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Amy Carmer
Western Governors University
801-575-5358
acarmer@wgu.edu

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WGU Selects Pilot Education Providers for Testing, Advice

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SALT LAKE CITY, UT -- Sixteen universities and other education providers from across the West were named today to serve as pilot institutions for the Western Governors University to test its online Catalog and provide advice on policies, procedures and marketing strategies.

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Early next year the WGU will begin offering competency-based degrees and certificates and brokering courses for participating education providers through its Internet-based catalog. Prior to opening its doors, the WGU will use focus groups composed of representatives of the pilot providers to test its various systems and procedures.

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"While there are a number of distance education programs around the country, the Western Governors University is unique with its focus on competency-based credentials and its involvement of multiple states and institutions," said Bob Albrecht, WGU's Chief Academic Officer. "The pilot providers will be critical in evaluating all the components needed to make the WGU a valued option for students."

Pilot education providers will:

- test the WGU online Catalog and other administrative functions, including counseling and bookstore services;
- provide advice on marketing strategies to attract qualified students;
- identify potential barriers -- regulations, statutes or policies -- that could limit involvement by states or providers; and
- offer advice on proposed policies and procedures related to involvement by education providers.

Focus groups are expected to test the catalog this fall. Next year, students will use it to create a profile, including convenient times for taking courses and the types of technologies they prefer, such as the Internet, computer software, videotapes or satellite. The Catalog will map out the skills a student needs to master in order to receive a WGU credential, list the cost of courses, provide career information and offer guidance and assessment services.

Those participating in the pilot include public and private universities, two-year colleges, consortia of higher education institutions and a corporation that provides workplace training. The WGU will include both traditional and non traditional education providers, such as corporations, that meet WGU's criteria for inclusion in the Catalog.

A list of the pilot education providers and a contact person follows:

University of Alaska Learning Cooperative
Jim Stricks
907-474-5197

Northern Arizona University
Dr. Samuel Levy
520-523-9484

Colorado Electronic Community College
Michael Rusk
303-340-5706

University of Hawaii
Hae K. Okimoto
808-956-3504

Idaho Center for Higher Education
Dr. Fred Rose
208-535-7829

Montana State University
Kim Obbink
406-994-6550

North Dakota State College of Science
Robert Gette
701-671-2112

Chadron State College (Nebraska)
Dr. Roger Wess
308-432-6364

Eastern New Mexico University
Dr. George Mehaffy
505-562-2312

Community College of Southern Nevada
Dr. Robert Silverman
702-651-4518

Eastern Oregon University
Dr. Joseph Hart
541-962-3614

Utah State University
Lou Workman
801-797-2171

Washington State University
Dr. Les Purce
509-335-4783

University of Wyoming
Dr. Ken Griffin
307-766-6476

Regis University (Colorado)
Dr. William Husson
303-458-1844

Micron Technology, Inc.
Karen Vauk
208-368-4578