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News Brief - 1/19/12

WGU Washington Doubles Enrollment in First Six Months

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From less than 1,000 to more than 2,000 students in a half-year, [online Washington university](#) fills critical need in Washington higher ed

SEATTLE — In its first six months, [online university WGU Washington](#), has more than doubled its enrollment, underlining the demand for non-traditional, affordable higher education options for the state's adult learners.

WGU Washington was established by the State Legislature in April 2011, in partnership with nationally recognized Western Governors University (WGU). WGU Washington enrolled its first students on July 1, 2011, which included existing WGU students living in the Evergreen State — a total of 983 students. Because students progress through WGU Washington at their own pace, new terms start at the beginning of each month. With 233 new students beginning their first term on January 1, 2012, WGU Washington's enrollment reached 2,016 students.

These students represent the diverse Washingtonians statewide whom WGU Washington was designed to serve — adults who are balancing family and work life, among other responsibilities, and who could not achieve their dreams of a bachelor's or master's degree in a traditional university setting. Many are rural and place-bound, and most are first-generation college students who have some college experience but never finished their degree.

"With each year, the necessity of a bachelor's or master's degree to succeed in Washington's job market increases," said WGU Washington Chancellor Jean Floten. "Today, there are some 950,000 Washingtonians — about a quarter of our workforce — who started but never finished their college degrees. WGU Washington is honored to have been entrusted by the state with providing opportunities for these working Washingtonians. The 2,000-student milestone is one that makes us very proud — but it's just a drop in the bucket of the work we have ahead of us."

WGU Washington offers 50 [online degree programs](#) in Business, Information Technology, Teacher Education, and Health Professions, including Nursing. Degrees are earned not by logging classroom hours but by proving competency in the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a given field. Many WGU Washington students have already mastered many of these competencies when they enroll, thanks to previous college experience and years on the job. The university's competency-based learning model allows these students to move more quickly through their coursework, advancing as soon as they're able to demonstrate their mastery through assessments and moving on to the material they still need to learn. With a flat-rate tuition of less than \$6,000 per year for most programs — regardless of the number of courses completed — this unique model saves busy Washingtonians valuable time and money.



"As one of the Founders and as a member of WGU's Board of Trustees since the university's inception, I highly recommend WGU Washington as a quality institution. This new university provides the state of Washington with another quality higher education alternative—one that takes advantage of 21st century technology and a new learning approach designed to address the needs of working adults."

—Dr. Samuel H. Smith
President Emeritus,
Washington State University

"WGU has been the perfect solution for me as it is very affordable, flexible, and responsive to my needs with their extensive mentor system. I have received excellent support at every turn and with this help I expect to graduate in 2 years instead of the usual 4 while still being able to provide for my family."

—Scott Fladgard
College of Business Student,
Kingston, WA

"A key aspect of WGU is how you can credibly use work experience to enhance your education experience. By demonstrating my competency in a subject, I know I will be well prepared for my career."

—Jim Parker
College of Business Student,
Kirkland, WA

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Degrees & Programs

WGU WASHINGTON TEACHERS COLLEGE

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- Graduate Programs for Licensed Teachers

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

- Business Bachelor's Degrees
- Business Master's Degrees

COLLEGE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- IT Bachelor's Degrees
- IT Master's Degrees

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- Healthcare Bachelor's Degrees
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