



# THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, FULFILLED

**WGU**   
ADVANCEMENT

## FROM STATISTICS TO STORY

As a teen mom, Cherie Watkins knew the statistics: less than 2% of teenage mothers earn a college degree. Determined to defy those odds and to provide a better life for herself and her family, Cherie knew that education provided the best pathway to opportunity. But she needed to find a school that worked for her.

That school was Western Governors University (WGU).

“I went looking for a school that would allow me to make higher education part of my own story.” Working closely with a one-on-one mentor, WGU provided Cherie with an affordable, competency-based education that gave her the skills she needed to succeed in her career as a nurse. “I always knew I deserved more. I was brave enough to demand it and disciplined enough to work hard for it. I was a statistic, and now I’m the exception. I’m a teen mother who now has a master’s degree.”

Cherie is one of the more than 160,000 people who have made higher education part

of their story through enrolling in WGU. As the nation’s largest nonprofit online university, WGU is reinventing the way we think about higher education. We strive to make education affordable and accessible to students like Cherie for whom the traditional college model simply does not work.

Behind WGU’s efforts to make higher education a reality for more Americans is WGU Advancement. Founded in 2018, WGU Advancement is devoted to finding new ways to support student success. In the pages that follow, you will see how WGU Advancement is helping students like Cherie reach their personal goals and become more than a statistic.

**“I was a statistic, and now I’m the exception. I’m a teen mother who now has a master’s degree.”**

— **CHERIE WATKINS**

M.S. Nursing—Nursing Informatics



# THE STORY IN THE NUMBERS

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**97%**  
overall student  
satisfaction

Source: Internal survey



**2.5 years**  
average time to earn  
bachelor's degree

Source: Internal survey



Average pre-enrollment  
income increase by

**\$12,600**  
within 2 years and by

**\$18,400**  
within 4 years

Source: Harris Poll



**94%**  
of employers  
say they would hire  
another WGU graduate

Source: Harris Poll



**91%**  
of graduates  
report their education  
was worth the cost

Source: Gallup

*"I have never felt so part of a school as I have with WGU. The program mentors, the course instructors, the enrollment counselors, even the teacher licensing team, they were all there for me, wanting me to succeed. And they made themselves available for me when I needed them. WGU is family....WGU has changed my life."*

— **MISTY O'BRIEN**

B.A. Special Education



# TALENT IS EVERYWHERE. OPPORTUNITY ISN'T. LET'S CHANGE THAT TOGETHER.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

**Affordability.** For many who aspire to higher education and the benefits it provides, this is the one word that separates them from taking the next step to achieve their dreams.

**At WGU, we believe the cost of a college degree shouldn't result in years of crippling student debt.** We strive to keep tuition rates low so more students can access higher education and complete their degrees.

Our donors advance our mission through their scholarship gifts. Whether we are engaging our alumni broadly through the Fellow Night Owl Scholarship or providing named annual endowed scholarship support to our students, our scholarship support enhances the lives of our students and their families.

**WGU scholarships not only help students afford their education, they show recipients that others believe in them and are rooting for their success.**

*"Receiving financial help from WGU helped me to get closer to accomplishing my dream of becoming a teacher. It was like a door had been opened after so many doors had been closed, and I'm very grateful."*

— **CRYSTAL MASON**  
B.A. Elementary Education





## ANNUAL GIVING

### **Every dollar counts.**

At WGU, every gift we receive supports our vision of making quality higher education affordable and accessible for all.

### **Every dollar counts, because every student counts.**

Through our unique instructional model, every student receives a customized education tailor-made to meet their needs.

### **Every dollar counts, because every donor counts.**

We can only help our students achieve their dreams one by one, student by student, dollar by dollar.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

### **What keeps people from achieving their dreams?**

That's the question that drives WGU. We are committed to identifying barriers to higher education and systematically knocking them down so more students can enroll in college, earn their degrees, and achieve their dreams.

WGU Advancement's work doesn't end with affordability, because we know that cost isn't the only barrier to access. Through special initiatives, WGU Advancement is tackling challenges like expanding broadband access to rural communities and alternative financial aid.

