Geography

The Department of Geography originated as Florida's first university geography program. It is also the administrative home for the environmental science program. Both geography and environmental science are fields of critical demand in these times of environmental degradation and uncertainty.

As geographers, we approach the analysis of environments by emphasizing space, place, and the effects of landscape processes at local, regional and global levels. Tools of the trade include maps, spatial analysis and critical review.

Geography is among the classic academic disciplines and includes the study of earth systems, human culture and interactions among them. It is a major that prepares students for a wide range of careers dealing with local and global issues.

A Distinctive Program

Both geography and environmental science curricula take full advantage of Stetson University’s unique location in Central Florida. The immediate area is noted for its natural beauty, mix of biodiverse landscapes, unique freshwater systems and innovative environmental policy. We are lucky that geography and environmental science majors benefit from a mix of ecosystems and environmental management institutions, useful for local and regional research. Most of our majors conduct their research for their senior project locally.

Academics and Research

Independent research
Students are encouraged to conduct summer research at Stetson or at other institutions that participate in National Science Foundation summer undergraduate research programs.

Facilities and opportunities
Facilities include three state-of-the-art teaching laboratories and the Rinker Environmental Learning Center (a L.E.E.D. Gold-Certified Building). The Hansen computer lab features 18 computers loaded with Geographic Information Systems software that is the industry standard. The geography department is housed administratively in the Gillespie Museum of Minerals. Classes meet most frequently in Sage Hall and the Rinker Environmental Learning Center -- two of the newest buildings on campus.

Preparation for graduate study
Students are fully prepared to continue their study at graduate programs across the country or abroad, if they desire. Recent graduates have been accepted, often with financial support, at the University of Arizona, University of Florida, Florida International University, Clark University, Stetson College of Law, Johns Hopkins University and others.

Fast Facts

Number of faculty: 2
Can you major in this program? Yes
Can you minor in this program? Yes
Emphasis within the major: biogeography, political ecology, Latin America, environmental geography
Popular second majors: environmental science, biology, pre-law (environmental)
Program website: stetson.edu/environmental-science-and-studies

This department prepares students for a wide range of careers.
Awards and Recognition

Distinguished faculty
Faculty members include a recent recipient of the Hand Award for Excellence in Research and a recipient of the National Council for Geographic Education Excellence in Teaching Award. The department chair is:

- J. Anthony Abbott, Ph.D., University of Minnesota; political ecology, Latin America, sustainability, renewable energy systems and policy, carbon accounting, sustainable agriculture

Grant-funded research
Grant-funded research is available to select students when faculty members secure grant support from the university, or through an outside agency. Students are also encouraged to take part in the Stetson Undergraduate Research Experience, which provides funding for equipment, room and board and travel.

Undergraduate awards and honors
Students have the opportunity to join the honor society Gamma Theta Upsilon. The Gamma Theta Upsilon Excellence in Geography Award is available to outstanding geography majors in the department. The department also offers outstanding junior and senior awards. The highest honor bestowed by the department is the Rachel Carson Environmental Science Award, which honors a student who has achieved extraordinary academic success and has shown a passionate dedication to making our world a better place in which to live.

Beyond the Classroom

Internships
Students participate in internships with public or private institutions to hone skills and apply experience outside the classroom. Our students have interned at the U.S. Geological Survey, Florida State Parks System, Volusia County Department of Environmental Management, National Geographic Society and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, among others.

After Stetson

Diverse careers
Our alumni work as geographic information scientists, computer mappers, environmental consultants, teachers/professors, environmental lawyers, impact assessment specialists, environmental engineers, travel consultants, international developers and land-use planners. Graduates have studied at Johns Hopkins University, Rhode Island School of Design, Stetson University College of Law, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Florida and University of Georgia, among others.