



WGU

WGU News – For Immediate Release

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WGU Launches Center for Applied Learning Science

New nonprofit will improve student outcomes through research, technology, and innovation

SALT LAKE CITY — (July 19, 2018) Today, Western Governors University (WGU) announced the creation of the [Center for Applied Learning Science \(CALS\)](#), a nonprofit innovation lab focused on improving student outcomes by combining technology, design thinking, and rigorous research methods. CALS will collaborate with other institutions and organizations, leveraging the knowledge and experience gained through WGU’s 100,000 enrolled students and 115,000 graduates.

“WGU’s proven learning model, innovative spirit, and scale positions CALS well to become the epicenter of applied learning science research,” said WGU President Scott D. Pulsipher. “The creation of CALS supports WGU’s objective to expand our impact on student success by developing and implementing new technologies and learning models that will improve student outcomes, not just for our students, but for all students.”

Drawing upon WGU’s experience graduating more than 115,000 students, CALS tackles both academic and psychological obstacles to learning. CALS has already begun partnering with other academic institutions and research organizations, collaborating on research, design, and student testing.

Jason Levin, WGU’s current Vice President of Institutional Research, is leading CALS as its Executive Director. “It is well known that education leads to employment, higher wages, and even longer, healthier lives. We believe all students investing time, money, energy, and effort in their education deserve to succeed and attain these benefits,” said Levin. “We’re focused on tough problems and know our success depends on like-minded partners willing to try new things,” he said.

“CALS and WGU are uniquely positioned to rapidly design, test, and refine effective learning solutions. Approximately 6,000 students start WGU each month—not only in spring or fall like most other schools. We can conduct rigorous research at a fast pace, letting students try our designs, measure results, improve, and test again,” said Levin.

In 2015 Levin’s team, a precursor to CALS, launched a “Leadership & Communication” course teaching emotional intelligence and workplace soft skills. To date, more than 22,000 WGU Health Professions students have completed the course and are more likely to stay in school, progress faster, and pass challenging courses sooner. In November of 2017, the course earned an Innovation Award from the Online Learning Consortium.

CALS was recently selected to participate in the inaugural round of J-PAL’s Education, Technology, and Opportunity Innovation Competition. CALS will work with J-PAL, a research center at MIT, to develop

scalable models to improve student learning in math. The J-PAL/CALS team is evaluating a suite of adaptive online interventions that are aimed at helping students cultivate a math mindset, reduce math anxiety, and increase comprehension of key math concepts.

About CALS

The Center for Applied Learning Science (CALS), as part of WGU Labs, develops habit-forming learning applications leading to educational attainment and life-long success. We learn how to help people learn. Leveraging advances in cognitive and behavioral sciences and emerging technology, the Center fosters innovation from idea through evaluation, continuously improving student learning at WGU and beyond.

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 nearly 100,000 students nationwide and has more than 115,000 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.