



News Brief - 12/08/04

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Western Governors University experiences year of impressive growth

SALT LAKE CITY -- Western Governors University (www.wgu.edu) reported another year of remarkable gains for its online, competency-based institution. This year enrollment in WGU degree programs more than doubled from 1,500 students to over 3,000. According to Robert W. Mendenhall, president of the university, WGU is still growing enrollments at almost 10 percent a month, adding 250 to 300 new students each month.

"We are an extremely attractive option for working adults who have competencies but lack the academic credentials," said President Mendenhall.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, tuition revenues increased 400 percent, and university net assets increased 37 percent. In addition, the university funded over \$1 million in scholarships and added three new corporate sponsors to its National Advisory Board, bringing the total to more than 20 organizations, each contributing \$250,000 or more. Current Advisory Board members include AT&T, Dell, Farmers Insurance Group, Google, Hewlett-Packard, Oracle, Qwest, Sallie Mae, Siebel Systems, Thomson Corp., Time Warner and Zions Bank among others.

In the past year, over 100 students have graduated from WGU, bringing the total number of graduates to over 160. Four years ago WGU had only 225 students, and even as recently as two years ago reported enrollment of only 750. Two years ago, WGU offered nine degree programs; it currently offers 24 different bachelor's and master's degrees in three principal areas: business, information technology and education.

Earlier this year, WGU moved into 16,000 sq. ft. of new office space and is expanding to an additional 10,000 sq. ft. in January. WGU employs more than 50 faculty in 24 different states, and has total employment of over 140 people.

During 2004, enrollments in the WGU Teachers College increased from 700 students to more than 2000. WGU is unique in providing competency-based degree programs leading to teacher licensure in multiple states. "We're playing a vital role in addressing our nation's teacher shortage by providing degrees and certificates leading to licensure in elementary education, math, science and social science," said President Mendenhall. WGU also has more than 400 current teachers studying for master's degrees.

"WGU is designed for people who have the desire and drive to get the work done," said Sandra Cipra, an elementary teacher who recently received her master's degree from the university. "I live two and half hours from the nearest university. By learning online, I set my own hours of study and overcame geographical barriers while receiving an excellent education. This whole experience has been very rewarding."

In addition to the success of the Teachers College, enrollments in WGU's business and information technology degrees also more than doubled. The university currently offers seven different bachelor's degrees in business, including Business Management, Information Technology Management, Human Resource Management, and Finance. WGU introduced this year four new information technology programs. In addition to a B.S. in Computer Information Systems, WGU now offers IT degrees in Network Management, Software Development, Project Management, and Security. And the university is launching its first MBA programs in January, with a general MBA degree and an MBA in IT management.

WGU currently has students in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, three U.S. territories, and nine foreign countries. States with the most WGU students include Texas, Utah, California, Washington, Georgia and Florida. The average age of WGU students is 40 and most work full-time.

"WGU was a great way for me to finish my degree while working," said recent graduate Alaina Hardie, a systems engineer for Q9 Networks in Toronto. "I highly recommend this school to others."

About Western Governors University

WGU is the only accredited university in the U.S. offering online competency-based degree programs. The university was founded and is supported by 19 governors, as well as over 20 leading corporations and foundations. WGU offers bachelor's and master's degrees in Information Technology, Business and Education. More information is available at www.wgu.edu.