

WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

# The Value of the WGU Experience

## Alumni Perspectives on Career Outcomes, Support and Wellbeing

2025 ALUMNI SURVEY



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# Table of Contents

|           |                                              |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Executive Summary</b>                     |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Key Findings</b>                          |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Introduction</b>                          |
| 3         | Demographic Summary                          |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Economic Value and Career Development</b> |
| 5         | Return on Investment                         |
| 7         | Engaged Employees                            |
| 8         | Career-Relevant Curriculum                   |
| <b>15</b> | <b>Foundations of the Student Experience</b> |
| 20        | Dedicated Faculty and Staff                  |
| 22        | Belonging                                    |
| <b>24</b> | <b>Graduating Thriving Alumni</b>            |
| <b>25</b> | <b>Expanding Access to Higher Education</b>  |
| <b>27</b> | <b>Conclusion</b>                            |
| <b>28</b> | <b>Methodology</b>                           |
| <b>29</b> | <b>About Western Governors University</b>    |
| <b>29</b> | <b>About Gallup</b>                          |

# Executive Summary

When asked what colleges and universities could do to make people more confident in higher education, the top two most cited topics by U.S. adults were increasing focus on teaching practical skills — specifically pertaining to careers — and lowering costs. At the same time, majorities of Americans agree that higher education can lead to personal benefits. Sixty-nine percent say higher education results in better jobs or career advancement for individuals, and similarly, 66% say it promotes higher household incomes.<sup>1</sup>

Western Governors University (WGU) is a national nonprofit university working to address these concerns that so many Americans share, while also translating the goals of higher education into measurable outcomes for students. Through an online, competency-based instruction model, WGU offers affordable, flexible degree programs to meet the diverse needs of today's students.

To investigate how effectively WGU is fulfilling this mission, the university partnered with Gallup to measure key aspects of its alumni's post-graduation lives and compare those outcomes to bachelor's degree holders nationally. Gallup conducted a web-based survey of WGU alumni who earned a bachelor's degree between 2020 and 2024 and compared their experiences and outcomes with those of national alumni who earned their bachelor's degrees during the same timeframe. The 2025 WGU Alumni Survey finds that the workforce-aligned curriculum and career preparedness are key drivers of the value WGU alumni place on their education and their satisfaction with the overall student experience. Mentorship, student support and a strong sense of belonging further shape that experience and help explain the high levels of satisfaction reported by WGU alumni.

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, J. M. (2025, July 16). *U.S. public trust in higher ed rises from recent low*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692519/public-trust-higher-rises-recent-low.aspx>

# Key Findings

- 1 **WGU alumni value their education.** Sixty-nine percent of WGU alumni strongly agree that their education was worth the cost, nearly double the percentage of alumni nationally who say the same (38%). [See page 4.](#)
- 2 **WGU alumni apply the skills they gained while earning their degree in their current jobs.** Among alumni who graduated at age 25 or older, 74% of WGU alumni strongly agree or agree they gained important job-related skills while completing their degree, compared with 64% of alumni nationally. Eighty percent of WGU alumni within this group who are working full time report using things they learned while obtaining their degree in their current role very often or often, compared with 70% of their national counterparts working full time who also earned their degree at 25 or older. [See page 8.](#)
- 3 **WGU alumni report close alignment between their education and career outcomes.** Two-thirds of WGU alumni strongly agree (43%) or agree (23%) that their first job after graduating from WGU was aligned with their career goals. [See page 14.](#)
- 4 **WGU alumni are highly likely to recommend WGU to others.** Sixty-nine percent of WGU alumni are highly likely to recommend WGU to friends and family, compared with 43% of national alumni who are likely to recommend their alma mater. [See page 15.](#)
- 5 **WGU alumni report a supportive environment — both academically and beyond.** Over half (58%) of WGU alumni strongly agree they had access to resources needed to be academically successful while obtaining their degree, compared with 43% of national alumni. Extending beyond academics, 71% of WGU alumni say their alma mater is passionate about their financial wellbeing, about twice as many as national alumni (33%). [See pages 17-18.](#)
- 6 **WGU alumni report a strong sense of belonging during their educational experience.** Seventy-three percent of WGU graduates say they felt like they belonged at their university, compared with 65% of their national peers. [See page 22.](#)

# Introduction

Since 2014, WGU has partnered with Gallup to survey its recent alumni about their experiences while attending the university, as well as their post-graduation wellbeing and employment. In the fall of 2025, Gallup surveyed over 2,400 recent WGU alumni who completed their bachelor’s degree between 2020 and 2024. Their results are compared with the responses of more than 1,500 national bachelor’s degree holders who also earned their degree during this same timeframe, with national data aggregated across multiple survey administrations.

