Water Quality Technology / Environmental Health degrees at Montana State University Northern

Havre, Montana

The Water Quality Technology/Environmental Health major at Montana State University - Northern is available for both Associate of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. This program, the only one of its kind in Montana, is designed to prepare students to become a certified operator of a water treatment plant, a wastewater treatment plant or a water distribution system. Most who complete the degree become certified in all 3 areas. Over 90% of our students are successful at passing their state certification exams on their first try. Several states have reciprocal agreements with Montana to accept these certificates as valid in that state.

In addition, the program prepares students for careers as laboratory technicians or assistants to engineers, scientists or agencies working with water quality related issues. The program is designed to meet the multiple-entry multiple-exit needs of individuals who wish to upgrade their skills or complete a particular portion of the program as it fits their schedule. Students may transfer credits from any accredited college and have the option of requesting that non-resident tuition fees be waived in certain cases when those fees would create a hardship and they wish to pursue a degree which is not available near their home such as Water Quality Technology.

MSU-Northern is also home to the Montana Environmental Training Center (METC) which is housed at the Great Falls campus. METC is a cooperative effort between the University and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. MSU-Northern and METC maintain a state-of-the-art laboratory on the Havre campus which was recently remodeled and furnished with over one-half million dollars in water testing equipment. The water quality program provides hands-on training as well as an opportunity for practical experience through the summer internship program. Through our agreements with municipalities statewide and in other states, students earn six credits while working as an intern, usually with pay, at a public water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant or water distribution system.

The geographic area served by Northern contains four Indian Reservations, and approximately one of every eight students at Northern is Native American, the highest percentage of any nontribal college in Montana. Many water quality majors are nontraditional students with an average age of about 30. MSU-N provides a comprehensive array of student support services, including counseling, tutoring, and job placement. The University also offers a unique Veterans Upward Bound program where military veterans can attend classes at no cost for 6 weeks in the summer and earn the first 4 credits of their water quality degree. All room, board, books, fees and tuition are covered.

Havre is a town of about 11,000 which serves as a regional center for northern Montana and southern Canada with the same services available as cities much larger in size. However, Havre is one of the least expensive towns in Montana in which to live, and has no shortage of housing.

Students come from many states and tribes. MSU-Northern's national reputation in the water quality program has attracted students recently from as far away as Alaska, Florida, and Hawaii. Graduates of the program are in high demand and many recent graduates have had several job offers from which to choose, with starting salaries for operators of up to fourteen dollars per hour. Interviews with employers and those students who have completed the program indicate a high degree of satisfaction by both. A good example is a 1996 graduate, Duane Gopfier, who earned a Bachelor of Science degree and has now returned to his home, the Rocky Boy Reservation in north central Montana. He is employed by the Chippewa-Cree Tribe in its

water resources program and when asked about his experience at Northern stated, “This is really a versatile program that allows you to do a number of things.” Duane’s success is the result of his self-discipline and his determination to succeed in a flexible program provided by a caring faculty who make students their highest priority.

If you would like further information about the Water Quality degrees offered by MSU-Northern, please contact Dr. Gregg Hester, Hagener Science Center, MSU-Northern, P. 0. Box 7751, Havre, Montana, or call (406) 265-4125.