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WGU News – For Immediate Release

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Graduates from 38 States to Participate in WGU Regional Commencement in Seattle on Saturday

SEATTLE — (April 27, 2018) Driven by a desire to advance his career and spend more time with his family, Clint Cole earned his bachelor's degree entirely online while on the road as a truck driver. Today, with degree in hand, he is preparing for his next role as a commissioned officer in the United States Air Force. Along with three other Western Governors University (WGU) graduates, Clint will share his story tomorrow when WGU holds its 65th commencement. This regional commencement will be held in Washington state, home to WGU's largest state affiliate, WGU Washington.

Although these graduates earned their degrees online, more than 1,000 bachelor's and master's degree graduates from 38 states, military installations overseas, and Canada will participate in the ceremonies. Commencement for master's degree recipients will begin at 9:30 a.m. PDT, with the bachelor's ceremony following at 1:45 p.m. PDT. Both ceremonies will be held at KeyArena at Seattle Center, but for those graduates, faculty, and staff who are unable attend the ceremony in person, the entire program will be streamed live at www.wgu.edu/wgu/commencement_seattle2018.

Bill Stainton, a multiple Emmy Award-winning TV producer, writer, and performer will deliver the commencement address. Graduate speakers include: Madhuri Vagaraju, B.S. Health Informatics from Redmond, Washington; Clint Cole, B.S. Business Management from Myrtle Point, Oregon; Annajean Ramirez, M.S. Nursing Education from Lemoore, California; and Jacqueline Zappey, M.S. Curriculum and Instruction from Port Orchard, Washington.

During Saturday's ceremonies, WGU will recognize 4,887 undergraduate and 3,522 graduate degree recipients who completed their degrees between January 1 and April 13 of this year, including 1,096 graduates from WGU Washington. Their areas of study included business, K-12 education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. The average time to graduation for those earning a bachelor's degree was 2 years, 4 months, while the average time to degree for graduate programs was 1 year, 7 months. The average age for those graduating is 39 years old.

WGU pioneered competency-based education, which measures learning rather than time spent in class. Designed to meet the needs of working adults, students study and learn on their own schedules with individualized, one-to-one faculty support. They complete courses as soon as they demonstrate that they have mastered the subject matter, 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 WGU students are able to accelerate their studies, saving both time and money.

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 97,000 students nationwide and has 106,000 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 21 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.