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Guinn co-chairman of online university

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SUN CAPITAL BUREAU

CARSON CITY Although Gov Kenny Guinn failed to show up at the conference of the Western Governors Association in Montana, his colleagues named him co-chairman of the Western Governors University, an online school that awards degrees based on competency rather than credit hours.

Guinn will be co-chairman with New Mexico Gov Bill Richardson.

Guinn said Tuesday that the online school "is an important resource to meet the growing demand for qualified teachers in Nevada."

"School aides who desire to become certified teachers can access WGU's online programs wherever they live and earn a degree through the Transition to Teaching Program," Guinn said.

Bob Mendenhall, president of Western Governors University, said it started its bachelor's degree courses for schoolteachers in March. He estimates that 75 of the school's 1,750 students are Nevada residents.

Most of the students are professionals or substitute teachers who are not certified by the state to teach. Some of them have degrees in other fields and want to earn a degree in education so they can teach.

The school has a master's program that helps teachers learn to use technology in the classroom. A handful of Nevada teachers have gained their master's degrees in that field, Mendenhall said.

Nineteen Western states belong to the nonprofit school, which is supported by tuition, grants from corporations and federal funds.

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