](http://www.library.csus.edu/services/lmc/).

**Department ListServ**

A ListServ is a network of individuals connected by an email list. We use the Environmental Studies ListServ to notify students of events, meetings, jobs, internships, and other information. Your Sac State email address will be added to the ListServ and you will begin to receive emails from the department. You can respond to the emails just as you would any other email, but you have the choice of sending your message to the original mailer, the entire member list, or just one individual ListServ member. The ListServ is a useful tool for communicating within the ENVS neighborhood at CSUS.

**Scholarships**

The ENVS Department has several scholarship opportunities. Please visit our web site to review and apply for ENVS scholarships.
Environmental Students Organization

The Environmental Student Organization (ESO) is a group of Sac State students who are committed to educating the campus and surrounding community on important environmental issues and to actively improving our environment.

The mission of ESO is "to educate the CSUS campus on current environmental issues and to spread environmental awareness within the community. We are a non-partisan group and welcome all who are interested or concerned about our ecological community. We are about establishing connections, applying new or different concepts, trying new ideas, building bonds, having fun, and getting things done. All students are welcome regardless of major!"

Career Center

The Career Center can help students plan a job search, identify employment opportunities, and prepare paperwork in applying for positions. Students should be sure to use this resource. Some specific services include:

- workshops providing valuable information on resume writing, job search strategies, interviewing techniques, and career fairs, all geared toward Environmental Studies positions
- individual career counseling (help with a job search, resume critique, discussion of specific job search questions or career concerns)
- a resume lab with computers to use for writing resumes and cover letters
- vacancy announcements on individual job openings
- information and resources on employment overseas
- resources on state and government jobs.

The Career Center assists students with interviewing skills, alumni services, and career alternatives. For more information, call the Career Center at (916) 278-6231 to set up an appointment with a counselor. Also, be sure to visit their website at: www.csus.edu/careercenter.

Professional Development

We encourage students to join a professional association that is affiliated with our field. Included among these organizations are the American Chemical Society, the Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP), American Society for Health Sciences, Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, American Forestry Society, American Wildlife Society, Society for Ecological Restoration, and the Ecological Society of America. Don't hesitate to talk with department faculty about identifying and joining a professional association.
Academic Integrity

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the CSUS Policy of Academic Honesty. Failure to abide by the policy – i.e. cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty – may result in a failing grade on an assignment or in a course, at the discretion of the professor. Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may also be reported to the office of student affairs. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades. Read more about Sac State’s Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures at http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. At Sac State, plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person’s contribution. As such, plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students caught plagiarizing the work of others will be reported to the Vice President for Student Affairs and will receive an F in the class. Faculty in Environmental Studies use Turnitin to screen for plagiarism. More information is available at http://www.csus.edu/umanual/AcademicHonestyPolicyandProcedures.htm

Also Visit: http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353 for specific guidance.

Students are responsible for:

Understanding the rules that preserve academic honesty and abiding by them at all times. This includes learning and following the particular rules associated with specific classes, exams, and course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to a charge of academic dishonesty.

Understanding what cheating and plagiarism are and taking steps to avoid them. Students are expected to do this whether working individually or as part of a group.

Not taking credit for academic work that is not their own.

Not knowingly encouraging or making possible cheating or plagiarism by others.

Cheating. At Sacramento State, cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Cheating at Sacramento State includes but is not limited to:

Copying, in part or in whole, from another's test or other evaluation instrument.

Using crib notes, "cheat sheets," or any other device, including electronic devices not permitted by the instructor as an aid in writing an examination.

Submitting work previously graded in another course unless doing so has been approved by the course instructor or by department policy.

Submitting work simultaneously presented in more than one course, unless doing so has been approved by the respective course instructors or by the department policies of the respective departments.

Altering or interfering with grading or grading instructions.
Sitting for an examination by a surrogate, or as a surrogate.

Additional Student Resources

If you have, or suspect that you may have, any type of disability that may affect your performance in school, please contact Disabled Student Services (DSS) at (916) 278-6955.

