



The academic majors of students taking American soil science classes: 2004-2005 to 2013-2014 academic years

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Many papers have been written in recent years discussing the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary aspects of soil science. Therefore, it would make sense that soil science courses would be taken by students in a wide array of academic majors. To investigate this, we collected data from eight different American universities on the declared academic majors of students enrolled in soil science courses over a 10 year time period (2004-2005 to 2013-2014 academic years). Data was collected for seven different classes taught at the undergraduate level: introduction to soil science, soil fertility, soil management, pedology, soil biology/microbiology, soil chemistry, and soil physics. Overall trends and trends for each class were evaluated. Generally, environmental science and crop science/horticulture/agronomy students were enrolled in soil science courses in the greatest numbers. Environmental science and engineering students showed rapid increases in enrollment over the 10 years of the study, while the number of crop science/ horticulture/ agronomy students declined. In the introduction to soil science classes, environmental science and crop science/ horticulture/ agronomy students were enrolled in the greatest numbers, while declared soil science majors only made up 6.6% of the average enrollment. The highest enrollments in soil fertility were crop science/ horticulture/ agronomy students and other agricultural students (all agricultural majors except crop science, horticulture, agronomy, or soil science). In both the soil management and pedology classes, environmental science and other agricultural students were the largest groups enrolled. Other agricultural students and students from other majors (all majors not otherwise expressly investigated) were the largest enrolled groups in soil biology/microbiology courses, and environmental science and soil science students were the largest enrolled groups in soil chemistry classes. Soil physics was the only class investigated where declared soil science students made up the largest single group of students, with other agricultural students being the second largest group. Results of the study showed that students from many different academic majors take soil science classes at American universities, and the most common majors in these classes depended on the class and the material it addressed.