

Environmental Studies Mission Statement

The program examines the cultural, economic, historical, political and social factors that influence local, national, international and global environmental issues and policies. Investigating a wide range of perspectives, it includes a broad exposure to many factors confronting humans as they struggle with complex environmental problems and possible solutions. Interdisciplinary and critical in nature, the program seeks to provide a diversity of disciplinary approaches to analyzing and reasoning about the natural environment, including courses in 4 colleges and 10 different departments. Most of its courses are in social science disciplines, but there are also offerings in humanities, education, science, mathematics and engineering. The program has been designed so students will develop a broad understanding of environmental concerns, along with a basic familiarity with environmental science, statistics, and research methods.

Learning Outcomes for Lehigh's Environmental Studies Program

Our overarching goal is that our graduates will learn to view environmental problems from a multi-disciplinary perspective and develop critical thinking skills to craft and evaluate solutions.

1. Students will apply a variety of analytical methods to environmental issues.

- a. Students will develop habits of mind to think in terms of the multitude of interconnections between environmental and social issues.
- b. Students will view environmental issues from multiple empirical, ideological, and cultural perspectives.
- c. Students will understand the role of uncertainty and risk involved in making environmental policy decisions.
- d. Students will critically evaluate empirical research studies and recognize its potential and limitations for defining and addressing environmental problems.
- e. Students will synthesize knowledge gained from different courses in order to develop solutions to specific environmental problems.

2. Students will effectively communicate about environmental issues, problems, and potential solutions.

- a. Students will possess a comprehensive knowledge of contemporary environmental issues and social responses to those issues.
- b. Students will construct well-reasoned and logical arguments about environmental issues and potential solutions.
- c. Students will effectively present and communicate coherently about environmental issues and potential solutions using a variety of media.

3. Students will understand the ethics and values associated with environmental issues and environmental justice.

- a. Students will recognize and reconcile a full spectrum of competing and sometimes conflicting values that underlie environmental problems and solutions.
- b. Students will understand the ethics, values, and standards that govern professional behavior.
- c. Students will identify distributional inequities resulting from environmental policies as well as the economic costs and benefits related to addressing environmental problems.