WGU graduates report high levels of satisfaction with WGU’s workforce-aligned curriculum, quality academic services and support, mentorship opportunities and dedicated faculty and staff. These factors drive why WGU alumni are so likely to recommend their alma mater to friends, family and colleagues, believe their education was worth the cost and experience higher levels of wellbeing following graduation compared with bachelor’s degree holders nationally.

## Demographic Summary

TABLE 1

|                                                              | <div>WGU<br/>GRADUATES</div> | <div>NATIONAL<br/>GRADUATES</div> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Total respondents                                            | 2,492                        | 1,534                             |
| Median current age                                           | 42                           | 25                                |
| Median age at graduation                                     | 39                           | 22                                |
| Female graduates                                             | 60%                          | 52%                               |
| First-generation graduates                                   | 58%                          | 32%                               |
| Historically underrepresented races/ethnicities <sup>2</sup> | 18%                          | 25%                               |

2 Includes respondents who identify as one or more of the following: Black or African American, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

# Economic Value and Career Development

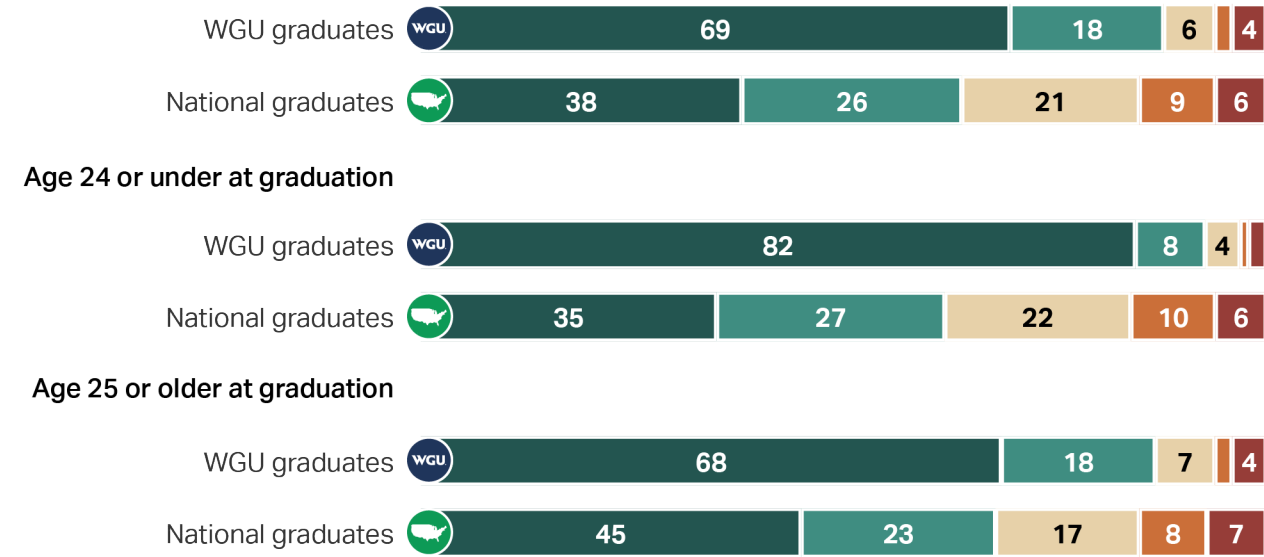
WGU aims to prepare its graduates for success across many aspects of life after graduation. This commitment is evident in the value WGU alumni place on the education they received: WGU graduates are almost twice as likely as national graduates to strongly agree their education was worth the cost. About seven in 10 (69%) WGU alumni strongly agree their education was worth the cost, compared with 38% of national alumni.

This difference persists across age groups, with WGU alumni outpacing their national peers regardless of how old they were when they graduated. Eighty-two percent of WGU alumni who graduated at age 24 or younger strongly agree their education was worth the cost, exceeding the 35% of national graduates of the same age group. This pattern holds among those who graduated at 25 or older: 68% of WGU alumni who graduated at age 25 or older strongly agree their education was worth the cost, compared with 45% of national graduates who earned their degree at 25 or older.

