

News Releases

WGU to Recognize More than 11,000 Graduates at Semi-Annual Commencement in Orlando News Brief - 2/10/17

Online, competency-based university has awarded more than 75,000 degrees since its founding

ORLANDO — On February 11, Western Governors University (WGU) will honor more than 11,000 graduates at its 32nd semi-annual commencement at the Disney Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando. And, although they earned their degrees online, more than 1,000 bachelor’s and master’s degree graduates from 45 states, a U.S. Commonwealth, and Canada, along with nearly 6,000 family members, friends, faculty, and staff, will attend commencement in person. The ceremony will take place at 9:45 a.m. Eastern Time.

You can watch or learn more about WGU’s 32nd semi-annual commencement at http://www.wgu.edu/wgu/commencement_winter2017 and by following @WGU on social media.

Will Weatherford, Managing Partner of Weatherford Partners and Former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, will deliver the commencement address. Joining him on stage will be four of the graduates who will share their stories at the ceremony: William Porro, MBA from Hialeah, Florida; Brittany Pierce, M.A. Science Education (5-9) from Palmer, Alaska; Joanne Sylvestre, MBA—Healthcare Management from Brooklyn, New York; and Eric Gardner, B.S. Information Technology from Richlands, North Carolina.

During Saturday’s ceremony, WGU will recognize 6,982 undergraduate and 4,476 graduate degrees in business, K–12 teacher education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. For graduates, faculty, and staff who are unable attend the ceremony in person, the entire program will be broadcast live via [streaming video](#).

WGU’s new graduates join the university’s alumni community, now 75,000 strong. According to a 2016 Harris Poll, 87 percent of recent WGU graduates are employed full time in their degree field. In addition, WGU graduates report a quicker return on their college investment—with an average increase in annual income of \$12,500 in the first one to three years after graduation.

Designed to meet the needs of working adults, WGU’s competency-based learning model makes it possible for students to fit studying into their busy lives. While WGU’s online degree programs are rigorous and challenging, students are able to earn their degrees without sacrificing work, family, and financial obligations. Students complete courses as soon as they demonstrate that they have mastered the materials, enabling them to move quickly through material they already know and spend more time on what they still need to learn. As a result, many students are able to accelerate their studies, finishing faster and saving money—the average time to complete a bachelor’s degree is about two and half years.

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