*"My degree has enabled me to better provide for my family. I've also set an example for my daughter that she can achieve her dreams, and because of the generosity of WGU supporters, I will be able to help her reach them. I wouldn't have been able to do any of these without a scholarship."*

— **JENN CALLAHAN**

B.A. Elementary Education



**AMBITION NEVER RESTS.  
NEITHER DO WE.  
WE'RE INVESTING IN THE  
FUTURE OF EDUCATION.  
JOIN US.**

**INNOVATION**

## **PERSONALIZED EDUCATION & OUTCOMES**

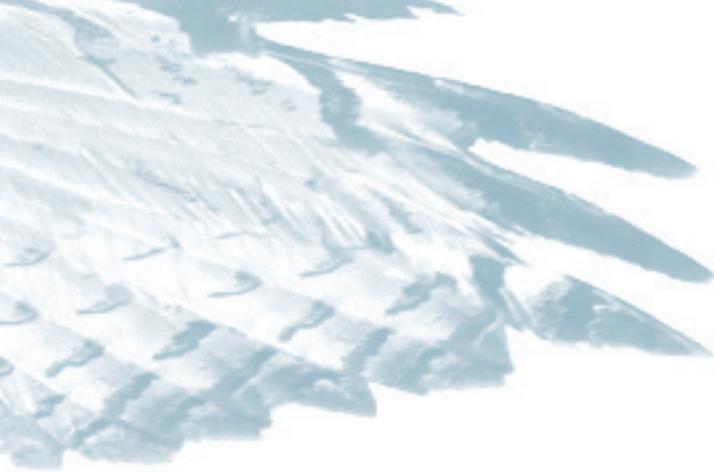
Adults seeking to enroll in higher education bring with them the skills, knowledge, and experience they've developed over years of work and learning. Yet most traditional institutions of higher education do not recognize these talents. WGU's competency-based education accounts for the real-world experiences that adult learners carry with them. We meet students where they are and assist them in their journey to develop the skills and knowledge needed to advance in their careers.

**By measuring learning as opposed to simply time spent in a classroom, WGU students can advance in their coursework at a pace that fits their unique schedule.**

### **One by One.**

We solve for the motivated student and advance outcomes one student at a time.

**— WGU BELIEF STATEMENT**



*“Job seekers want to know what skills will translate into a successful career or promotion, so the creation of a personalized learning pathway that incorporates those skills and competencies will help students match their credentials with what employers want.”*

— **MARNI BAKER STEIN, PH.D.**

Provost and Chief Academic Officer,  
WGU

## Next Generation Platform

**How can we better support our students through providing a more personalized educational experience?** This is the question that has driven WGU since its founding. The Next Generation Platform is a bold solution that transforms the online student experience for the next generation of learners. Through this innovative platform, WGU is able to better target educational, behavioral, mindset, and other interventions for each specific student to support their unique learning needs.

## Interoperable Learning Records

The classroom of the 21st century has changed. Today’s students develop skills and competencies through multiple education and employment providers that cannot be easily depicted on a traditional college transcript. To better reflect the wealth of talent that learners accumulate throughout their professional and educational careers, WGU helped lead the effort to develop Interoperable Learning Records (IRLs). IRLs verify and validate the skills, competencies, certifications, and achievements of each learner and can be safely and easily shared with employers, educational institutions, and others as users advance in their careers.

## Microcredentials

Learning doesn’t end when someone graduates or stops going to school. In an ever-changing world, employers look for new skills to meet the demands of evolving industries just as working professionals seek out opportunities to gain new proficiencies and advance their careers. Microcredentials allow individuals to develop and demonstrate specific skills that open doors to new opportunities. They certify to employers and others that learners have demonstrated knowledge in a specific skillset. Microcredentials provide low-cost opportunities to build job skills and continued learning. They can be unbundled from a degree program or stacked together to build toward a degree.



## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

### Program for Academic and Career Advancement (PACA)

For many prospective students, a lack of college readiness blocks their path to continued education. Believing in the worth and potential of every person, WGU is committed to enabling academic and career opportunities for students regardless of their prior academic experience. Through the Program for Academic and Career Advancement (PACA) at WGU Academy, students participate in small group sessions and one-to-one coaching designed to develop the affective and social-emotional skills needed to succeed in school and life.

### Entrepreneur Bootcamp

How can we better serve budding entrepreneurs today? WGU's Entrepreneur Bootcamp seeks to address this question by providing an interactive, online bootcamp that expands access and optimizes outcomes for prospective entrepreneurs by removing common physical, financial, and educational barriers to entrepreneurial success. Through WGU's Entrepreneur Bootcamp, prospective entrepreneurs are empowered to develop and test their business concepts in an online workspace for projects, peer review, and collaboration.



