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Peterson's and Western Governors University Partner to Bring Greater Distance Learning Choices to Students Worldwide

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Partnership Further Demonstrates Peterson's and Parent Company Thomson Learning's Commitment to Lifelong Learning

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PRINCETON, NJ -- Peterson's, the nation's leading provider of information about distance learning programs, and Western Governors University (WGU), a competency-based cyber university, have partnered to give adults quick and easy access to detailed information about WGU degree programs and the ability to electronically query and link to WGU admissions counselors. The partnership builds upon a \$1-million investment Peterson's parent, Thomson Learning, made in WGU last year and is part of Peterson's and Thomson Learning's strategy to meet the multiple needs of lifelong learners.

"Distance learning is all about access," says Peterson's Chief Executive Officer, Michael Brannick, "and so is Peterson's. Peterson's is a catalyst: we make more effective connections between educational consumers and education providers. By harnessing the power of our student outreach through The Education SupersiteSM at petersons.com, WGU will be able to focus its efforts on providing its quality degree programs and spend less time on basic recruiting and admissions."

WGU, which has the backing of governors from 19 states, has developed competency-based programs in four areas of study that offer students the opportunity to earn a degree or certificate based on their demonstrated skills and knowledge essential for mastery of a particular field. WGU's master's degree in learning and technology, associate of arts degree, and associate degrees in network administration and electronic manufacturing technology provide students with a way to utilize their life and work experience to earn a college degree. In addition, WGU offers over 500 distance education courses from over 40 universities and colleges.

"Now more than ever, people need to find affordable, practical education that will give them skills and knowledge they can take directly into the workplace," adds Bob Mendenhall, president of WGU. "Peterson's student outreach will help learners interested in competency-based degree programs to access the quality programs we offer."

Forecasts indicate that distance learning enrollments will skyrocket in the new millennium as non-traditional students -- those over 25 -- seek educational opportunities and programs designed around their individual goals, schedules, job requirements, and interest. International Data Corporation, a market research firm, indicates that distance learning enrollments are growing by 33 percent annually and will reach 2.23 million in 2002. Consequently, the number of institutions and organizations providing such education alternatives is expected to escalate in order to meet this demand. A world of opportunities awaits distance learning candidates.

About Peterson's

Founded in 1966, Peterson's, a division of Thomson Learning, is the most trusted source of advice and comprehensive information about education and career opportunities. The world's leading provider of online services in support of lifelong education access and career choice, Peterson's is also renowned for its reference guides, books, and software. The Education SupersiteSM at www.petersons.com is the most heavily traveled educational resource on the Internet, serving hundreds of thousands of unique visitors every month. The Web site has searchable databases and interactive tools to help users learn about and contact U.S.-accredited academic institutions and summer programs. CollegeQuestSM (www.CollegeQuest.com), Peterson's site for college-bound students and their families, provides a complete solution for each step of the college decision process, from finding and applying to colleges to searching for financial aid and scholarships. Peterson's, in association with Educational Testing Service, also offers GradAdvantageSM (www.gradadvantage.org), a Web site featuring online graduate school applications. Peterson's products and services attract an audience of over 45 million education consumers annually.

Thomson Learning is one of the world's largest providers of information and materials for learning. Whether it is in the traditional academic setting, the corporate training room, the career school, or the virtual classroom, Thomson Learning provides online services and print and multimedia products.

Headquartered in Stamford, CT, with offices worldwide, Thomson Learning is a division of The Thomson Corporation (TTC). TTC is one of the world's leading information companies, with 40,000 employees worldwide and revenues of more than \$6 billion. TTC's common shares are traded on the Toronto, Montreal, and London stock exchanges.

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 1996 as a result of the vision of the governors of the western United States to share higher education distance learning resources.

Editors Note: For customized distance learning statistics or review copies of Peterson's Guide to Distance Learning Programs, Distance Learning MBA, Independent Study Catalog, or Virtual College by Pam Dixon, contact Peterson's News Bureau at 888-892-6288.