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WGU to Celebrate More than 4,100 Graduates, 2/8/13



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News Brief - 2/8/13

WGU to Celebrate More than 4,100 Graduates at Winter Commencement

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Former Governor Jeb Bush to address graduates and faculty at online university's 24th commencement ceremony February 9 at 9:45 a.m. EST at Atlanta's Philips Arena

SALT LAKE CITY — Western Governors University (WGU), www.wgu.edu, the nonprofit online university established by 19 U.S. governors, will host its 24th semi-annual commencement on Saturday, February 9, at the Philips Arena in Atlanta. The university, which has more than 39,000 students nationwide, will recognize 4,134 graduates during the ceremony.

Although WGU students complete their studies online, the university holds "in-person" commencement ceremonies for its students twice a year. More than 375 graduates, along with more than 2,600 family members and friends, will attend the event, traveling to Atlanta from 36 states, including Hawaii. In addition, one graduate on military assignment will journey from Japan to walk in the ceremony. Nearly 90 of the graduates attending are Georgia residents. For those who cannot attend in person, the ceremony will be streamed live on the [WGU website](#).

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush will deliver the commencement address at Saturday's event. During his term as governor, Bush worked with the Florida Legislature to take advantage of new technology to expand access and improve the quality of education. In 2000, the state established online public high school Florida Virtual School as an independent educational entity—a unique distance-learning institution that allows students in rural areas of the state to take Advanced Placement classes for college credit. Governor Bush currently serves as chairman of the Foundation for Excellence in Education, a national foundation focused on education reform.

At Saturday's event, WGU will confer 2,596 bachelor's degrees and 1,538 graduate degrees in four disciplines: Business, Information Technology, Teacher Education, and Health Professions, including Nursing. Founded in 1997, WGU is designed to meet the needs of busy working adults. The average age for these graduates is 39; however, the ages range from 17 to 74.

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 [online 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 35 months.

For more information about WGU's 24th semi-annual commencement or to watch the event live, go to http://www.wgu.edu/commencement_winter2013.

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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

[Watch the video](#) »

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."

[Read about WGU in the news](#) »

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.

[Watch the video](#) »

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- COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**
 - Business Bachelor's Degrees
 - Business Master's Degrees

WGU State Institutions

- WGU Indiana
- WGU Missouri
- WGU Tennessee

COLLEGE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

- Healthcare Bachelor's Degrees
- Healthcare Master's Degrees