*“Being a student at WGU, I had to learn how to learn, how to be self-sufficient, and how to produce quality work. WGU taught me to understand my limits and to know that to be successful, you must be prepared to fight through challenges. I’ll forever be determined to better educate, train, and develop myself for the future. We all come from different backgrounds, yet we’re here as one.”*

— **DANIELLE SMITH**

B.S. Business—Information Technology  
Management

## ENABLING INNOVATION FOR ALL LEARNERS

As a pioneer in the development of innovative technology models to support student success, WGU is well-positioned to connect educational institutions with innovation in order to advance student academic, career, and life outcomes. Through internal and external collaborations, WGU is accelerating advances in new technological, systems, process, and learning ideas that better meet the needs of all students, especially those who have been overlooked in the past.



# REINVIGORATING THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION *TOGETHER*

*“I’ve dedicated my life’s work to transforming global healthcare delivery and encouraging education to pursue needed bold projects that will help us move from care to cure. Western Governors University is uniquely positioned to deliver these new opportunities from the Merkin Family Foundation for students and I’m proud to be partnering with them.”*

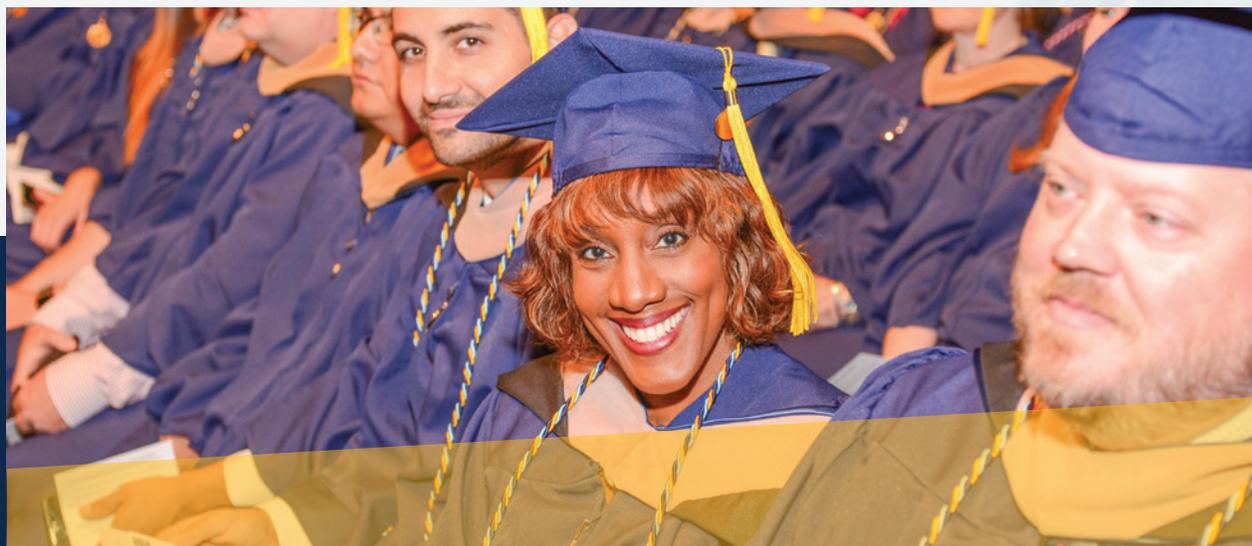
— **RICHARD MERKIN, MD**

Founder and CEO,  
Heritage Provider Network  
WGU Donor

**Talent is everywhere.** From coast to coast, you’ll find Americans with character and grit eager to cultivate their potential and apply it to meaningful employment that will lead to a better life for themselves and for their families.

**Opportunity isn’t.** Higher education opens doors to opportunities that enable people to achieve their dreams. Yet for far too many, access to higher education remains limited. The traditional “one size fits all” model of education simply doesn’t fit with the unique situations of millions of Americans.

**WGU is bridging the gap.** WGU is reinvigorating the promise of higher education, connecting the untapped talent of hundreds of thousands of Americans with opportunities to advance their careers and lead a provident life.



**But there's so much more we can do.**

There are 36 million Americans who have some college experience, but no degree. This statistic represents a crisis in higher education. At a time when employers struggle to find qualified candidates, we cannot ignore the millions of people who are passionate about getting ahead but whose life circumstances do not fit the traditional model of higher education.