DSS provides a wide variety of services to students with disabilities. The Environmental Studies department is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. See your instructor as early as possible for mutual resolution of any disability-related issues, particularly with regard to field trip participation.

For additional help with written assignments visit the Writing Center in Calaveras Hall, (916) 278-6356, www.csus.edu/writingcenter.

University Library

The University Library supports the department’s instructional and research programs through resources and services made available to students and faculty both in-house and over the Internet. The Library houses hundreds of public computers connected to the Internet for access to online resources to conduct research. Information regarding library holdings is available online at www.library.csus.edu/. The Electronic Course Reserve provides the full text of selected reserve materials online both from inside the Library or remotely from any computer with Internet access. Other Library resources include the Find Articles search, the University Archives, the Virtual Reference Desk and the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) for faculty and staff.

The University’s in-house collections are complemented by retrieval and delivery services made possible through resource sharing networks, traditional inter-library loan, and document delivery. Many University Library resources, including Electronic Course Reserves, online databases, and electronic journals are accessible via the web at http://www.library.csus.edu
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
INDIVIDUAL MEDIA RELEASE FORM

Please turn this form into the Department Office, Amador Hall 554A.

I, the undersigned, give and grant permission to California State University, Sacramento to use in such a manner as it may deem advisable the photographs, audio, visual and/or video transmissions of films, recordings, print, etc., in which I have participated. I hereby release California State University, Sacramento, from any and all claims by me, my heirs and assigns, with respect to any such use.

Print Name ______________________________ Signature ______________________________

Sac State ID ______________________________ Date _________________
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
RELEASE OF LIABILITY, WAIVER OF RIGHT TO SU, ASSUMPTION OF RISK
AND AGREEMENT TO PAY CLAIMS

Activity: ________________________________________________________________

Activity Date(s) and Time(s): ______________________________________________

Activity Location/Facility: __________________________________________________

Hazards to be aware of: ____________________________________________________

Hazard mitigation (how to prepare for a safe activity): __________________________

In consideration for being allowed to participate in this Activity, on behalf of myself
and my next of kin, heirs and representatives, I release from all liability and promise not to
sue the State of California, the Trustees of the California State University, California State
University, Sacramento and their employees, officers, directors, volunteers and agents
(collectively “University”) from any and all claims, including claims of the University’s
negligence, resulting in any physical or psychological injury (including paralysis or death),
illness, damages, or economic or emotional loss that I may suffer because of my participation
in this Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity.

I am voluntarily participating in this Activity. I am aware of the risks associated with
traveling to/from and participating in this Activity, which include but are not limited to physical or
psychological injury, pain, suffering, illness, disfigurement, temporary or permanent disability
(including paralysis), economic or emotional loss, and/or death. I understand that these injuries
or outcomes may arise from my own or other’s actions, inaction, or negligence; conditions
related to travel; or the condition of the Activity locations(s). Nonetheless, I assume all
related risks, both known or unknown to me, of my participation in this Activity,
including travel to and from the Activity.

I agree to hold the University harmless from any and all claims, including attorney’s
fees or damage to my personal property that may occur as a result of my participation in this
Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity. If the University incurs any of these
types of expenses, I agree to reimburse the University. If I need medical treatment, I will be
financially responsible for any costs incurred as a result of such treatment. I am aware and
understand that I should carry my own health insurance.

I am 18 years or older. I understand the legal consequences of signing this
document, including (a) releasing the University from all liability, (b) promising not to sue
the University, and (c) assuming all risks of participating in this Activity, including travel
to, from and during the Activity.

I understand that this document is written to be as broad and inclusive as legally
permitted by the State of California. I agree that if any portion is held invalid or unenforceable,
I will continue to be bound by the remaining terms.

I have read this document, and I am signing it freely. No other
representations concerning the legal effect of this document have been made to me.

Participant Name:__________________________________________ Date: ____________

Signature: _________________________________________________________