New Logo, New Frontier

Dr. Jeff Livingston, CEO

As traditional educational institutions head back to school with the beginning of the 1998 fall semester or quarter, WGU is pleased to announce that we will be a part of that educational experience for many students. The Smart Catalog™ is now operational, and pilot students have begun to apply for WGU competency-based degrees and enroll in classes through WGU. WGU is now poised to expand that accessibility to all interested students from around the country.

This summer has provided a key turning point for WGU as the virtual nature of this university has become a reality for students. The list of WGU providers and the offerings available on the Smart Catalog™ continue to grow. With this growth, and the opening of the Smart Catalog™ WGU has taken on a new image as well.

As you can see displayed throughout this newsletter, WGU has a new look and feel, with the unveiling of our official logo and what will come to symbolize WGU in the future. Soon you will be seeing this image everywhere as WGU embarks upon a new era of educational opportunities. WGU is looking forward to a long and successful tradition as we enter this new frontier of higher education.

Thank you for your interest in and support for WGU.

Governor’s Spotlight

Jim Geringer, Governor of Wyoming

On behalf of the State of Wyoming and the Western Governors University, it is my pleasure to speak to you in this edition of the WGU newsletter. As a sitting member of the WGU Board of Trustees and a supporter of the vision of WGU since the inception of the idea, I can tell you first hand that it has been a tremendous and enlightening journey.

Being a part of the development, implementation and evolution of WGU has allowed my involvement with a project that proves to change the face of education. The excitement that WGU is generating, and the opportunities it will provide for students from around the country and eventually around the world, make WGU a very unique endeavor. WGU is designed to make continuous learning more accessible to our citizens. We are reacting to the demands of our learners, and that is a key component to providing better opportunities.

As WGU prepares to enroll students in courses and programs from institutions around the country, as well as in WGU competency-based degree programs, I am looking forward to all the possibilities that will emerge for students. I encourage all of you to visit WGU and the Smart Catalog™ on-line at www.wgu.edu so that you can see for yourselves what great opportunities lie at the fingertips of students regardless of time or place.

It has been my pleasure to be involved with WGU. I continue to look forward to a long and successful relationship between the State of Wyoming, the Western Governors University, and myself.

Sincerely,

Jim Geringer
WGU Expands Global Reach through Agreement with China; President Clinton Hails Cooperation

Western Governors University's international presence expanded once again this summer with the signing on June 3, 1998 of an International Memorandum of Understanding with China through an agreement with the China Internet Education Center (CIEC). Under the agreement, WGU and the CIEC plan to collaborate on the development and delivery of distance learning programs, extending the ability of both institutions to reach new student markets and to tap into an even broader selection of courses and degree programs.

President Clinton hailed the agreement as a model for building relations between the two countries. "This agreement between Western Governors University and the China Internet Education Center offers us an excellent opportunity to use technology to expand access to information and increase cooperation between our two nations," the President said. "I commend the leadership of both institutions for their innovative ideas and for demonstrating the kind of positive working relationships that can be built between the peoples of the United States and China."

A joint statement issued by WGU Board of Trustees co-chairs Governors Michael Leavitt (Utah) and Roy Romer (Colorado) acknowledged the President's endorsement. "We're very pleased that Western Governors University has received the favorable attention of President Clinton and his administration. The President recognizes that global leadership in the next century absolutely depends on the skills and knowledge of our people, which in turn, depends on improving our capacity to provide the highest quality of education."

The China Internet Education Center was established in late 1997 with authorization from China Telecom to explore ways to set standards for distance learning procedures, administration methods, technologies and market demand pricing. In addition, the CIEC is charged with tracking and developing new technologies, as well as expansion of distance learning markets in China. The CIEC has agreements with more than 10 universities in China and plans to enroll nearly 3,000 Internet students this fall for graduate and post-graduate studies.

"Our ability to reach out and work cooperatively with other governments and international institutions certainly helps bolster the appeal of WGU among students and educators," said Jeff Livingston, CEO of WGU. "But is also demonstrates the role WGU can take in driving better understanding of distance learning for a worldwide audience, and the need for even more cooperation and collaboration between educational institutions."

The agreement is the fifth international alliance forged by WGU. Other agreements include: Takai University in Japan, University of British Columbia in Canada, The Open University in the United Kingdom, and the Virtual University of the Monterrey Institute of Technology in Mexico.

Standards Conference Final Paper now Available at www.wgu.edu

The Technology Standards for Global Learning Conference facilitated a tremendous discussion from a very diverse group of individuals. These discussions led to consensus on final recommendations for standards in global distance learning. These recommendations, and other outcomes from the conference have been outlined in a final paper now available at the WGU website—www.wgu.edu. Just click on About WGU and you will find the paper under Press Releases. The document is available for download in both Word and WordPerfect formats.

In addition to the recommendations mentioned above, the conference report also includes the findings from the seven working sessions, a summary of presentations made by guest speakers and panelists, and other key information regarding the conference itself. WGU is currently in the process of selecting a date for the 1999 follow-up conference to this year's Technology Standards for Global Learning. Please keep your eye on the WGU web site for the announcement of this date.
WGU is pleased to announce the addition of yet another distinguished member to its National Advisory Board. Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. will become the 12th member of the NAB.

Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. is the world’s leading provider of educational services to families, schools, and industry. Jeffrey Cohen, vice president of Academic Services for Sylvan Prometric, stated that the partnership is a “marvelous fit” for his group. “WGU is a revolutionary concept in education. It’s truly exciting to be part of something that will give millions of people access to quality coursework and the ability to earn a degree via competency-based education.”