**Will you join us?** WGU Advancement is throwing open the doors of opportunity by providing student scholarships and investing in innovative programs designed to further increase access to higher education. But we cannot do this work alone. As the nation's largest nonprofit university, we welcome the support of employers, foundations, and generous individuals who join us in the belief that we have a moral imperative to share the benefits of higher education with all those who seek to access it.

*"Shortening the enrollment-to-workforce cycle is important for the future of workforce development, and WGU Advancement is proving to be a critical funding source for Western Governors University in this endeavor. The resources generated through donations and grants will drive innovation and support scholarships to provide a pathway to a better life for students while also addressing workforce shortages."*



**— CAROL D'AMICO, ED.D.**

Executive Vice President, National Engagement and Philanthropy, Strada Education Network & Board Member, WGU Advancement

# EDUCATION WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

In 1997, governors from 19 states came together to launch a new kind of university, one that combined the innovation of the internet with the flexibility of a competency-based curriculum designed to meet the needs of employers in high-demand industries. Since then, Western Governors University has transformed the field of higher education and opened doors of opportunity for hundreds of thousands of students.

Like WGU, WGU Advancement represents a new kind of fundraising in higher education. We want more students to have access to higher-quality, career-based education, and we provide resources to promote affordability while also investing in new technologies and learning models that help us reinvigorate the promise of higher education for all.

*"I chose WGU because of everything I researched and reviewed. They had a very supportive staff which is absolutely important for you to be able to make it through that process. WGU's faculty and self-paced environment allowed for me to have the structure that I needed. And it was instrumental in my ability to complete this chapter of my life. And for that, my family and I are forever thankful."*

— **GUSSIE HOPKINS**

B.S. Business—IT Management

## STUDENT PROFILE



73%  
Work full time



41%  
First-generation



62%  
Receive financial aid



24%  
Ethnic minorities



38%  
Receive Pell Grants (undergraduates)



23%  
Low-income



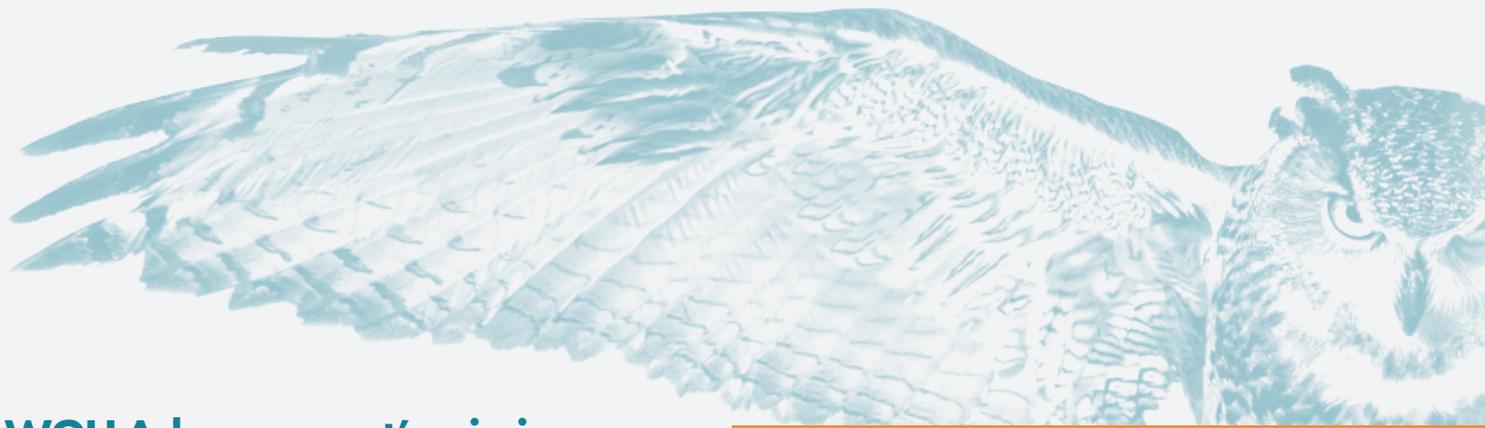
12%  
Military, veterans or families



17%  
Rural residents



71%  
Students from underserved populations



## WGU Advancement's mission

WGU Advancement is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 2018 as the official fundraising arm of Western Governors University (WGU) and its affiliates.

