

“Western Governors University’s online competency based programs for current and prospective teachers will make a significant difference in teacher education nationally.” Utah Governor Michael Leavitt

FIRST QUARTER 2003



Three High Technology CEOs Highlight Western Governors University At Western Governors Association Winter Meeting

During a Plenary Session of the Western Governors’ Association Winter Meeting in December, three prominent executives in the field of high technology commented on the contributions of Western Governors University.



Eric Benhamou

Eric Benhamou, Chairman and CEO of Palm, Inc., said Western Governors University has made “extraordinary progress” over the last year and is “riding the wave of an evolution in technology.” He told the governors, “the notion of competency based education is becoming broadly accepted because competency based

promotions are the basis of advancement in our industry.” WGU is in sync with what industry has adopted and this appeals to CEOs in the technology field.



Eric Schmidt

Google CEO Eric Schmidt said WGU has taken hold of the concept that “formerly inaccessible information is now easily available on the Internet... it’s ‘on sale.’” He said, “I’ve been involved in the education conversation over the years and now I see WGU making Internet education happen.”



Tom Siebel

Tom Siebel, Chairman and CEO of Siebel Systems said, “WGU is leveraging great work from great universities to deliver a product of enormous educational and economic value.” He said the application of technology makes education available “any time, in any language, at any place, in any currency.”



WGU President Robert Mendenhall explains how Western Governors University programs are helping to meet the demand for more qualified teachers. From left to right, Gov. Jim Geringer, Wyoming, Gov. Mike Johanns, Nebraska, Gov. Judy Martz, Montana, Jim Souby, Western Governors Association Executive Director, and President Mendenhall.

High Demand for Teachers, WGU Initiatives Discussed At Winter Meeting of Western Governors

Educational concerns highlighted the discussion at the Winter Meeting of the Western Governors’ Association (WGA) in December. WGA Chair Judy Martz, Governor of Montana, set the stage by asking her colleagues, “How do we insure that we have enough qualified teachers?” She said the governors are concerned that states will have a well qualified teaching force, sufficient in numbers to educate children who will be seeking jobs in a very competitive international marketplace.

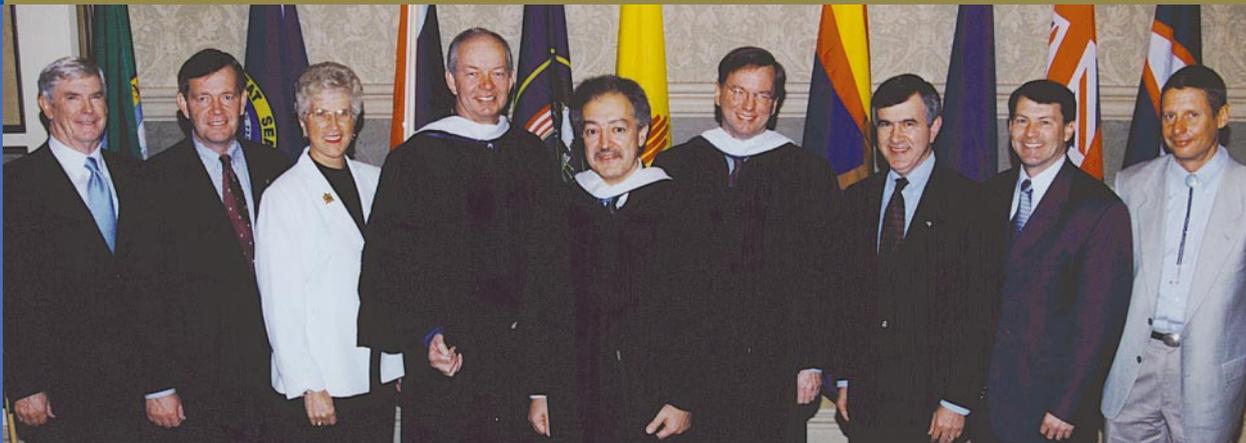
Utah Governor Michael O. Leavitt said Western Governors University, which was born from a brainstorming discussion by the governors in June 1995, has already effectively “leveraged the tools of technology” to meet the growing demand for teachers. He said a \$10 million Department of Education grant to WGU for a teachers college has allowed WGU to develop bachelors and masters degrees in education, including initial teacher certification for elementary and secondary teachers and specialization in reading, math, science, ESL, and learning technology. WGU programs are focused on important underserved populations, including paraprofessionals and uncertified teachers already in the schools, as well as second-career professionals.

