EMPHASIS OF PROGRAM
The Environmental Science Program provides students with an in-depth understanding of natural systems and how humans interact with the environment. It prepares students for careers and graduate studies in environmental science and provides the academic basis to analyze environmental problems from several perspectives. The Environmental Science major offers students the flexibility of choosing from two emphasis areas: Natural Science or Humanity and Environment. Each option prepares students for a particular career track.

SCHOLARSHIPS
Incoming students may be eligible for a number of academic and leadership scholarships through the Office of Admission. Once you are at SMSU, the Kronke Scholarship is available to upper level environmental science majors only. Scholarships are awarded based on a student’s academic record including the ACT, class rank, GPA, and leadership potential. Numerous other opportunities exist within the Science Department for scholarships, workstudy and part-time employment.

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“I always thought SMSU was a very tight-knit community of staff and students. It always seemed like everyone supported each other and wanted each other to succeed...I was also able to present my research at local and even national conferences, which was supported by the University.”

Amanda (Goebel) Strommer ’02
Environmental Science
Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment
Pursuing Masters degree in Water Resource Science from the University of Minnesota

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
Graduates with a Bachelor of Science degree in environmental science may choose from a number of growing career possibilities.

The Natural Science option, with its strong life science and math component, prepares students for employment by environmental consulting firms, environmental education centers, or government agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources or the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Humanity and Environment option is designed for liberal arts students with an interest in communicating information about the environment. The academic preparation provided by this option is useful for students interested in careers in environmental law, environmental journalism, environmental education, and local, state or federal government.

Career Opportunities
• Wetland Ecologist
• Green Technology
• Hazardous Waste Manager
• EPA Technician
• Environmental Education
• Soil Conservation Technician
• Environmental Engineering
• Air Pollution Analyst
• Park Ranger
• Environmental Policy

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PREPARATION
Prospective Environmental Science majors should have a good background in mathematics and English. Courses in the sciences are helpful but not necessary. Clarity and confidence in writing, speaking, and in the use of mathematics are the most valuable skills.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH
All Environmental Science students conduct a research project as part of their Senior Capstone requirement and present their results at the SMSU Undergraduate Research Conference the fall of their senior year. A Research Methods course taken junior year guides Environmental Majors through the development of a project idea, preparation of an extensive literature review, and writing of a research proposal. The purpose of the SMSU Undergraduate Research Conference is to highlight the work done by all undergraduate students at SMSU. It is an annual, one-day conference at which hundreds of SMSU students engage in a professional exchange of ideas and showcase their hard work and accomplishments to the community and potential future employers.

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS
- Environmental Awareness Club
- Biology Club
- Chemistry Club

FACILITIES & RESOURCES
The program is housed in the Science & Math and Science & Technology buildings and include newly renovated laboratories which give the Environmental Science program state-of-the-art facilities in which to teach and conduct research. The labs contain solutions preparation areas, a variety of instruments for cellular and molecular studies, and controlled environmental chambers. SMSU also has a Greenhouse, a Museum of Natural History and a Planetarium. A well-equipped soils lab allows for physical and chemical characterization of soil and sediment samples. The department also has extensive teaching and research collections of plants, rocks, minerals, fossils and preserved specimens in addition to a rock and fossil preparation area. A 22-acre Wildlife Area is located on campus and features a variety of plant communities including prairie, wetlands, and coniferous and deciduous forests. The Wildlife Area is used extensively in field-based courses and research projects. The SMSU Water Resources Center facilitates joint projects between area agencies and SMSU students to provide needed service to the region, fill data gaps, and provide students with valuable research and internship experience. SMSU’s Geographic Information Center (GIS Center) contains state-of-the-art computer analysis and mapping equipment. Having GIS knowledge is a skill increasingly desired by many employers. All Environmental Science students are required to take a GIS course as part of their major.

FRESHMAN ADMISSION PROCESS
- Complete Application
- $20 Non-refundable Application Fee
- Official High School Transcript(s)
- ACT or SAT Test Scores

FRESHMAN ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
- Rank in the upper half of graduating class
- Score a composite of 21 or above on the ACT or 990 on the SAT

LIBERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
The Liberal Education Program (LEP) at Southwest Minnesota State University provides students with the opportunity to obtain a solid, general education across the fundamental domains of human knowledge. When empowered with these ideas, facts, skills, and values, students can understand and effectively participate in the affairs of the community, nation, and wider world. The Liberal Education Program is built upon ten Student Learning Outcomes which were developed by the faculty to represent the foundation of higher education.

For more information about this major, please contact: The Environmental Science Program at (507) 537-6178.