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WGU Applauds Introduction of Legislation that Would Establish a Competency-Based Education Demonstration Program, 9/19/13



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News Brief - 9/19/13

Western Governors University Applauds Introduction of Legislation that Would Establish a Competency-Based Education Demonstration Program

Nation's leading provider of competency-based degree programs praises initiative to foster innovation in higher education

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SALT LAKE CITY — Today, a bipartisan group of Members of the House of Representatives led by Congressman Matt Salmon, Congressman Jared Polis, Congresswoman Susan Brooks, and Congressman Rob Andrews introduced legislation to establish a Competency-Based Education Demonstration Program. Western Governors University (WGU), www.wgu.edu, the only U.S. university offering accredited competency-based degree programs at scale, strongly supports this new legislation as a critical step toward increasing college quality and affordability and strongly applauds the leadership of the bipartisan group of Members.

Established in 1997 by a bipartisan group of U.S. governors to expand access to high-quality college degrees, nonprofit WGU offers more than 50 online, competency-based bachelor's and master's degree programs in the high-demand fields of business, K-12 teacher education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. Now with more than 40,000 students and 26,000 graduates from all 50 states, WGU has led the way in the development of competency-based education.

Competency-based education focuses on measuring learning rather than time. Ideal for adult learners returning to college to complete a degree, competency-based learning allows students to take advantage of their experience and prior learning to move quickly through material they already know so they can focus on what they still need to learn. Instead of enrolling in courses that require a set amount of time to complete, students complete their courses as soon as they demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. Because students can accelerate their studies, they can shorten their time to degree completion, saving both time and money.

"Over the past 16 years, WGU has proved that competency-based learning is an affordable and efficient approach to providing high-quality degree programs, particularly for adults who've started, but not completed, a degree," said WGU President Dr. Robert Mendenhall. "This demonstration program will help remove critical barriers to innovation and create an environment that will allow us to continue to develop programs that improve the quality and affordability of higher education in America. I applaud the leadership of Representatives Salmon, Polis, Brooks, and Andrews in moving this important legislation forward. Just as the United States benefitted greatly from the Distance Learning Demonstration Program in 1998, this legislation will provide the necessary push to move higher education closer toward the goals we all share for college accessibility and affordability."

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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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