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Western Governors University Granted Eligibility Status

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Inter-Regional Accreditation Committee (IRAC) decision will help assure potential students of quality programs as WGU prepares to open its virtual doors

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SALT LAKE CITY, UT -- Western Governors University (WGU) reached a major milestone this week when the Inter-Regional Accreditation Committee (IRAC) granted the University "Eligibility for Candidacy" status.

"We're thrilled with the committee's decision and we're now full-steam ahead on the launch of the WGU Web site and our official opening this summer," said Jeff Livingston, CEO of WGU. "We truly appreciate the committee's willingness to review and assess the WGU vision and its potential impact on higher education and to put us on track for full accreditation. This is also good news for our member states that have waited for the IRAC decision before approving state licensure for WGU." IRAC is a higher education accrediting group designed to address the unique, competency-based, multi-regional operations of WGU. IRAC formulated the eligibility requirements, accreditation standards and candidacy process that WGU is following.

"Eligibility for candidacy" status signifies that WGU has taken the necessary steps toward establishing a quality institution with the potential for future accreditation. "It's truly an important step in our evolution," said Bob Albrecht, WGU's chief academic officer. "It marks our acceptance as a recognized educational institution and gives potential students confidence in WGU's ability to deliver a quality program."

WGU's accreditation effort has been underway for some time, but reached a critical stage in April when IRAC began review of WGU's formal submission and the actual WGU Web site and the SmartCatalog™. The process came to a pivotal point on May 8 when WGU staff members met with IRAC representatives in Seattle to review progress on the eligibility requirements and discuss IRAC's evaluation of the university. At the meeting, IRAC representatives notified WGU of their decision to grant eligibility status.

About IRAC

The Inter-Regional Accreditation Committee (IRAC) was formed through the collaboration of four regional accrediting associations, including North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Commission on Institutions of Higher Education), Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (Commission on Colleges), and the Western Association of School and Colleges (Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, and Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges). The four associations empowered IRAC to develop an accrediting process for WGU.

About WGU

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 by offering online access to courses from universities, colleges and corporate training programs through its unique SmartCatalog™. WGU was formed in 1997 as a result of the vision of the governors of the Western United States to share higher education distance learning resources. WGU's administrative offices are located in Salt Lake City and its academic offices are in Denver.

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