

## PRESS RELEASES

### News Brief - 7/8/97

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### Oklahoma Joins WGU, International Agreements Signed

SALT LAKE CITY, UT -- The Western Governors University is expanding its 21<sup>st</sup> century vision of higher education with the announcement that Oklahoma will join its ranks, and several universities outside the United States will begin collaborating with the WGU.

Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating and Hans Brisch, Chancellor for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, recently announced Oklahoma will participate with 14 other states and one territory in this unique learning system. Beginning in early 1998, the WGU will offer competency-based degrees and certificates, utilize the Internet to broker courses for participating education providers, and harness advanced information technologies to reach students at home and across the world.

In another development, the WGU is moving into the international arena. Universities in Great Britain, Japan and British Columbia have all agreed to collaborate in promoting international education and to explore opportunities for joint delivery of courses, among other efforts.

In announcing Oklahoma's participation, Keating noted that the "21<sup>st</sup> century has just arrived in Oklahoma."

"This 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to post secondary education combines the best and the brightest from all Western states, along with today's technology, to provide an affordable and broad range of post higher education opportunities for Oklahomans whether they are at home, on the job, or in class," Keating said. "This is great news for students, for business and our colleges and universities."

"As a result of Oklahoma's membership in WGU, our colleges and universities will be able to develop new markets both in and outside of Oklahoma, bringing new revenues to the state and extending Oklahoma's influence," Brisch said. "We also believe that our involvement in the national and international learning markets WGU offers will make our courses and programs stronger and even more competitive."

Bob Albrecht, WGU's Chief Academic Officer, said Oklahoma will be a great addition to WGU.

"Oklahoma State and the University of Oklahoma have two of the largest continuing education enterprises in the country, and will only strengthen WGU's offerings," Albrecht said.

On the international front, WGU officials have signed a memorandum of agreement to collaborate on several efforts with The Open University in Great Britain, the Open Learning Agency in British Columbia, Canada, and the Tokai University Educational System in Japan. Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt, WGU's co-chair, will meet with education leaders in China later this month to discuss their involvement.

The memorandum of agreement lists several areas for WGU to work cooperatively with each of the entities to:

- promote international education and further the understanding of the international delivery of educational programs;
- exchange information on effective international delivery mechanisms;
- remove national barriers to the exchange of courses, programs and awards;
- search for opportunities to collaborate educationally and administratively including opportunities for the joint delivery of courses, programs and awards;
- examine opportunities for joint ventures and other modes of working together including consortia and other cooperative ventures designed to promote cooperative courses, programs and awards;
- encourage other institutions to join this effort.

WGU members include the states of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming and the territory of Guam. Governors Roy Romer of Colorado and Mike Leavitt of Utah serve as Co-chairs for the WGU Board of Trustees.