Sylvan Prometric is the global leader in delivery of technology-based assessment services for academic admissions and professional licensure/certification. In 1997, Sylvan delivered more than 2.3 million computer based tests in 25 languages through its network of nearly 2,000 Authorized Prometric Testing and Sylvan Technology Centers in 105 countries. Sylvan Prometric delivers standardized tests for more than 150 clients, including virtually all major IT industry certification programs.

“Sylvan is a wonderful addition to our board,” said Jeff Livingston, CEO of WGU. “Not just because of their remarkable business capabilities, but also because of their demonstrated commitment to excellence in lifelong learning.”

WGU is pleased to announce that significant progress has been made with respect to WGU’s state licensing process since last updating you in May. WGU has now either been approved or granted an exemption to operate in thirteen of our eighteen member states and territories: Arizona, Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and the Territory of Guam.

Applications to seek a license for WGU to operate are currently pending in 2 states, and WGU continues to work with the remaining 3 states regarding the appropriate process for effective licensure.

A native of Colorado, Mark and his wife, Alesha recently celebrated the birth of their first child, Kyla.

Tiffney Schmohe has been promoted to the position of Education Provider Information Coordinator in Denver. Tiffney is managing interactions with the pilot providers during the phase of populating the Smart Catalog™ with their programs, courses and classes.

Kim Puckett joined the WGU staff in Salt Lake City as Accounting Assistant. She grew up in Indiana and attended Ball State University. With 15 years of experience in accounting, she has previously held positions at Air Liquide America, International PowerSystems, and Federal Mogul. In May, Kim moved to Salt Lake from Vermont with husband Jim and son Silas.

**Alec Testa** is the new Director of Assessment at WGU in Denver. Prior to coming to WGU, he was the Executive Director of Planning and Analysis at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU). Before that he was the Coordinator of the Assessment Resource Office at ENMU. Alec was also the first president of the New Mexico Higher Education Assessment Association, and has served on the conference committees for the American Association of Higher Education Assessment Forum, and the Teaching and Learning Technology annual Summer Institute. Alec began his work in higher education working in student affairs at California State University Fresno, and took his doctorate in Counseling and Educational Psychology from the University of Nevada, Reno. He is a Nationally Certified Counselor.

**Kay Rollins** joins WGU as a Quality Control Editor, Education Providers Division, in Denver. Prior to joining WGU, she was an enrollment specialist with The Women’s College, University of Denver. Kay received her bachelor’s degree from Kansas State University and is near completion of a master’s degree in Adult Education from Regis University, Denver.

**Mark Zenger** is currently serving as the Academic Support Coordinator at the WGU Denver Offices. Prior, Mark worked in the customer service environment managing the training department at the Levi Strauss & Co. outsourced call center. He graduated in 1996 from Brigham Young University with a B.S. in Zoology. He is now attending the University of Colorado at Denver to earn a master’s degree in Health and Business Administration.

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Sloan Foundation Contributes Second WGU Grant

WGU is pleased to announce a second contribution to WGU from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. WGU is very grateful for the continued support and commitment the Sloan Foundation has given to WGU. The Sloan Foundation has made a 1998 contribution to WGU with a $250,000 grant. The Sloan Foundation contributed a $500,000 grant to WGU in 1997. This renewed show of support from the Sloan Foundation has bolstered the credibility of WGU and helps move forward the vision of WGU.

"The Sloan Foundation is very pleased to be able to make this second grant to the Western Governors University," stated Frank Mayadas, Senior Program Officer for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and member of both the WGU Board of Trustees and National Advisory Board. "WGU is built on a visionary premise, and that vision is now becoming a reality. We are delighted to reaffirm our support."

Frank Mayadas has been a valued member of both of the WGU boards, and has provided critical guidance and leadership during his involvement with WGU. WGU is very pleased to have the support of and association with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Progress Report on Academic Affairs

Dr. Robert Albrecht, CAO

Much progress has been made over the summer with respect to academic affairs. Dr. Alec Testa joined the Western Governors University staff on August 1 as our first Director of Assessment. We pressed him into service before his actual start day so that he could attend the meetings of the two program councils and the assessment council in Denver on July 20-22. These meetings were critical to the development of the WGU assessment process.

Since WGU exists as a credentialing and certifying institution rather than a teaching institution, the assessment process is a cornerstone of our work. In the certificate and degree programs every student must demonstrate the possession of skills and competencies through individual assessments. So, the program councils work together with the assessment council to identify the assessments that will measure the competencies that make up the curriculum. Some off-the-shelf assessments (tests to most of us who are not in this field) are faulty (in the eyes of test and measurement people); some are inappropriate because they are aimed at a different audience from our students; some simply don't measure the skills required in our curriculum; and others fail for a variety of reasons.

Hence, the joint meeting of program councils and assessment council is the occasion for these experts from around the country to identify the process for selecting assessments for the various domains of the curricula, and for completing the process of choosing the particular assessment. Three days of meetings included discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of various instruments, of the precise nature of the curricular requirement, of the various kinds of assessment and so forth. Since WGU chose the council members on the basis of different expertise, these meetings provided the opportunity for program people and assessment people to pool their expertise in order to select sound assessments for our students.

The discussions are the WGU version of a typical university meeting where the requirements for a degree are set and agreed upon by the faculty. The administrative staff takes the results of those meetings and implements them, but it is the faculty that sets the standards of the degree for the student.

Another area of activity in WGU where significant progress is being made is in program development. The Curriculum Development project, headed by Dr. Judy Grace and funded by the Colorado Office of Energy Conservation, is on schedule in developing program curricula for about 15 certificates and degrees. That work will be completed by March, 1999.

CALENDAR

September 2, 1998
Board of Trustees & National Advisory Board Meeting
San Jose

October 14, 1998
Board of Trustees Meeting
Salt Lake City

January 15, 1999
Board of Trustees Meeting
Silicon Valley

Remaining 1999 Board Meetings—TBA