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## Western Governors University Takes Another Step Forward

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### *Congress approves national higher education legislation; WGU included as "Demonstration Program"*

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SALT LAKE CITY -- The United States Senate today approved the Higher Education Reauthorization Act (HR 6) that includes a number of initiatives designed to increase access to higher education.

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The Senate's approval comes one day after the U.S. House of Representatives gave its approval. One of the key components of the Act will expand student aid eligibility for distance learning institutions such as Western Governors University (WGU). Gov. Mike Leavitt, R-Utah, and Gov. Roy Romer, D-Colorado, co-chairs of WGU, said today that the action by the U.S. Congress is important to WGU.

"This is a significant day in the evolution of technology-based learning. Today's passage of the Higher Education Reauthorization Act expands student aid eligibility for technology learners. Demonstration programs will now begin to eliminate some student aid restrictions and allow more non-traditional students to obtain higher education, including full-time workers, parents, people in rural areas or people with disabilities," Governors Leavitt and Romer said today in a joint statement.

"This is also a significant day for Western Governors University. WGU was the only technology-based learning institution specifically identified as a 'Demonstration Program' in the legislation that was initiated by the Department of Education and now overwhelmingly approved by the United States Congress. WGU is already working with the Department of Education to use provisions of the act to secure student aid access for our students. It is our expectation to offer student financial aid as soon as possible.

"We appreciate the vision the Secretary of Education and the Congress has shown in understanding the role of technology based learning in the future of education. We thank the Governors who are members of WGU for their continued support on this specific legislation and for the institution of Western Governors University," Governors Leavitt and Romer said.

### 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 on-line 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, technology-based, learning resources. WGU's administrative offices are located in Salt Lake City, Utah, and its academic offices are in Denver, Colorado.