

News Releases

News Release: WGU Holds Summer 2011 Commencement, 7/20/11

Lumina Foundation for Education President Jamie Merisotis to Deliver Commencement Address

SALT LAKE CITY — Just 12 years after opening its virtual doors, nonprofit Western Governors University, www.wgu.edu, will celebrate the graduation of 1,972 graduates at the online university's 21st semi-annual commencement, which will take place July 23rd in Salt Lake City, Utah. The event, which will be held at the Nu Skin Theatre at Energy Solutions Arena, will begin at 9:40 a.m. (MDT).

Although WGU is an online university serving students in all 50 states, including U.S. territories and military staff and families stationed overseas, the university holds "in-person" commencement ceremonies for its students twice a year. Nearly 300 graduates will attend the event in Salt Lake City, traveling to Utah from 36 states as well as military posts in Europe. For those who cannot attend in person, WGU streams the ceremony live from its [website](#).

Lumina Foundation for Education President and CEO Jamie Merisotis will deliver the commencement address. Lumina is the nation's largest foundation dedicated exclusively to increasing postsecondary access and success. The Foundation's goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by 2025. The Foundation is a long-time supporter of WGU, providing grants for new programs and special studies.

At Saturday's event, WGU will confer 1,201 bachelor's degrees and 771 graduate degrees in four disciplines: Business, Information Technology, Teacher Education, and Health Professions, including Nursing. Founded by 19 U.S. governors to expand access to higher education, WGU is designed to meet the needs of busy working adults. The average age for these graduates is 38; however, the ages range from 18 to 70.

WGU's competency-based model makes it possible for students to benefit from prior education and experience by allowing them to move quickly through material they already know so they can focus on what they still need to learn. While WGU's degree programs are rigorous and challenging, students with work and family responsibilities can schedule their studies to fit their lives. As a result the average time to complete a bachelor's degree is two and a half years.

For more information about WGU's 21st semi-annual commencement or to watch the event live, go to http://www.wgu.edu/wgu/graduation_july2011 or call 1.801.428.5463.

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