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# The Salt Lake Tribune

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## WGU pays its way

### Salt Lake Tribune

It is time someone calls the press on irresponsible negative reporting that ignores truth. *The Tribune's* July 24 article "WGU survives on heavy pork diet" is a prime example. Here is the truth.

The \$21 million provided over eight years by the federal government successfully created a new private university, the nation's only nonprofit online competency-based university. Western Governors University is now self-sustaining on tuition, accounting for 86 percent of revenue, so our survival is hardly tied to federal funds.

WGU's mission is exactly what federal funding should support. WGU has established a new model in higher education, based on demonstrating competency rather than credit hours or clock hours. WGU has increased access for working adults. One-third of WGU students are rural, one-third have annual household income less than \$35,000, 20 percent are minorities, and over one-half are first-generation college students.

*The Tribune* stated that the federal subsidy is \$20,230 for each of WGU's 1,047 graduates. This misses entirely that WGU had only 500 students three years ago, has grown to almost 6,000 students and is still growing about 40 percent annually. Obviously the federal money has already served 7,000 students and created a university that will serve tens of thousands of students over the next 20 years.

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