

PRESS RELEASES

News Brief - 12/13/99

[Welcome to WGU](#)

[What We Are](#)

[Who's Involved](#)

[Vision, History & Mission](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Administration](#)

[About Your Privacy](#)

[Glossary](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Return to Press Releases](#)

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60 Washington Teachers Recipients of Western Governors University Scholarships

60 Washington teachers to earn WGU master's degree with scholarships sponsored by Washington businesses

SALT LAKE CITY - Sixty Washington teachers have been awarded scholarships that cover half of the tuition necessary to earn a master of arts degree in learning and technology from Western Governors University (WGU), the competency-based university consortium comprised of 19 member states.

The WGU MA degree in learning and technology is a robust blend of leadership, education, and technology curricula geared for the self-starter. While appropriate for master's candidates of various backgrounds, the program is specifically designed for professional educators who currently use technology in the classroom and who are committed to discovering new and better ways to teach.

Gov. Locke (Washington), co-chair of WGU, stated, "This is a tremendous opportunity for Washington teachers and students. WGU is meeting two very important needs for the State of Washington with this program; its master of arts program enables teachers to enhance their teaching skills with technology in order to provide an even more enriching experience for the students in their classroom; and its competency-based distance education model provides the flexibility and accessibility today's teachers need in order to advance their education and careers."

WGU President Bob Mendenhall added, "The WGU master of arts degree gives teachers a chance to earn a quality degree through distance education while maintaining full-time careers, or what I like to call the opportunity to 'learn at your own pace at your own place.' Another great benefit of the program is the ability for these scholarship teachers to then take what they learn back to their individual schools and districts and help other teachers benefit from technology-based learning as well."

Gene Sharratt, superintendent of the North Central Educational Service District in Washington stated, "The WGU MA program offers a timely and significant online learning opportunity for educators in north central Washington who are eager to participate in this competency-based program. Access to traditional higher educational experiences is not possible for many of our educators due to distance and travel conditions. Online learning, which recognizes skills already mastered through life and work experiences, complements identified educator needs in our region. This program further complements Gov. Locke's initiative to provide Internet access to each of the school districts and classrooms in Washington. North Central Educational Service District is proud to be part of this exciting and worthy opportunity, and we welcome this opportunity to further the skills of our teachers, which translates to improvement in student learning."

The 60 Washington teachers who received scholarships have already enrolled in the WGU master of arts degree program and will now begin working toward their WGU MA degree.

About WGU

WGU (www.wgu.edu) 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.