



Enrollment Passes 15,000, 9/11/09

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Western Governors University Enrollment Passes 15,000

43 Percent Increase in Two Years for Online University

Salt Lake City, Utah - Western Governors University, www.wgu.edu, marks another milestone this month — enrollment at the non-profit, online university has surpassed 15,000 students. New students in September alone (WGU students can begin their studies at the first of any month), exceeded 1,400. The growth, more than 43 percent in just two years, is taking place in undergraduate and graduate degree programs in all four of the university's colleges: Business, Healthcare Professions, Information Technology, and Teaching.

"The phenomenal growth we're seeing at WGU is the result of a number of factors, including the current economic conditions," said WGU's Vice President of Marketing and Enrollment Patrick Partridge. "Many of our new students have been affected by the recession and are earning their degrees to 'retool' for new careers. WGU makes sense for them because we offer degrees in high-demand fields such as education and healthcare. Our competency-based academic program offers the flexibility to fit study into their busy schedules, and it allows them to use their prior education and experience to accelerate their progress. In addition, our tuition is very affordable, about half that of other online universities."

Amid nationwide reports of climbing college costs and degree program reductions, Western Governors University continues to buck the trend. In contrast to other, more expensive online universities, tuition at non-profit WGU is comparable to a state college at about \$6,000 per year and, over the past four years, has only increased by \$200. WGU's mentor-guided, competency-based academic model provides both flexibility and one-on-one support. Students may begin their terms at the beginning of any month. The university's affordability and accessibility, combined with more than 50 fully accredited bachelor's and master's degree programs in high-demand fields such as education, business, information technology, and healthcare, make it an excellent value in higher education, even in recessionary times. In addition, WGU has awarded more than 500 scholarships over the past 12 months.

"While online study may have seemed 'scary' a few years ago, today it is the preferred approach for many busy adults," Partridge said. "It's critical, however, that students select an accredited, academically rigorous program that support their career objectives and meet employer needs."

