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Indiana Becomes 18th State To Join Western Governors University

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Indiana residents will gain new educational opportunities as Western Governors University increases Midwest participation

SALT LAKE CITY, UT -- Western Governors University (WGU) today announced that Indiana has become the 18th state to participate in this unique initiative, designed to bring higher education and lifelong learning opportunities to people everywhere. By joining the public/private consortium, Indiana officials expect to offer residents an increased variety of educational resources and delivery methods designed to meet each person's learning needs.

WGU is a competency-based, degree-granting, virtual university offering courses from a wide array of sources, including state universities and colleges, as well as coursework from private corporations. Indiana joins 17 other states and territories already participating in WGU, including: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

"Lifelong learning is vital to the continued prosperity of our state," explained Governor Frank O'Bannon. "The Western Governors University will be a valuable tool to expand access to higher education for all Hoosiers. Our participation in this unique initiative will help advance the technology of distance education in our state."

Indiana presently offers distance learning programs at many of its higher education institutions. And as a member of WGU, these distance programs can be integrated into the WGU offering and expanded to take advantage of the extensive coursework available from the consortium's other members.

"One of WGU's great strengths is the remarkable consensus among our member states who believe that WGU is positioned to take the lead in changing the future of higher education," said WGU co-chair Utah Governor Mike Leavitt. "We are glad that Indiana shares this vision and look forward to a fruitful working relationship with Governor O'Bannon and the education community there."

As with the other participating states, Indiana provides a one-time, \$100,000 payment to join the consortium. Governor Frank O'Bannon will become a member of the WGU corporation and will appoint members to the Indiana Advisory Committee. This committee provides direction to the state, interacts with WGU and coordinates efforts in distance delivery. A member from the Indiana steering committee also serves on the WGU States Advisory Council, which advises the Board of Trustees and WGU Executive Staff on matters related to WGU operations and the relationships to each state.

About Western Governors University

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 is a competency-based, degree-granting, virtual university that delivers cost-effective education using the Internet and other advanced telecommunications and networking technologies. 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.