

PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCES

The goal of the department is to meet societal needs for food, fiber, energy, and intrinsic value related to the conservation and management of plant and soil resources. Teaching, research, and extension efforts are designed to spur innovation and provide understanding regarding management of agricultural and environmental resources to increase long-term sustainability food production systems.

Undergraduate students select an option of study from: agronomic business, crop production and management, plant biotechnology and improvement, or soil and water resources. Students may choose to specialize in an area such as: entrepreneurship, forage and livestock production, pest management, plant genetics, precision agriculture or environmental management. In addition, students can fulfill prerequisites for professional programs such as pharmacy school. Students interested in professional certification will complete the necessary course requirements in their degree programs. Students have flexibility to work with their academic advisors to develop a plan of study to suit their interests. Many undergraduate students work with the research faculty on projects providing the student an opportunity to assist in gathering new information related to plant breeding and genetics, biotechnology, environmental remediation, plant physiology, crop production, weed science, soil nutrient management, soil chemistry, soil physics, water quality and land restoration.

Upon completion of a Bachelor of Science program, students are employed by private firms, public institutions, state and federal agencies, or non-profit organizations that require personnel with expertise in plant and soil systems. Typical careers include: federal employment in soil and rangeland conservation; crop consulting; technical sales and service for seed, fertilizer or agricultural chemical supply companies; farm or ranch operation; research positions as plant and soil scientists with federal agencies, state agricultural experiment stations or private industries; teaching and extension positions with colleges and universities; and a broad range of employment or ownership in retail businesses supplying feed, seed, grain, fertilizers, equipment, agricultural chemicals and other agricultural supplies and services. Our undergraduate program has also successfully prepared students to pursue advanced degrees in plant and soil sciences, agricultural economics, environmental science, and other related disciplines. Demand for individuals with experience in plant and soil sciences will continue as long as society demands a safe, secure food supply balanced with a desire to conserve natural resources.

Minor in Agronomy or Soil Science

The Department of Plant and Soil Sciences offers two minors, Agronomy (20 hours) and Soil Science (19 hours). Students pursuing a minor in Agronomy will take courses in areas that are most important for understanding the science of crop production, including genetics and biotechnology, weed science and nutrient management in order to prepare them for careers that support crop production. The Soil Science minor has a great deal of flexibility (12 credits of controlled electives) that will allow students to explore diverse aspects of soils ranging from chemistry to conservation while helping them prepare for a variety of environment-related careers.