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## WGU Texas to Celebrate Launch



### Contact for media inquiries

Erin Moore  
PR Manager  
385-428-8586  
[erin.moore@wgu.edu](mailto:erin.moore@wgu.edu)

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More Information:  
877-214-7011

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News Brief - 9/21/11

### WGU Texas, State's Newest University, to Celebrate Launch and Formalize Community College Partnership

**Community College Officials, State Leaders, and Students Will Assemble at the State Capitol to Celebrate New Online University Established by Governor Rick Perry**

AUSTIN — WGU Texas, [texas.wgu.edu](http://texas.wgu.edu), the nonprofit, online university established by Governor Rick Perry and endorsed by the state of Texas, will mark its official launch today at a special event at the State Capitol. During the event, Texas' newest university and the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) will sign a partnership agreement designed to make it easier for the State's community college graduates to transfer to WGU Texas to complete a bachelor's degree. The event, which begins at 4 pm today at the Capitol Extension Auditorium, can be viewed live via streaming video at <http://texas.wgu.edu/launch>.

Speakers at the event will include Governor Rick Perry's Education Policy Advisor Kate McGrath, legislative sponsors Senator Judith Zaffirini and Representative Dan Branch, officials from the Texas Association of Community Colleges and WGU President Robert W. Mendenhall. Current WGU students and graduates living in Texas will also participate in the celebration, and several will speak about their experiences with WGU.

WGU Texas was established August 3 by Governor Rick Perry with support from Texas Higher Education Chairs Senator Judith Zaffirini and Rep. Dan Branch. The state's only fully online, competency-based university, WGU Texas offers more than 50 accredited bachelor's and master's degrees in Business, Information Technology, Teacher Education, and Health Professions, including Nursing. A subsidiary of nationally recognized, nonprofit Western Governors University, WGU Texas is open to all qualified Texas residents.

"Earning a college degree is one of the most effective ways for individuals to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families," Gov. Perry said when he signed the Executive Order establishing WGU Texas. "By offering online, competency-based courses in key workforce areas, WGU Texas provides another flexible, affordable way for Texans to fulfill their potential and contribute their talents for years and decades to come, without any need for state funding. Our strengthened collaboration with WGU plays an important role in the effort to ensure Texas has an equipped workforce to meet the needs of job creators."

The new partnership with the TACC will make it possible for the state's community college graduates to transfer seamlessly to WGU Texas with upper-division standing. In addition, community college graduates will receive a 5% tuition discount and will not be required to pay the university's application fee. WGU Texas will also sponsor a competitive scholarship program for Texas community college graduates.

"The Texas Association of Community Colleges is very pleased with our new partnership with WGU Texas, said TACC President Dr. Reynaldo Garcia. "This agreement offers our graduates another opportunity for completing their bachelor's degrees at a quality university that is affordable and accessible.

"We are very pleased to have the support and endorsement of Governor Perry, Senator Zaffirini, Representative Branch, the TACC, and so many higher education leaders in Texas," said WGU President Dr. Robert W. Mendenhall. "This is a very important day for WGU Texas, and we are looking forward to making higher education more affordable and accessible for Texans."

WGU Texas' academic model is unique—rather than earning degrees based on credit hours or time spent in class, students are required to demonstrate competency in degree subject matter. They advance by writing papers, completing assignments, and passing exams that demonstrate their knowledge of required subject matter. This allows students to move quickly through areas where they have prior work or academic experience and focus on the areas they still need to learn. Learning is individualized and guided by the one-on-one support of a faculty mentor. Degree programs are rigorous and challenging, but designed to allow students to schedule their studies to accommodate work and family obligations. Tuition is affordable, approximately \$6,000 per year for most degree programs, and federal financial aid is available. For more information, visit the WGU Texas website, <http://texas.wgu.edu/>.

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"My mentors were fabulous and they were very supportive. Going back to school having a family and being an older student, there are always obstacles that can knock you off track. My mentors played a very pivotal role in getting me to graduation."

— Phyllis Boone  
B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies (K-8) Graduate

"The education [at WGU] focuses on relevant education. As you progress through the coursework, you are actually gaining work experience. You're fully prepared to go out and start working from day one."

— Jay Patel  
M.S. Information Security & Assurance Graduate

"I spent years trying to finish a degree, but WGU took away all the obstacles—I love the nonprofit status, tuition is reasonable, and being competency-based I could use my experience without having anything to slow me down."

— Melissa Richards  
B.S. Business Management Graduate

**Take the Quiz**

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