



Master in Environmental Management

The Master in Environmental Management program offers interdisciplinary training to solve pressing sustainability challenges in both cities and rural areas.

What Is the Western Difference?

Western's MEM program takes advantage of Colorado's ecological diversity, wealth of natural resources and sustainable communities to offer a learning laboratory in the Rockies. Dr. John Hausdoerffer, the program's director, describes it as a "globally informed, place-based education."

In addition to the full-residency option, select environmental professionals can choose its distance-exception option. This blended learning environment brings together diverse perspectives and offers students the opportunity to network professionally and engage in a global conversation about issues that matter to them.

Unlike similar programs with distance-learning options, students in Western's program engage with each other throughout the year. Distance-exception students benefit from the perspectives of students immersed in small seminar and experiential activities in the Gunnison area. In turn, full-residency students gain weekly insights from people with extensive and diverse professional and regional experience. For two weeks each summer, all students and faculty gather in Gunnison for intensive, field-based, solutions-driven workshops.

Students can build a personalized program that fits their interests and their professional needs, including using their professional work for their master's projects.

Students can complete a master's project with an environmental or governmental organization, rather than write an academic thesis.

Working professionals can adapt course schedules to fit with their careers.



FACTS

The program's 70 students represent 60 universities, 20 undergraduate degrees and seven countries.

MEM partners with the Peace Corps Master's International program and AmeriCorps VISTA, giving graduates an edge with federal agencies.

Students work closely with faculty mentors to build their environmental portfolio. The student-faculty ratio is 8 to 1.



What Skills Will I Acquire?

Western's MEM offers a two-year master's degree in one of two complementary tracks – Integrative Land Management and Sustainable & Resilient Communities.

Students can expect to:

- Improve their understanding of environmental systems, various impacts on those systems and an array of solutions to address them.
- Investigate environmental policies and the politics behind creating them.
- Develop skills for environmental problem solving among diverse stakeholders and within organizations and agencies.
- Enhance career opportunities in environmentally related disciplines.



What Can I Do With My Degree?

The Integrative Land Management track prepares students for careers in public lands management, private land conservation and climate adaptation.

The Sustainable & Resilient Communities track prepares students for careers in environmental nonprofit development, sustainability consulting and coordinating (for businesses, towns, universities), resilient community advocacy, and environmental organization management.

Either track can lead to or enhance rewarding careers for dedicated environmental managers.



Meet Andres Esparza

Andres Esparza, a member of the inaugural MEM class, says the new program's uniqueness, affordability and the area's recreational opportunities drew him to Gunnison. But program director John Hausdoerffer's passion sold him.

Esparza, who earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Texas El Paso and worked as an outdoor educator in Yosemite, said he's been

surprised at the freedom students have to set the course for their studies. He cites the forums students are creating to connect faculty, students and the community to issues and solutions:

"Dr. Hausdoerffer told us, 'Create something we're not giving you.'"

Gunnison also surprised him. "It's small, but packed with passionate, smart people – people who want to live here," he says.

Esparza plans to work with southern Colorado communities to learn more about why people do – or do not – use public lands.

"I spend a lot of time outdoors," he says, "but I don't see my culture represented in the backcountry. The demographics of the country are changing, but the use of public lands is not keeping up."

More Info: 800.876.5309 | admissions@western.edu

western.edu/MEM