

News Releases

WGU Receives Investment in State Subsidiaries, 8/29/11

Nonprofit, online university receives \$4.5 million grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help expand access to affordable, competency-based higher education

SALT LAKE CITY — Western Governors University, www.wgu.edu, has received a \$4.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help leverage the online university's state subsidiaries to expand access to affordable, competency-based higher education. The grant will be used to support development and outreach for WGU Indiana, WGU Washington, and WGU Texas, as well as to launch additional state subsidiaries in the future.

Western Governors University was established in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors with a mission to expand access to quality higher education. Accredited and nationally recognized, the online university now has more than 25,000 students in all 50 states. The university's four colleges, Business, Information Technology, Teachers College, and Health Professions (including Nursing), offer more than 50 accredited bachelor's and master's degrees, many with industry-specific certifications.

Designed to meet the needs of working adults, WGU uses a competency-based learning model, which allows students to advance by demonstrating their knowledge and abilities, rather than accumulating credit hours. Students can take advantage of prior education and experience to move quickly through course material they already know, allowing them to focus on new learning. In addition, students may enroll at the beginning of any month and terms are six months long with no limit on the number of courses a student may complete per term. Tuition is affordable, less than \$6,000 per year for most programs. For more information, go to www.wgu.edu.

"College students have changed, and it's time higher education made some changes to keep up with them," said Hilary Pennington, Director of Postsecondary Success at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "The foundation is pleased to support Western Governors University because they have a strong track record of providing a high-quality, affordable, and flexible college experience that meets the needs of today's students. In these tough economic times, it is more important than ever to support students who are juggling jobs and families while trying to make a better life for themselves."

Joan Mitchell, VP of Public Relations

Phone: 801-428-5463

Email: jmitchell@wgu.edu

More Information: 866-225-5948

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WGU is an accredited online university offering online bachelor's and master's degree programs.

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