Since its founding, WGU Advancement has dedicated itself to making high-quality, career-based education affordable and attainable for all by increasing and improving access to higher education and accelerating innovations in learning on behalf of students. WGU Advancement partners with foundations, corporations, associations, employees, students, and alumni to support scholarships, explore new learning models, and implement new technologies that reinvigorate the promise of higher education.



### MISSION:

We advance the mission, vision and goals of Western Governors University and its affiliates.

### VISION:

To create transformational, intergenerational, positive change.

*“WGU Advancement inspires individuals, employers, sector partners, and philanthropic foundations that believe in WGU’s purpose and contribute to its transformative endeavor. WGU Advancement will help scale WGU’s impact to make college more affordable for students in need and to drive innovation in higher education to transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of students and their families.”*

— **SCOTT PULSIPHER**

President, WGU

Board Member, WGU Advancement

# TALENT IS EVERYWHERE. OPPORTUNITY ISN'T.

## DEAR SUPPORTERS,

At WGU, we believe in the inherent worth and ability of every individual and the transformative power of education.

As the first person in my own family to complete a degree, I personally know the generational difference that education can make. My opportunities are greater than those of my parents, and my children have even more opportunities available to them than I did. This is the transformative power of education, and at WGU Advancement, we work with investors to pave the path to opportunity for all and accelerate innovation in post-secondary education.

I am proud to work with the WGU Advancement team to connect individuals, corporations, and foundations to WGU's mission. We know that talent is everywhere, but opportunity isn't. We are working with our donors to change that through investments in areas such as scholarship support, alternative financial aid, and broadband access. We also know that our students are ambitious, and we at WGU are, too. Nearly a quarter century after our founding, we are just getting started. We invite donors to join us in the innovations that we are pioneering in both post-secondary education and the future of work. Investments at WGU have the power and reach to truly reinvigorate the promise of education.

We all want to make a difference in the world and giving to WGU is an impactful way to do so.

Sincerely,



**Annalisa Holcombe**  
President, WGU Advancement



# HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

**WGU is changing the way we do higher education.  
WGU Advancement makes this change possible.**

Since its founding in 1997, WGU has attracted the attention and support of generous contributors who recognize the need to reinvent higher education and who share our vision of affordable, accessible higher education for all.

If you're passionate about giving people an opportunity to advance their careers and achieve their dreams, we invite you to join us by making a gift to support our work. Your gift—whatever the amount—will change the lives of students and their families.

**There are many ways  
to support WGU and  
its students.**

To speak with a WGU Advancement officer about how you can best partner with us, please visit our website at [wgu.edu/advancement](https://wgu.edu/advancement) or call us at **(385) 428-6900**.

*"My education at WGU has reshaped how I view leadership. I am better equipped to be an agent of positive change. And for someone who manages a national leadership initiative, that's important. **WGU made learning actionable**, and I feel like I have new tools to create a more profound impact. My graduate degree is the tangible evidence of my persistence, my determination, and my resilience. I am no longer defined by what I'm not."*

— **KARLA ORTIZ FLORES**

M.S. Management and Leadership

# LEADERSHIP

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# WGU COLLEGES

College of Business  
College of Information Technology

Teachers College  
College of Health Professions

**Competency-based learning** – Students advance through most courses as quickly as they master the material.

**Unparalleled flexibility** – Students complete coursework wherever and whenever works best for them.

**One-on-one support** – Students work with a dedicated mentor from enrollment through graduation.

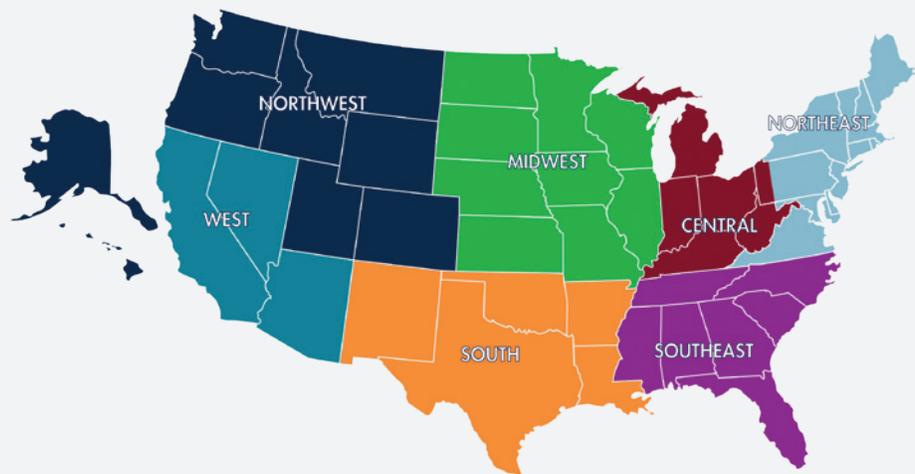
A degree from WGU is **respected, recognized,** and **accredited** by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

