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News Brief - 7/29/13

Longtime champion of Texas higher education to serve as new leader of online university



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AUSTIN – WGU Texas, (texas.wgu.edu), the nonprofit, online university established by the state of Texas in 2011, has appointed Ray Martinez as its new Chancellor. Martinez, a well-known figure in Texas higher education, will begin his duties as Chancellor on August 5th.

Ray Martinez joins WGU Texas after serving in senior government relations roles with Texas A&M International University and Rice University. He also served for several years as the Chief of Staff and General Counsel to State Senator Judith Zaffirini. In addition, he served as the Director of the Texas Senate's Higher Education Committee, developing policy and shaping practice to support student success and strategic student financial assistance programs. Previously he served as a President George W. Bush appointee to the Election Assistance Commission and in several roles on White House staff with President Bill Clinton. He earned a B.A. from Southwestern University and a J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center.

"It's an exciting time in Texas education, a time of great need and opportunity," said Martinez. "As the first member of my family to complete a college degree, the contribution that WGU Texas is making to higher education in this state is personally important to me. This role gives me a chance to not only help more striving students succeed—which has always been my passion—but also to join the family of innovative higher education providers trying to meet the needs of underserved populations, particularly those who are working adults with some college but no degree."

Martinez follows founding WGU Texas Chancellor, Mark David Milliron, who will remain involved with the continued development of the university as a member of the WGU Texas Advisory Board. In particular, he'll work closely with the new chancellor on several large grant initiatives with the U.S. Department of Labor as well as national and local foundations. Milliron served on the national WGU Board of Trustees from 2004 to 2009 and has been instrumental in growing WGU Texas as its first chancellor. WGU Texas has doubled its enrollment in the past 18 months, with current enrollment over 3,700 students.

"We're thrilled to have someone of Ray's background and passion for student success take the reins of WGU Texas as it continues to make a difference in Texas in the months and years to come," said WGU President Dr. Robert Mendenhall. "We're confident this will be a smooth transition and that Ray, working with an already strong and supportive state advisory board, partner education institutions, corporate partners, and foundation supporters, will take WGU Texas to the next level in helping more working adults in the state achieve their higher education goals."

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—Tom Costello
NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams

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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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