



# Press Release: Winter '09 Commencement Speaker

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News Brief - 1/16/09

## Western Governors University to Award Degrees to Career-Focused Online Students from Across the U.S.

### Commencement Speaker Scott McNealy Champions WGU's Online Approach for Delivering Affordable, Workforce-Ready Educational Programs

SALT LAKE CITY -- Does a struggling economy limit the opportunity to go to college? Not for the more than 600 men and women who will graduate from online, nonprofit [Western Governors University \(WGU\)](#) on **Saturday, January 24**. More than 80 percent have earned fully accredited bachelor's or master's degrees online while holding down jobs, and 70 percent will be qualified for positions ranked among the "top five sectors for job growth" by CareerBuilder.com, the nation's largest recruitment and career advancement source.\*

"Distance and online education used to be viewed as the wave of the future, but the success of the WGU graduates proves that the future is now," said **Scott McNealy, co-founder and chairman of Sun Microsystems and founder of Curriki**, who will deliver the WGU commencement address. "Eliminating the digital divide has long been our cause at Sun, as has eliminating the educational divide through Curriki, and WGU's unique approach embodies the power of technology for making higher education more affordable and accessible for people from all walks of life. Its demanding and highly respected curriculum ensures that graduates are well prepared to thrive in today's dynamic and challenging workplace."

*EDITORS NOTE: You may also want to view a November [Time magazine article on WGU \("Go Western Young Man"\)](#). And see a [CBS2 Chicago news story](#) about WGU's demanding and affordable academic programs. For a list of student profiles in your community, please contact Joan Mitchell at 801-428-5463.*

While college costs have risen dramatically during the past decade, WGU continues to offer an excellent value, particularly for adults seeking degrees and professional accreditation, with tuition for most of the University's programs at just \$2,890 for a six-month term. WGU's competency-based approach awards degrees based on the student's demonstrated understanding of the subject matter, as opposed to the number of hours spent in a classroom. The WGU tuition is a flat rate for each term, rather than per-credit or per-course, so students can complete as much as they can for the same tuition.

Students from over 20 states will convene in Salt Lake City to receive their diplomas in person. Those unable to attend can participate via a live simulcast on the WGU website.