Robert Mendenhall, President of Western Governors University, said technology is greatly expanding access to higher education and fundamentally changing the models of education with which we are familiar. “In particular, technology enables education that is learner-centric, individualized, and interactive, making education far more relevant to the needs of individuals. It allows for anytime, anyplace learning, which is particularly attractive to working adults, and it enables true lifelong learning in a formal sense. These new forms of educational delivery require new ways to measure and credential learning. Governors, together with industry leaders, need to actively support the new learning paradigms for them to flourish.”

Western Governors University



"Their concern, understanding and leadership in establishing competency-based education models speaks both to their expertise and their very real concerns about expanding access and accountability in higher education." Western Governors University President Robert Mendenhall



WGU honorary degrees were bestowed upon Gov. Jim Geringer, Wyoming, Eric Benhamou, and Dr. Eric E. Schmidt at the Western Governors Association Winter Meeting. From left to right, Gov. Kenny Guinn, Nevada, Gov. Mike Leavitt, Utah, Gov. Judy Martz, Montana, Gov. Geringer, Mr. Benhamou, Dr. Schmidt, Gov. Mike Johanns, Nebraska, Gov. Mike Rounds, South Dakota, and Gov. Gary Johnson, New Mexico.

Western Governors University

Western Governors University Bestows Honorary Degrees

At graduation ceremonies in Salt Lake City and Las Vegas, Western Governors University conferred five honorary degrees on key early supporters of the university.

Senator Robert F. Bennett is serving a second 6-year term in the U.S. Senate after a successful business career as CEO of the Franklin International Institute (now Franklin Covey). He has been a leader in the Senate in support of distance education and Western Governors University.

Jim Swartz has been a leading Silicon Valley venture capitalist since the early 1970s and is a founder and general partner of Accel Partners. He provided significant financial support for WGU to reach out to underserved populations.

Gov. Jim Geringer served eight years as Governor of Wyoming and is one of the original founding governors of Western Governors University. Education has been a major priority and interest and he has pushed for higher standards, proper assessment of achievement, and effective use of technology for classroom and distance learning.

Eric Benhamou is Chairman of 3Com and Chairman and interim CEO of Palm Inc. He served on the WGU Board of Trustees and was Chair of the National Advisory Board for the first five years of the University.

Dr. Eric E. Schmidt has served on the University's National Advisory Board and is a Corporate Partner, first as Chairman and CEO of Novell Inc., and currently as Chairman and CEO of Google.

WGU President Robert Mendenhall said, "These five individuals exemplify the forward-thinking supporters of WGU in both the public and private sector, and their concern, understanding and leadership in establishing competency-based education models speaks both to their expertise and their very real concerns about expanding access and accountability in higher education."

Western Governors Review Scholarship Programs And Reaffirm On-Going Support for WGU

A presentation on Western Governors University programs and activities was featured during the Plenary Session at the Western Governors' Association Winter Meeting, including an update on the Legacy Scholarships announced last year. Under the leadership of the Western Governors' Foundation, the western governors, corporate sponsors and education leaders gathered at the close of the Olympics in Salt Lake City to announce the Teachers' Legacy Scholarships – a legacy for the classroom. The new partnership among western governors, business leaders, and WGU aims to address a national need for 2 million new teachers over the next 10 years and current significant teacher shortages in math, science and reading.

The governors committed to raise 1000 Legacy Scholarships to assist K-12 teachers and prospective teachers who wish to obtain initial elementary teacher certification, a secondary math endorsement, or pursue an advanced degree in Learning and Technology through Western Governors University. To date, they have funded over 200 scholarships for teachers in 13 western states.

During the discussion of how to fine tune and implement improvements in distance learning, Tom Siebel, Chairman and CEO of Siebel Systems told the governors that a "curriculum markup language" (CML) would make computer-based education more accessible and interactive. He said "the piece of technology we still need in distance learning is a CML. It is not yet invented, but it will be done. It will be the breakthrough technology which will change distance education."

(Western Governors Review Scholarship Program... Continued from page 2.)

