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"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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News Brief - 8/7/13

WGU Study Suggests Improved Earning Potential for Graduates

Average earnings of 2006-2009 graduates of online university have increased an average of \$18,600 annually compared with pre-enrollment levels

SALT LAKE CITY — There's good news for busy adults considering going back to college to complete a bachelor's or master's degree—nonprofit, online Western Governors University (WGU), www.wgu.edu, appears to be worth the investment. In a study conducted last year by Harris Interactive, currently employed WGU graduates from 2010-2012 reported a net increase in their annual incomes of \$9,000, on average, compared with the incomes they were earning prior to enrollment. In addition, currently employed WGU graduates from 2006-2009 reported a net increase in their annual incomes of \$18,600, on average, compared with the income they were earning prior to enrollment. The survey was conducted online in August and September of last year by Harris Interactive among 1,079 graduates of WGU.

As the economy and job markets have changed over the past several years, many Americans have begun to question the value of a college degree, but even during the recession, college graduates were able to keep their jobs at a higher rate and earn more than those without degrees. And forecasts by the Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce show that by 2018, 63 percent of new jobs will require a college credential. So, despite the questioning, a high-quality college education is still worth pursuing.

There are about 37 million adults in the U.S. who have started college but have not completed a degree.* Busy adults with job, family, and financial responsibilities need to know that the time and money they invest in earning a degree will help make life better for them and their families. These adults, who've often completed some college, frequently consider online universities for their flexibility, but sometimes worry that a degree from an online school may not be as effective in helping them achieve their career and financial goals.

"While no university can guarantee its students an increase in income after graduation, the study conducted by Harris Interactive provides strong evidence that the online, competency-based degree programs offered by WGU are worth the investment," said Jason Levin, WGU's Vice President of Institutional Research. "In addition, we survey employers of our graduates annually, and their feedback indicates that WGU graduates are well prepared for their jobs. In last year's survey, 95% of employers rated the performance of their WGU graduate as about the same as or stronger than the job performance of employees who were graduates of other universities."

WGU offers accredited bachelor's and master's degree programs in four high-demand career fields: business, K-12 teacher education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. The university uses an innovative approach to learning called [competency-based education](#), which allows students to earn their degrees by demonstrating what they know and can do rather than spending time in class to accumulate credit hours. Designed to meet the needs of adult learners, competency-based education allows students to apply prior education and experience to move quickly through material they already know so they can focus on what they still need to learn. WGU faculty members, called mentors, work one-one with students, offering guidance, support, and individualized instruction.

Course curriculum and requirements are developed in collaboration with representatives from industry and other academic institutions, ensuring that students graduate with the knowledge and skills employers need. While WGU's degree programs are rigorous and challenging, competency-based learning makes it possible for students to accelerate their programs, often finishing sooner, saving both time and money. Tuition for most WGU degree programs, which has not increased since 2008, is charged at a flat rate of about \$3,000 per six-month term.

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- WGU Missouri
- WGU Tennessee

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