



# WGU®

WGU News – For Immediate Release

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## WGU Earns 2017 OLC Digital Learning Innovation Award

*Nonprofit, online university was selected from among 60 digital courseware initiatives in the Online Learning Consortium's annual #DLIAward competition.*

**SALT LAKE CITY** — (November 16, 2017)

Western Governors University (WGU) announced today it has earned the 2017 OLC Digital Learning Innovation Award Institutional category (DLIAward), for advancing undergraduate student success through the adoption of digital courseware. WGU was one of three institutions and ten faculty-led teams selected from among 60 submissions in year two of the Online Learning Consortium's (OLC) DLIAward competition.

WGU has improved student outcomes by implementing a specialized course that focused entirely on the affective domain of learning. Higher education traditionally focuses on the cognitive domain of learning, however strong affective skills (soft skills) are highly correlated with greater academic and career success. This emphasis focuses on development of advanced social and emotional intelligence essential for the contemporary workforce. The project was implemented in the College of Health Professions with nursing students. More than 10,000 nursing students have completed the course, which was the result of a decade of research and independent evaluation. More than 76% of students who have completed the course report they are more motivated to graduate. Subsequent to this course, students are showing greater success in completing challenging courses and are progressing academically at higher rates.

“WGU’s mission is to expand access to higher education and to help students—particularly underserved students—change their lives through degree attainment,” said Dr. Jan Jones-Schenk, WGU’s Academic Vice President for College of Health Professions. “WGU’s Professional Leadership and Communication Course is making a significant difference in the lives of our students. As a result of the course, students have become more resilient, demonstrated discipline and control of their lives, and ultimately have a greater chance of academic success.”

“The mission of the OLC DLIAwards is to discover student-centered active learning solutions that advance the world of digital learning for all students,” said Kathleen Ives, D.M., CEO and executive director of the Online Learning Consortium. “The awarded projects in this year’s competition truly



support this mission and serve as valuable models that other institutions can emulate as they embark on their own digital courseware initiatives.”

The 2017 DLIAwards were presented to honorees on November 16, by Stacey VanderHeiden Güney, Director of the Digital Learning Solution Network, during the OLC Accelerate conference, in Orlando.

Awards were determined by two rounds of review, first by a review team of institutional-level and higher education organization-level reviewers, who narrowed the field of submissions for final review by a national panel of judges. Details about each of the 2017 OLC DLIAward honorees can be found online at <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/about/olc-awards/2017-DLIAward-recipients>.

To learn more about the results of WGU’s course, view this [video summary here](#).

### **[About the Digital Learning Innovation Awards](#)**

The Online Learning Consortium’s Digital Learning Innovation Award competition recognizes exemplary faculty-led teams and institutions for advancing student success through the adoption of digital courseware. The award program is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Postsecondary Success Program. More information about the DLIAwards is available at <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/about/olc-awards/dlia/>.

### **[About WGU](#)**

Established in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors with a mission to expand access to high-quality, affordable higher education, online, nonprofit WGU now serves 88,000 students nationwide and has more than 95,000 graduates in all 50 states. Driving innovation as the nation’s leading competency-based university, WGU has been recognized by the White House, state leaders, employers, and students as a model that works in postsecondary education. In just 20 years, the university has become a leading influence in changing the lives of individuals and families, and preparing the workforce needed in today’s rapidly evolving economy. WGU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, has been named one of *Fast Company*’s Most Innovative Companies, and was featured on NPR, *NBC Nightly News*, CNN, and in *The New York Times*. Learn more at [www.wgu.edu](http://www.wgu.edu).