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Virginia Governor Announces VCCS/WGU Admission Agreement, 8/21/12



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News Brief - 8/21/12

Governor Bob McDonnell Announces Faster, More Affordable Bachelor's Degree Pathway for Nursing Students Through a VCCS/WGU Guaranteed Admission Agreement

Students using the agreement could earn their bachelor's degree in three years at an estimated total cost of \$17,000 in tuition and fees

RICHMOND — Governor Bob McDonnell today announced a new statewide guaranteed admission agreement between Virginia's Community Colleges (VCCS) and Western Governors University (WGU) that creates a faster and more affordable pathway to a baccalaureate degree for nursing students beginning this academic year.

Students who take advantage of the guaranteed admission agreement, which is unprecedented in Virginia, could earn a bachelor's degree in three years at an estimated total cost of \$17,000 in tuition and fees.

"This agreement is exciting for Virginia students and families," said Governor McDonnell. "I would like to commend these two bold and innovative organizations for coming together to help make a college education more affordable and accessible for Virginia families. In this particular case, it is creating an outstanding opportunity for students to prepare themselves for good-paying nursing careers — a career field that is often in demand in every region of the state."

The guaranteed admission agreement requires students to first earn their associate's degree in nursing from one of Virginia's 23 community colleges as well as their license to practice as a Registered Nurse (RN). The students must also be working as a registered nurse to be accepted into WGU. Those students would then complete nine additional courses, for a total of 26 credit hours, through WGU on-line classes to earn their bachelor's degree in nursing.

"We are excited to be working with Western Governors University to create an affordable pathway to a baccalaureate degree," said Glenn DuBois, chancellor of Virginia's Community Colleges. "And we think this could be just the beginning of our relationship with WGU. This could be a blueprint for offering similar baccalaureate opportunities in other high-demand fields such as information technology, business, and other healthcare-related programs. Virginia's Community Colleges were created to address Virginia's unmet needs in higher education and workforce training. Higher education costs have become one of those needs and this agreement is an important part of the solution."

"WGU was created by governors to expand affordable higher education capacity within the states," said WGU President Dr. Robert W. Mendenhall. "This agreement represents the way WGU can complement state higher education systems by providing affordable, flexible pathways for working adults to earn high quality degrees with value in the workplace."

"This new pathway to a nursing degree offers a tremendous value for students and future healthcare professionals," said Secretary of Education Laura Fomash. "Making college more affordable and accessible has been a priority for this administration, and the agreement between VCCS and Western Governors University represents a significant step towards that goal."

The agreement with WGU represents the latest in more than 30 statewide guaranteed admissions agreements that the VCCS holds with public and private universities. This is the first agreement, however, created with a goal of keeping the total tuition and fees costs of a bachelor's degree to less than \$20,000. All of the VCCS transfer agreements can be reviewed and compared by visiting the Virginia Education Wizard, a free one-stop website for college and career planning, at www.vawizard.org.

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NBC News Reports on WGU



"The dreams of 19 governors have become [WGU Grad Angie Gonzalez's] dream fulfilled."

—Tom Costello
NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams

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Featured News

Find out why Fast Company calls WGU one of the world's 50 most-innovative companies, CNN says we're "a school without boundaries," and major news outlets from NPR to Bloomberg BusinessWeek are touting WGU's "potential to transform the higher education industry."

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Why We Are Different

WGU has an innovative learning model for helping working adults earn bachelor's and master's degrees. Learn more about how it can help you.

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