

PRESS RELEASES

News Brief - 8/27/01

[Welcome to WGU](#)

[Return to Press Releases](#)

[What We Are](#)

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[Who's Involved](#)

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[Newsletters](#)

Governor Martz and Gates Foundation's Vander Ark Become Trustees of Western Governors University

[Administration](#)

SALT LAKE CITY - Two new members have been elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees of Western Governors University, the only online, competency-based university in the country. They are Montana Gov. Judy Martz and Tom Vander Ark, executive director, education, for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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[Glossary](#)

Gov. Martz was elected as Montana's first female governor last November after serving four years as the state's lieutenant governor. A Montana native, Gov. Martz worked as a field representative for U.S. Senator Conrad Burns from 1989 to 1995. She also served as president of the Butte Chamber of Commerce in the early 1990's. For more than 30 years, she and her husband, Harry Martz, have owned and operated a commercial solid-waste business in Butte. As a small business owner, she became actively involved in local and statewide economic development issues.

[FAQs](#)

Tom Vander Ark is the executive director for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's education initiative, where he is responsible for the development and administration of the foundation's K-12 education grant programs and scholarship programs. For the five years before he joined the foundation, Vander Ark served as a public school superintendent in one of Washington state's larger districts. Prior to leading Federal Way Public Schools, Vander Ark ran a consulting practice for Cap Gemini and was a senior executive for a \$5 billion national retailer.

WGU offers the only online competency-based degrees in the country. At the university's Web site, www.wgu.edu, students can find descriptions of competency-based degree programs, an online catalog of quality distance-learning courses, an online library, bookstore, and access to a personal WGU mentor, who will guide a student through his or her customized degree program. Students can use prior work, college and life experience coupled with learning new skills to develop and demonstrate the competencies necessary to earn a WGU degree that is relevant to education and career goals.

WGU provides accessibility, flexibility, and the opportunity for all students to achieve their educational goals. WGU was founded and is supported by 19 states and governors as well as 22 leading corporations and foundations. Current WGU degree offerings include an associate of arts degree, associate of applied science degrees in IT/network administration and IT/CNE, associate of science degrees in business and IT, bachelor of science degrees in business/IT management and computer information systems, and a master of arts degree in learning and technology.

WGU is governed by a board of trustees made up of educators, industry leaders, and governors. In addition to Gov. Martz and Mr. Vander Ark, three trustees were recently re-elected: Jim Geringer, governor of Wyoming; Clara M. Lovett, president emeritus, Northern Arizona University; and Roy Romer, former governor of Colorado, superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District. Also serving as trustees are: Eric A. Benhamou, chairman of the board, 3Com Corp.; Kim Jones, vice president of Worldwide Field Operations, Sun Microsystems; Tony Knowles, governor of Alaska; Michael O. Leavitt, co-chair, governor of Utah; Gary Locke, co-chair, governor of Washington; Robert Mendenhall, president and CEO, Western Governors University; Tom Pelto, vice president of Law & Government Affairs, AT&T Corp.; David Powers, executive director, Nebraska Coordinating Commission on Higher Education; Sean Rush, general manager of Global Education Industry, IBM Corp.; and Samuel H. Smith, president emeritus, Washington State University.