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News Brief - 9/10/13

WGU Enrollment Tops 40,000

Despite national decline in college enrollment, online university continues to grow

SALT LAKE CITY — Even as the number of enrolled college students nationwide dropped for the first time since 2006, enrollment at online Western Governors University (WGU), www.wgu.edu, reached a new high in September—more than 40,000 students nationwide. The only U.S. university offering accredited competency-based degree programs at scale, nonprofit WGU offers more than 50 bachelor's and master's degrees in business, information technology, K-12 teacher education, and health professions, including nursing.

WGU's innovative approach to education allows working adults to return to school and earn their degrees without sacrificing work and family responsibilities. The latest milestone in student enrollment at WGU shows that, despite a half-million student drop in enrollment in the U.S. last year, more Americans than ever are finding value in a degree from WGU.

"While the need for a college credential is greater than ever before, finding an affordable way to earn a respected degree can be a challenge, particularly for working adults," said WGU's Chief Marketing Officer Patrick Partridge. "WGU offers students quality and flexibility as well as affordability, which are the reasons our enrollment numbers continue to buck the national trend."

WGU was created in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors to expand access to high-quality, [affordable higher education](#). The university's [competency-based degree programs](#) allow students to advance through their courses as soon as they're able to demonstrate mastery of the subject material, rather than sitting through a predefined number of classroom hours. The result is an average time to graduation of roughly three years for a bachelor's degree. The affordable flat-rate tuition of approximately \$3,000 per six-month term, regardless of the number of courses completed, means the ability to accelerate saves students money as well as time.

At its semiannual commencement in July, WGU celebrated a new graduating class of more than 4,000, bringing the number of Americans who have received a WGU degree to more than 26,000. A recent Harris Interactive study conducted for WGU found an average salary increase of \$9,000 for individuals who graduated from WGU from 2010-2012, as compared to their salary at enrollment. And last month, WGU announced that the university will not increase tuition for the sixth straight year.

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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."

[Read about WGU in the news](#) >

In the News

 "While such programs [like Western Governors University] are now the exception, I want them to be the norm."

—US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

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- Teacher Licensure Programs
- Graduate Programs for Licensed Teachers

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

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- Business Master's Degrees

WGU State Institutions

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- 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