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Utah State School Board Approves WGU Degrees for Teacher Licensure

SALT LAKE CITY -- The Utah State Board of Education today unanimously approved Western Governors University (WGU) teacher licensure programs.

WGU is unique in obtaining approval from multiple states, whereas most teacher education programs are only approved in a single state. Utah becomes the fourth state to formally approve WGU programs for teacher licensure, joining Arizona, Nevada and Texas. Because WGU is regionally accredited and state-approved, WGU graduates are also directly accepted for initial licensure in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Washington. In addition, a total of 46 states have reciprocal agreements with states which have approved WGU.

According to Western Governors University President Dr. Robert Mendenhall, "This is a very significant boon for Utah teachers, particularly in rural areas and for those who work full time. WGU's Teachers College (tc.wgu.edu) offers the only online competency-based teacher licensure program in the state. Competency-based degrees means students may demonstrate their competency rather than just taking courses and counting credit hours."

The approval was based on a review by the State Office of Education and the State Board, as well as an independent evaluation commissioned by the State Office, and conducted by Dr. Steve Lilly, dean of education, California State University San Marcos. Dr. Lilly said: "If I were to make a recommendation based on my review of the three documents submitted by WGU, I would suggest that they be granted approval to offer the programs requested....To not approve them at this time would, in my view, represents a lost opportunity to look at a truly innovative approach to teacher preparation..."

Specifically, the Board approved a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master of Arts in Teaching, both of which lead to pre-kindergarten through 8th grade licensure in the State of Utah. The Board also unanimously approved WGU's Master of Arts in Mathematics Education, an endorsement program for already-certified teachers.

WGU offers the only online competency-based degrees in the country. At the university's Web site, 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.