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Interregional Accrediting Committee (IRAC) defers decision regarding WGU candidate for accreditation status

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SALT LAKE CITY - In follow-up to the WGU site visit for candidacy for accreditation that took place February 7-10, 2000, the Interregional Accrediting Committee (IRAC) today announced that they have been unable to decide this issue and have deferred action on WGU's application for six months. IRAC has asked WGU to submit further information about its unique model.

[Glossary](#)

"While we would have preferred more certainty, this is part of the process for a new institution," stated WGU president Bob Mendenhall. "Traditional accreditation is a three stage process-eligibility, candidacy, and accreditation...and it takes some time. WGU's status as an eligible university has not changed, and no negative judgment about the quality of our degrees is implied by this deferral."

[FAQs](#)

WGU provost, Dr. Chip Johnstone added, "The fact that five major universities already accept our associate degrees in transfer through articulation agreements, that several states recognize our master's degree for teachers, and that twenty major corporations provide substantial financial support for WGU's continuing development is a tremendous show of quality support for WGU. While our candidacy will take longer to achieve, it is not surprising that the uniquely innovative nature of our model is difficult for traditional educators to evaluate."

WGU Co-Chair Gov. Mike Leavitt of Utah, stated, "The needs of society for education and training are changing more rapidly than traditional education can meet. WGU was developed as a new and unique distance education initiative to address those needs. We realize that it will take time for the traditional accreditation agencies to feel comfortable with this kind of innovation, but the market is demanding it and it will happen. WGU will continue to move forward in a positive and quality manner and work diligently to provide IRAC with what they have requested to make a decision regarding our candidate for accreditation status over the next six months."

"Over the last 10 years, traditional educational institutions have not been able to keep pace with society's or industry's needs. The result is that we have gone around traditional education processes," added WGU board member Gov. Jim Geringer of Wyoming. "That was the reason for the creation of WGU. We expect that the traditions will change out of the necessity to certify competency in new ways. Education must adapt so that it can actually certify competency, not just certify that a student has been exposed to education, and that is what WGU is all about. The deferment of WGU's candidacy status demonstrates the impact WGU is already having on higher education and the need for change. We will continue to move forward with our exciting initiative."

About IRAC

IRAC is the sixteen-member committee that represents four regional accreditation commissions that was formed to conduct the accreditation process for WGU. The commissions involved in IRAC are the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Commission on Institutions of Higher Education), Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (Commission on Colleges), the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities and Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges).

About WGU

WGU is a degree-granting, competency-based, online, distance-education institution. With just a few clicks at www.wgu.edu, a student can find competency-based degree programs, an online catalog of quality distance-learning courses, an online library, bookstore, and one-on-one access to a personal WGU mentor, who will guide the student through his or her customized degree program. WGU was founded and is supported by 19 states and governors as well as 20 leading corporations and foundations. Current WGU competency-based degree offerings include an MA in learning and technology, an AA, three AAS degrees in information technology, and an AAS degree in electronics manufacturing technology.



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