

# News Releases

## Students Confirm: Mentor-Based Faculty Works News Brief - 2/2/15

*WGU's nontraditional education includes unique faculty model that scores high for engagement*

SALT LAKE CITY — Western Governors University is known for pioneering the competency-based learning model that lets students study independently, progress at their own speed, and focus on what they need to learn while moving quickly through what they already know. But another hallmark of WGU's nontraditional approach —[faculty who serve first and foremost as mentors](#)—has helped the university earn high marks from students for helping them feel deeply engaged in their learning and connected to their university, despite the online, independent nature of their programs.

The data have long shown that faculty mentoring leads to a more enriching student experience and that at WGU, *independent* doesn't mean *alone*. But on Thank Your Mentor Day 2015, the anecdotal evidence drove the point home.

As part of National Mentoring Month, WGU invited students to send messages of thanks to their faculty mentors. They responded in droves with personal stories and testimonies to the value of faculty whose number one job responsibility is to work for the students, helping each one graduate.

View the dozens of student- and alum-submitted Thank Your Mentor videos at [www.wgu.edu/thanksmentors](http://www.wgu.edu/thanksmentors).  
Read their social media messages on the [#ThanksWGUMentors Tagboard](#).

At WGU, each student is assigned a faculty mentor who stays with the student from the day they enroll to the day they graduate. Mentors help their students set (and regularly adjust) a degree plan that fits their goals and their lives, guiding students through their program, checking their progress, providing solutions to anything that's slowing them down or tripping them up. A mentor's role is to coach each student to success.

Meanwhile, each course is served by a team of course mentors, subject-matter experts who bring unique teaching and learning methods to a course's specific content and topics. Through one-on-one tutoring, videos or webinars, group discussions, or whatever else it takes, course mentors ensure that students learn what they need to learn to master each course's competencies and graduate with the knowledge and skills employers are looking for.

The value of this approach isn't just anecdotal. The data bear it out as well:

According to Gallup, **68% of WGU students** surveyed last year strongly agreed they had a **mentor who encouraged their goals and dreams**—more than three times the national average.

The 2014 National Survey of Student Engagement found that students **rated WGU 20% higher** than other institutions on quality of interactions with faculty, **23% higher** on academic support, and **16% higher** for their entire education experience.

Learn more at [www.wgu.edu/thanksmentors](http://www.wgu.edu/thanksmentors).

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