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Western Governors University Designated to Provide Financial Aid to Online Students

Federal financial aid now available to WGU students through unique program

SALT LAKE CITY - Western Governors University (WGU) announced today that it has been selected as part of a limited number of higher education institutions, to participate in a new federal financial aid program specifically designed to benefit distance-education students.

The program designates only 15 post-secondary schools, systems and consortia from across the country to allow distance-education students to benefit from all types of federal financial aid. In making the announcement in Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said: "Recent advances in technology and use of the Internet have resulted in a spectacular growth in distance education and present us with a two-fold challenge: to ensure that students pursuing high-quality distance learning programs have access to federal student aid, and at the same time, to ensure the integrity of the federal student aid programs. These projects will help us accomplish both goals by testing new ways of delivering federal aid to students involved in distance education programs."

"We are very pleased to be recognized by the department in this way," said Dr. Robert C. Albrecht, WGU Chancellor. "For the past several years, students who wished to pursue their education by distance learning were excluded from receiving federal aid. With this program, WGU students will directly benefit with expanded educational opportunity, regardless of means and will enjoy the same benefits as campus-based students. It helps us fulfill the mission given us by the governors of our member states to expand access to higher education."

In hopes of being named by the department as a participating institution, WGU has been working for the past several months to make the necessary preparations to ensure a smooth implementation of these new financial services in time for the Fall 1999 semester.

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 online catalog. 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, Utah, and its academic offices are in Denver, Colorado.