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Rebecca L. Watts named Chancellor of nonprofit university's newest state-affiliate

COLUMBUS, OH — (June 21, 2018) Today, Ohio Department of Higher Education Chancellor John Carey announced a new partnership that establishes WGU Ohio, ohio.wgu.edu, an online, competency-based university created to expand access to higher education for Ohioans. Created through an agreement between the state and nonprofit, nationally recognized Western Governors University, WGU Ohio offers accredited bachelor's and master's degrees in four high-demand fields critical to the state's economy: business, K-12 teacher education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. WGU Ohio will be self-sustaining on tuition and receives no state funding.

Chancellor Carey joined Ohio business and education leaders as well as leaders from WGU, including President Scott D. Pulsipher and newly appointed Chancellor Dr. Rebecca L. Watts, at the Ohio Statehouse today to announce the partnership. Watts, who previously served as Associate Vice Chancellor at the Ohio Department of Higher Education, will lead WGU Ohio and will be supported by an Advisory Board that will include senior business, community, and higher education leaders from across the state.

“WGU’s affordability and online, competency-based learning model provide another option for busy adults to earn a degree as they balance work and family responsibilities,” said Chancellor Carey. “WGU Ohio was established as a priority of Governor Kasich’s administration to provide affordable, career-focused education for all Ohioans.”

“WGU’s mission is to make the promise of higher education affordable and accessible for more Americans. The fact that nearly half of WGU students living in Ohio today are first-generation college students is evidence of this focus,” said WGU President Pulsipher.

WGU Ohio currently has 2,200 enrolled students and 2,700 graduates, including Crystal Stewart of Cleveland, who recently earned her master’s degree in Nursing, “As a first-generation college graduate, I’m showing my daughter that with hard work and a good education anything is possible. My degree from WGU continues to open doors for me and today I proudly serve as Director of Nursing at a care and rehab center.”

Chancellor Carey’s endorsement of WGU Ohio on behalf of the Ohio Department of Higher Education was authorized by the Ohio General Assembly and signed by Governor Kasich on June 30, 2017. Programmatic approvals by the Department of Higher Education were signed by the Chancellor on February 22, 2018.

All WGU Ohio programs are competency-based, a proven learning model that focuses on measuring student learning rather than class time. Ideal for busy adults, competency-based learning allows students to study and learn on their own schedules, moving quickly through what they already know so they can focus on what they still need to learn. They have 24/7 access to learning resources and regular individualized faculty support, advancing as soon as they demonstrate mastery of course materials by writing papers, making presentations, and passing exams.

For many students, WGU’s learning model makes it possible to complete a degree faster—the average time to complete a bachelor’s degree is less than three years. Tuition is charged at a

flat rate of less than \$6,500 per year for most bachelor's degree programs and about \$7,500 per year for most master's programs, regardless of the number of courses taken. Students may begin their terms on the first day of any month. WGU Ohio is now accepting applications for enrollment. For more information, go to ohio.wgu.edu.

Support from other Ohio leaders:

Cheryl Hay, Director of Project Talent Acquisition, JobsOhio:

“Delivering access to a variety of education partners that provide skills and credentials for Ohioans seeking in-demand jobs is critical to economic development here. WGU Ohio will join other great programs within the state that play an important role in preparing individuals for work across sector lines, making Ohio more attractive to businesses seeking talent and new opportunities to grow jobs and investment.”

Jack Hershey, President, Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC):

“OACC’s partnership with WGU has provided a flexible reliable pathway for our graduates to go on and obtain a bachelor’s degree and advance in the workforce. WGU is a highly respected university and has a reputation for helping to accommodate the needs of transfer students.”

Pat Tiberi, President and CEO, Ohio Business Roundtable:

“WGU works with employers to align its curriculum with workforce needs. This approach benefits both the student who is well prepared for the job, and the employer who can hire with confidence. I’m excited for WGU Ohio to have a greater presence in our state, which will help us prepare even more highly qualified Ohioans.”

About WGU Ohio

WGU Ohio is an online, competency-based university established to expand access to higher education for Ohio residents. The university offers more than 60 undergraduate and

graduate degree programs in the fields of business, K-12 teacher education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. Established in 2018 through a partnership with nationally recognized Western Governors University, WGU Ohio is open to all qualified Ohio residents. The university is nonprofit and self-sustaining on flat-rate tuition.

Degrees are granted under the accreditation of Western Governors University (WGU), which is accredited through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). WGU's College of Business is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), Teachers College programs are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE*). More information is available at ohio.wgu.edu or by calling 866.903.0108.

*Western Governors University offers nursing programs that are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (*One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 5380, Washington DC 20036, 202-877-6791*).

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