**Tuition and fees** - Tuition and fees are per term. Terms are six months long and can begin on the first of any month.

Tuition as of January 2020:

- Undergraduate programs: \$3,225 - \$3,550
- Graduate programs: \$3,240 - \$4,180

## WGU REGIONS ►



## WGU'S 10X VISION

To empower the future workforce and reinvigorate the promise of higher education for not just hundreds of thousands, but millions of individuals, we have amplified our vision from reinventing the institution to reinventing the entire system of higher education.

**To build this infrastructure, WGU has developed and launched new entities dedicated to fulfilling the 10X vision.**

**WGU**   
ADVANCEMENT

**WGU**  
Academy

 **NEW U**  
VENTURE PARTNERS

**wgu**   
labs



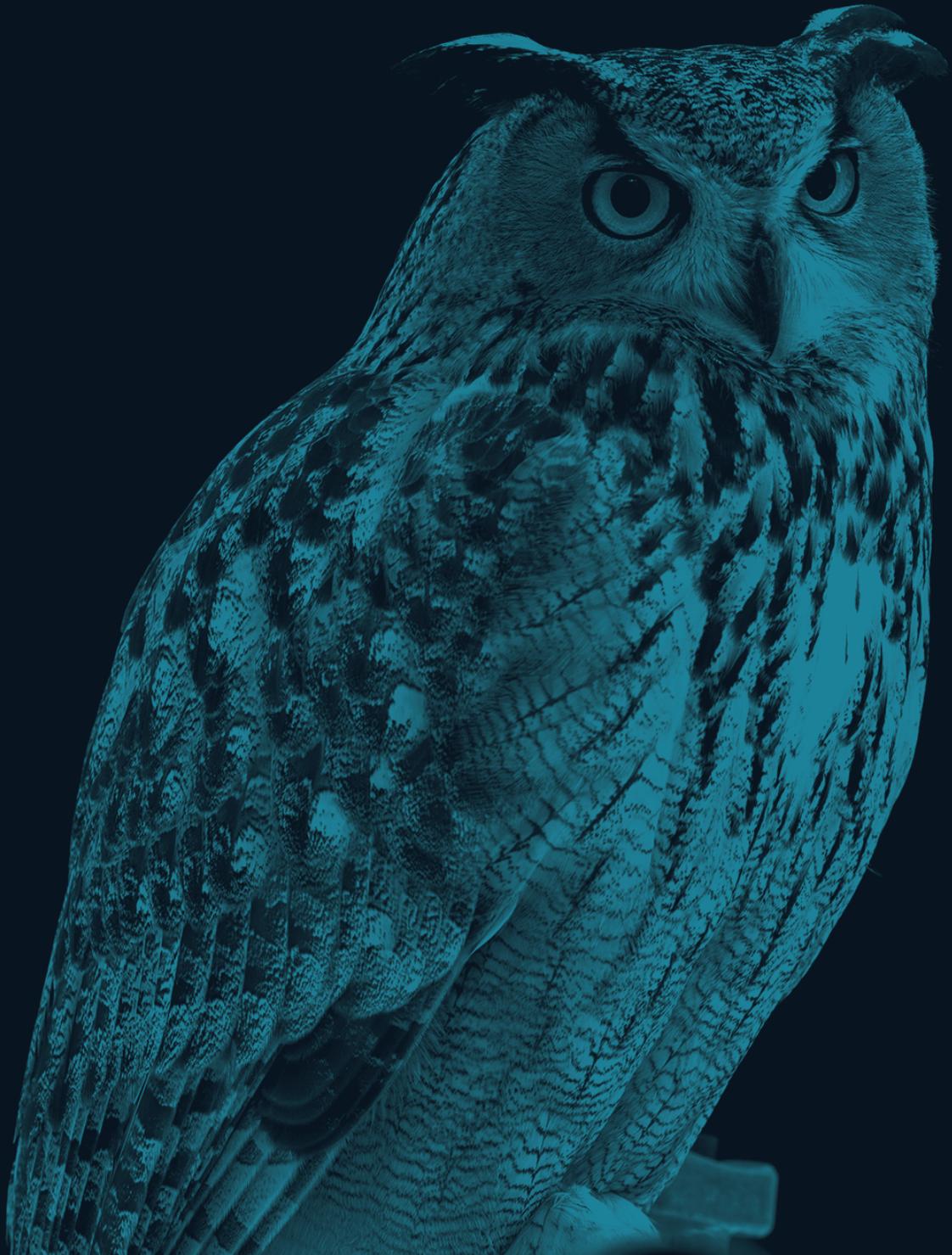
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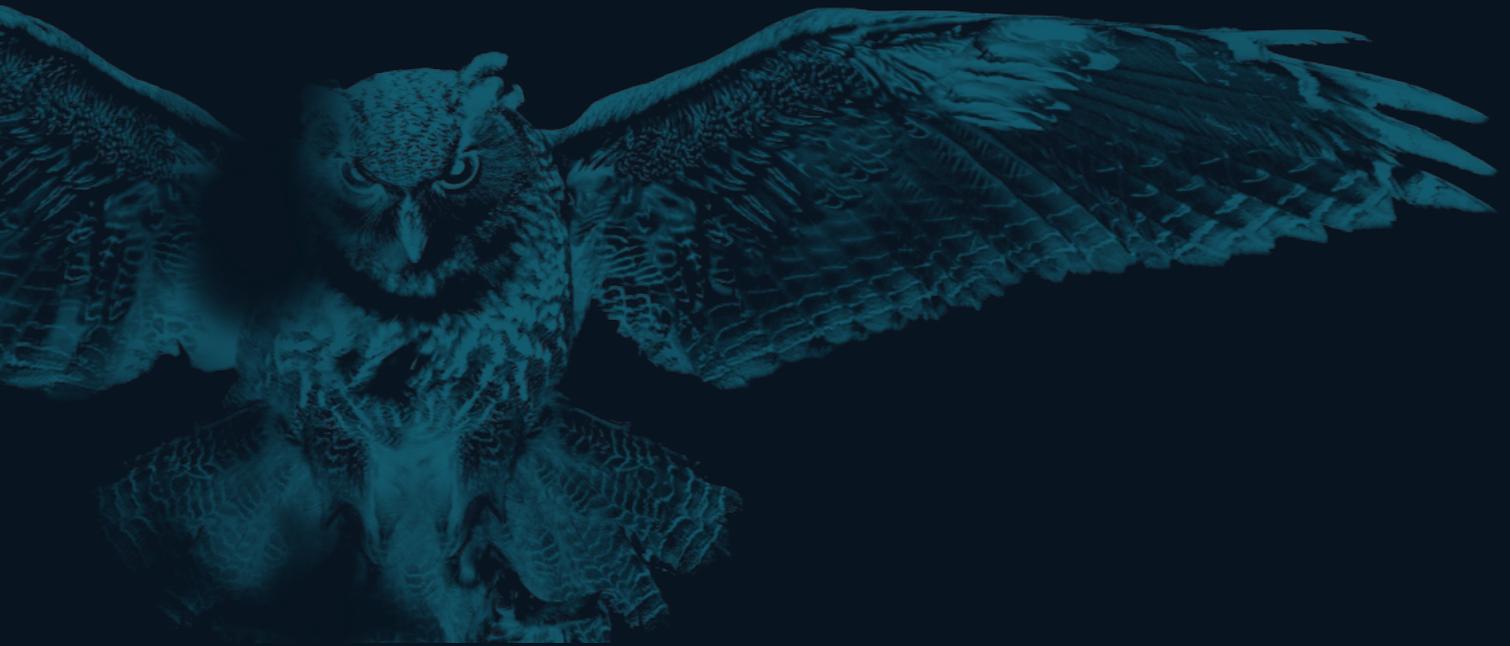
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advancement@wgu.edu  
**wgu.edu/advancement**

*"I give to Advancement because I know that what I give is truly impacting students, truly making a difference in their lives."*

— **MARK RAIKES, PH.D**

Senior Manager, Development  
Teachers College





**WGU**  | ADVANCEMENT

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**[wgu.edu/advancement](https://www.wgu.edu/advancement)**