How do members of the Allegheny College community develop their perceptions of fracking and what role does media play in influencing such perceptions?

- Dependence on foreign fuels leads to an increased desire for a domestic fuel source
- Our research analyzed perceptions of hydraulic fracturing and how the media influences such viewpoints.
- We conducted several focus groups of Allegheny students in order to develop an understanding as to how people are influenced by the media.
- We concluded that it does play a role in shaping student perceptions on the issue.

The research was grounded in political ecology and three themes emerged: The Power of the Media, Style of Defense in Media, and Education as an Important Factor.

**The Power of Media**
- Participants who were previously undecided were influenced by the media
- People with predetermined dispositions were not influenced
- Following focus groups, participants realized the importance of media

**Style of Defense in Media**
- Recognized the bias of the videos
- Participants criticized the lack of reliable sources provided by the videos
- Videos played with emotions

**Education as Important Factor**
- Increased importance of personal education
- Participants want unbiased facts

**Introduction of Hydraulic Fracturing to Bousson**

**Changes/Development of Ideas & Ideologies About Fracking**

**Campus-wide Education/Awareness (Informative Groups)**

**Formation of Student Groups Based on Beliefs of Hydraulic Fracturing**

**Change in future actions regarding hydraulic fracturing; possibly more responsible in regards to environment**

**Relation to Political Ecology:**
- Hydraulic Fracturing is related to subjects and identities thesis; new environmental systems (hydraulic fracturing) lead to changing ideas creating opportunities for new identities and collective action
- It is considered a new environmental system introduced to an area: Allegheny College
- Due to the different sources of media students are exposed to, many of their views have been influenced on fracking

**Desire for Education**
- Direct correlation between a desire for more education and the amount of media exposure
- This research has helped show the shortcomings in the media portrayal of the issue for it lacks unbiased information
- Unbiased information is needed to create environmental change
- Groups have been formed on campus to foster conversation and awareness, such as the Bousson Advisory Group, Students for Environmental Action, etc.

**Influences on Fracking Perceptions “Before”**

**Influences on Fracking Perceptions “After”**