

OUR MISSION AND ACADEMIC ROLE

Our Mission Statement. The Department of Biology provides an intellectually stimulating and dynamic environment where students and faculty can jointly pursue knowledge and experience in the biological sciences.

Our Philosophical Context. The Faculty of the Department of Biology at Valparaiso University is dedicated to the highest standards of scientific ethics and intellectual integrity. This dedication requires an unbiased assessment of the results of observation and experimentation and compels us to accept the conclusions the results yield. For over a century, biological evolution has been supported overwhelmingly by repeated observations and experimental studies. Moreover, support for evolution in the legitimate scientific community is unequivocal. Therefore, the Department uses evolutionary principles as a central, unifying framework for understanding the unity and the diversity of the living world, while remaining sensitive to the faith roots of its students and alumni.

Our Academic Role. Biology is the disciplined study of living organisms. It is also a vital part of liberal education, enabling students to develop an appreciation of their own biological nature as well as the great variety of organisms and communities of organisms with which they come into contact and upon which they are dependent. The study of biology may be at many different levels: molecular, cellular, organismic, population, community, ecosystem, evolutionary. The department offers instruction at each of these levels designed to meet the requirements for graduate study, for professional schools, for a teaching career in biology or for working in industrial or governmental positions.

Nearly all biology courses have a laboratory or field component which are taught by professors or other experienced faculty. The department makes extensive field trips to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, which ranks third of all US National Parks in species diversity, and to other distinguished natural history institutions in the Chicago area. Valparaiso University has a partnership with a biological field station in southern Michigan called [Pierce Cedar Creek Institute](#) (PCCI). Funding is available through PCCI for student/faculty summer research collaborations at the field station.

Biology majors are encouraged to conduct research under the supervision of a faculty member as part of the graduation requirements. Majors also have the opportunity to conduct research at many highly recognized programs sponsored by national laboratories or other institutions.

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