City Students Can Learn Geology From Buildings, Says UD Scholar
DAYTON, Ohio--High school students in urban areas could learn about rocks and geological formations simply by studying different buildings and structures in their city neighborhoods, suggests a University of Dayton scholar.

Urban geology is what Michael R. Sandy calls this innovative teaching technique. He uses it to help his beginning geology students at UD learn about rocks.

"It's a different way of helping students learn about rocks, and it's especially helpful for students in urban areas who might not get much opportunity for field study," says Sandy.

"A scholar in London has done the same thing there, and I picked the idea up from him."

Sandy earned his B.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of London.

Each semester, Sandy's students at UD spend at least one class period walking around the campus, following the route of a rock tour Sandy has devised. A printed brochure and map describe rocks at different sites on the 101-acre campus.

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For example, a low wall between two buildings contains blocks of sedimentary rock called Cedarville and Springfield dolomite. The brochure describes these rocks for the students.

Also described are granite steps which lead into the student union building. Another low wall contains Indiana Limestone and sandstone. A black-colored metamorphic rock, slate, is used as facing on another campus building.

There are many other examples on the tour, which takes from 30 to 45 minutes to complete.

Similar tours could be designed for high school students who live in areas removed from natural rock formations, suggests Sandy.

"Almost any urban area contains numerous different types of rocks in its buildings," says Sandy.

"This might not be the entire answer, but it could help students in urban areas to learn to identify different types of rocks."

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For media interviews, contact Michael Sandy, assistant professor of geology, at (513) 229-2952.