The governors responded by adopting a resolution to direct western state-funded universities and information technology resource organizations to define and develop the curriculum markup language standard. The CML standard would apply to software language and an associated browser that would enable the delivery of instructor-led or computer-aided coursework; Internet-driven collaborative questions and answers; real-time and structured skills assessment; structured means of organizing, delivering and interacting with education materials; and assembly and interaction of ad hoc workgroups.



Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt (center) with new WGU National Advisory Board Members Dr. Eric Schmidt (L) and Tom Siebel.

Siebel Systems and Google Now Represented on Western Governors University National Advisory Board

Tom Siebel, President and CEO of Siebel Systems, Inc. and Eric Schmidt, President and CEO of Google, have joined the WGU National Advisory Board. The WGU National Advisory Board was created to foster a global and visionary perspective consistent with the successful implementation of the Western

Governors University and to aid in the strategic planning process. The NAB serves at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees and consists of a diverse group of industry representatives, who share a common interest in improving education.

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Western Governors University



Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn and Dr. George Ann Rice, Clark Country School District, developed innovative strategies to attract teachers from within the district.

WGU Awarded \$3.7 Million DOE 'Transition to Teaching' Grant to Help Nevada and Texas Districts Meet Growing Demand for New Teachers

Faced with a critical shortage of qualified K-12 teachers, school districts throughout the nation are struggling to meet the need for 2 million new teachers in the next 10 years. Today 30-40% of teachers in many urban and rural districts are not certified. The need is especially acute in learning technology, math, science, reading and ESL.

For the Clark County School District in Las Vegas and Houston's Region 4, which is comprised of 54 districts, a U.S. Dept. of Education 5-year grant will provide scholarships for 648 paraprofessionals to be certified as teachers. Through Western Governors University, these individuals will earn their Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies degree and receive elementary certification.

According to Dr. George Ann Rice of Nevada's Clark County School District, the program helps to meet a critical need. She said her large district can only produce 30% of the teachers they need every year. "We need to grow more teachers from within, and that means reaching and teaching prospective teachers in new ways. This grant is an attractive solution to the dramatic teacher's shortage."

Dr. Rice said her district is attracted to Western Governors University because it provides access to people who want to become teachers but who don't have time for traditional education. And, because it is competency based, many of the paraprofessionals have demonstrated skills which will make it possible for them to earn their degrees and certification more rapidly. Dr. Rice said competency based degree programs offered through WGU assure her of attracting paraprofessionals who have served in the classrooms, know the schools and neighborhoods, and who are anxious to become fully-qualified teachers.

Students Around the Country Find WGU's Online Competency Based Programs the Right Fit for Educational Advancement

On December 1, 2000, Gennie Kirch, a Roy, Utah elementary school teacher, received her Master of Arts in Learning and Technology, becoming the first graduate of Western Governors University. Since then, 32 more students have received degrees from the country's only online, competency-based university. The graduates, from Alaska, California, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Oregon, Utah, Arizona and Wyoming, are mostly working adults who have decided to pursue degrees through WGU because of the flexibility offered by the University. Many of them express statements similar to Gennie's in the first graduation ceremony.

"For the past fifteen years, I've wanted to get my master's degree, and was even accepted in a traditional university, but time, money and family circumstances prevented it from happening," said Ms. Kirch. "When I learned of WGU, and that my master's program could be designed for me, it seemed too good to be true."

Ms. Kirch said it wasn't easy, however. "I often studied in the middle of the night when I had the time, and when the Internet was faster, but sometimes I wasn't sure I could keep going. I think it was definitely as difficult as a traditional classroom education, maybe harder," she said.

The most recent WGU graduates received degrees in December 2002 in conjunction with the Western Governors' Association Winter Meeting in Las Vegas. They are Paris M. Waddill, Portland, Oregon, Robb Myhre, Everson, Washington, Gregory P. Marshall, Bellingham, Washington, and Debra S. Austin, Beaverton, Oregon.

Western Governors University...

...offers the only online competency-based degrees in the country. At the University's website, www.wgu.edu, students can find 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.

WGU was founded and is supported by 19 states and governors, as well as 25 leading corporations and foundations. WGU offers associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees in three areas: IT, business and education.

2040 East Murray Holladay Road, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117
P (801) 274-3280 F (801) 274-3305 www.wgu.edu