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

[Vision, History & Mission](#)

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Susan Rauch
MEM/Hubble Communications
For Cisco Systems
512-480-8961
srauch@onr.com

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Cisco Systems Chairman John Morgridge Appointed to WGU National Advisory Board

WASHINGTON, DC -- Governors Roy Romer (Colorado) and Mike Leavitt (Utah), co-chairs of the Western Governors University Board of Trustees, today announced that Cisco Systems, the San Jose-based networking leader, has joined in support of this "virtual university" program. Cisco Systems will serve as a corporate partner to WGU and is also contributing \$250,000 in cash, plus additional in-kind resources, to the project. The announcement, which was made during a meeting of the WGU Board of Trustees, also included naming Cisco Chairman John Morgridge to the WGU National Advisory Board, a panel of corporate leaders formed to provide advice and counsel on a number of issues. The governors were meeting in conjunction with the semi-annual National Governors Association conference.

WGU is a competency-based, degree-granting, virtual university that delivers cost-effective education using the Internet and other advanced telecommunications and networking technologies. In addition to Cisco Systems, WGU's corporate partner list includes Apple, AT&T, 3Com Corporation, IBM, International Thomson Publishing, KPMG-Peat Marwick, Microsoft, Novell, The Sloan Foundation and Sun Microsystems.

Cisco Systems, the leading provider of networking for the Internet, has a history of involvement with and support of education. Said Morgridge, "Cisco is pleased to be joining WGU - an initiative that harnesses technology to expand educational opportunities and reach a greater and more diversified body of students. WGU and Cisco are working towards very similar goals regarding technology, education and competency-based learning and training. Our own Cisco Networking Academies program seeks to educate students about networks by using the Internet and each school's own network to deliver Academies curriculum."

"Western Governors University is very happy to have Cisco as a member of the team," said Jeffery Livingston, CEO of WGU. "We feel there is an excellent synergy with WGU's goals and with our other corporate partners. We are especially pleased that John Morgridge has made the commitment to be personally involved on the National Advisory Board, as he brings remarkable enthusiasm for improving education and excitement about technology."

Cisco Networking Academies is a new program to teach and certify high school and college students to design, build and maintain computer networks capable of supporting national and global organizations. Officially launched this past October, the program is designed to address head-on the current shortage of Information Technology workers in the U.S. Students who complete the four semesters of specially developed curriculum and certification testing are ready to begin working in the IT field with an estimated salary of \$35,000-45,000 annually. Currently, there are 115 Networking Academies operational in 16 states. More information about Cisco's education programs is available on their Web site (www.cisco.com/edu).

Western Governors University was formed in 1997 as a result of the interest of the governors of the western United States to share higher education distance learning resources. WGU's mission is to expand educational opportunities for learners everywhere, offering courses from a wide array of sources. Educational access will be provided to a dispersed population of students who might not otherwise have access to higher education and to those needing workplace training. Its corporate offices are located in Salt Lake City, Utah, with academic offices in Denver, Colorado.

The states and territories participating in Western Governors University are Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.