



## About WGU

### News Brief - 1/16/08

#### Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, Jr., Joins the Board of Western Governors University

SALT LAKE CITY -- Governor Bill Ritter, Jr., (D-Colorado) has been elected to the Board of Trustees of Western Governors University ([www.wgu.edu](http://www.wgu.edu)), replacing Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano who served from 2005 to 2007. WGU is a private, non-profit, online university originally created by 19 western state governors. As the nation's only competency-based university, WGU caters to working adults, with approximately 10,000 students across all 50 states, and a growth rate in excess of 30 percent annually.

"Western Governors University is an important component of the postsecondary landscape in Colorado. It represents the leading edge of online, competency-based higher education," remarked Ritter. "I'm pleased to join a distinguished Board of Trustees, replacing my friend Governor Napolitano."

According to WGU President Robert Mendenhall, "The involvement of governors has been integral to the growth and development of WGU from the very beginning. Education is a major priority for governors and WGU provides innovative, cost effective solutions for adult higher education focused on workforce development. We are delighted to have the expertise and interest of Governor Ritter in expanding the impact of WGU nationally."

Governor Ritter is committed to education reform, from preschool, to K-12 and into higher education. He is also working to integrate workforce needs and educational opportunities by bringing employers and educators to the same table to improve "real world" skills for graduates. "The objectives of Western Governors University fit the goals of my administration well," Ritter said. "Among my highest priorities is to double the number of postsecondary education degrees and certificates earned by our students. WGU will help us further that goal."

Governor Ritter is Colorado's 41st governor and the first Colorado-born governor in more than 35 years. He was one of 12 children raised on a farm in rural Colorado. Following his graduation from law school, the governor served as a deputy district attorney in Denver and then served for 12 years as Denver's district attorney, earning a reputation as an effective and innovative prosecutor. Ritter ran for governor in 2005 and took office in 2006.

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### "Competency-based..."

"I like the idea of a competency-based program. In some areas I already had expertise and skills so I could take an independent study class and build the portfolio and take the exams. In other areas I needed more instruction."

—Gretchen Burr, WGU graduate, high school teacher

### "I am an expert..."

"Western Governors has raised the bar for online courses. Instead of graduating from their courses and saying, "I have passed all of the requirements," they want their students to say, "I graduated from WGU and I am an expert in the field..."

—Jeffrey Cravy, WGU graduate student

### "Competency-based..."

"Google has pioneered the idea of access to information. The reason Google thinks WGU is such a good idea is because WGU has pioneered the concept of competency-based education whenever you want it."

—Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google Inc.

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