## News Release: Winter 2010 Commencement, 2/16/10

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## WGU to Award Degrees to Graduates from 48 States at Winter 2010 Commencement

**988 Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees to be Conferred at February 20 Ceremony**

Salt Lake City — Western Governors University, www.wgu.edu, the online, competency-based university with more than 17,000 students nationwide, will recognize its largest graduating class to date at its semi-annual commencement on February 20. The event, which will be held at Kingsbury Hall in Salt Lake City, Utah, allows graduates to attend online through the university's website or in person. More than 120 of the 988 graduates will travel from as far away as Florida, Alaska, and Hawaii to receive their diplomas from University President Robert W. Mendenhall.

Hilary Pennington, representing the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will deliver the commencement address. Pennington is the Director of Education, Postsecondary Success & Special Initiatives, U.S. Program, for the foundation, which has awarded WGU a $1.2 million grant to help increase college graduation rates among low-income students between 18 and 26 years of age.

Founded in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors, WGU offers more than 50 fully accredited degree programs in high-demand career fields such as education, business, information technology, and healthcare, including nursing. Ideal for adults with work and family responsibilities, WGU's mentor-guided, competency-based academic programs enable students to earn their degrees by demonstrating their knowledge through tests and assessments rather than by logging time in class. The university's quality, flexibility, and affordability have made the dream of a college education accessible to students in all 50 states as well as military students and their families stationed overseas.

WGU's graduating class for its 18th commencement is the largest to date, with 530 undergraduate and 458 graduate degrees to be awarded. The largest group of graduates, a total of 529, comes from WGU's NCATE-accredited Teachers College. The College of Business will grant 320 B.S. and MBA degrees, and 82 will graduate from the College of Information Technology. WGU's newest college, the College of Health Professions, will recognize 57 graduates in nursing, healthcare management, and health informatics.

WGU will broadcast the ceremony live over the Internet via streaming video beginning at 9:45 am, MST, on February 20, 2010. For more information, go to www.wgu.edu/graduation_winter2010.