



News Brief - 7/15/05

Former US Secretary of Education Dr. Rod Paige To Deliver Commencement Address At Graduation Ceremony on August 6

SALT LAKE CITY -- Recent graduates from Western Governors University will receive their degrees at graduation ceremonies beginning at 10 am on Aug. 6 in Salt Lake City. Commencement speaker Dr. Rod Paige, former US Secretary of Education, will address the candidates for bachelor's and master's degrees. The graduating class is comprised of 199 individuals from 40 states and 2 foreign countries.

The graduation ceremony will also be simulcast over the Internet to graduates who are not able to attend in person. Because of bandwidth restrictions the program is available only to graduates and their families and cannot be accessed by the general public.

Secretary Paige became the 7th U.S. Secretary of Education in 2001, serving until last year. The son of a principal and a librarian in public schools, he is the first school superintendent ever to serve as Secretary of Education. He earned a bachelor's degree from Jackson State University in his home state and a master's and a doctoral degree from Indiana University.

Secretary Paige was guided by a philosophy that education is a civil right, just like the right to vote or to be treated equally. As Secretary, Dr. Paige created the Blueprint for Management Excellence in order to streamline operations and provide strategic direction and focus for the department's central mission: ensuring equal access to education and promoting educational excellence throughout the nation.

Several graduates will also have an opportunity to speak during the ceremony. The opportunity for graduates to describe their experiences as WGU students has become an especially inspiring tradition at WGU graduations. Students describe their interactions with their faculty and fellow students, what returning to school has meant in their lives, and how their programs have helped them reach their goals. WGU holds graduation ceremonies twice a year.