FIGURE 1

**My education from [University] was worth the cost.**

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree



Note: Data labels less than 4% are not displayed. Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

## Return on Investment

### MANAGING THE COST OF A DEGREE

Affordability — expensive tuition fees and student loans — is the third most referenced reason for low confidence in higher education among U.S. adults.<sup>3</sup> While the cost of higher education remains among the public’s top concerns, WGU offers an affordable pathway to earning a bachelor’s degree that helps reduce the financial burden on students. WGU leverages a unique, flat-rate tuition model that enables students to maximize the number of courses they complete each semester and can reduce the time to graduation.

Roughly half of both WGU alumni (53%) and national alumni (52%) borrowed money in student loans to obtain their bachelor’s degree. Yet, WGU alumni who borrow for their education report that they have lower student loan debt than bachelor’s degree holders nationally. Among those who did borrow, the median self-reported student loan burden to obtain an undergraduate degree for WGU alumni is approximately \$15,000, compared with roughly \$27,000 for national alumni.

FIGURE 2

#### Median Self-Reported Student Loan Burden Among Alumni Who Borrowed



3 Jones, J. M. (2025, July 16). *U.S. public trust in higher ed rises from recent low.* <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692519/public-trust-higher-rises-recent-low.aspx>

## INCOME GROWTH

Earning a higher education credential is widely seen as a pathway to better jobs, promotions and career advancement, with this outcome consistently one of the most frequently selected benefits of higher education among Americans.<sup>4</sup> Like many college students, WGU alumni seek a meaningful return on their investment in earning their degree, particularly in terms of career and income progression.

Nearly seven in 10 (69%) WGU alumni report that their income increased after they graduated from WGU. Alumni report a median increase of approximately \$25,000 in self-reported personal income since their enrollment at WGU. These figures are extremely similar for working learners — alumni who were working full time during enrollment and who are currently working full time. Seventy-three percent of working learners report that their personal income increased after graduating from WGU; they also report a median increase of approximately \$25,000 in self-reported personal income since their enrollment at WGU.

“

I needed a degree that had a clear path to employment that I could do while I was working.<sup>5</sup>

”

These reported increases are also reflected in shifts in alumni self-reported income distribution following graduation. Thirty-one percent of WGU graduates report their annual income was \$75,000 or more before they were enrolled. This percentage almost doubles when considering present income — 57% of WGU alumni report their present income is \$75,000 or more. A similar pattern exists for working learners. Among WGU working learners, 36% report they were earning \$75,000 or more before they were enrolled, compared with 66% of WGU working learners reporting a current income of \$75,000 or more.

4 Jones, J. M. (2025, July 16). *U.S. public trust in higher ed rises from recent low*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692519/public-trust-higher-rises-recent-low.aspx>

5 Qualitative quotes are pulled from WGU alumni who responded to the 2025 WGU Alumni Survey.



## Engaged Employees

Gallup defines employee engagement<sup>6</sup> as “the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace.” Decades of Gallup research find that engaged employees — those who are psychologically committed to their role — have higher rates of retention, productivity and wellbeing than those who are disengaged at work.

WGU students are often further along in their careers or have worked prior to attending WGU. Roughly eight in 10 (79%) WGU alumni say they were working full time while they were enrolled in their degree program, often putting them further along in their careers than many college students. This is also evident in the age of WGU students at the time of graduation. The median age of WGU graduates at the time of graduation is 39, compared with 22 for national graduates.

WGU alumni are more engaged in their workplaces than their national peers. Among graduates who are employed full time, approximately half (49%) of WGU graduates who were 25 or older at graduation are engaged in their job, while about a third (35%) of national graduates 25 or older at graduation are engaged employees. This high level of engagement among WGU alumni is particularly notable given that Gallup research has shown declines in engagement among U.S. employees in the years since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>7</sup> These WGU graduates are also more likely to strongly agree that they have the opportunity to do what they do best and do work that interests them.

FIGURE 3

### Employee Engagement

- WGU graduates, employed full time and 25 or older at graduation
- National graduates, employed full time and 25 or older at graduation



6 Gallup measures employee engagement using the Q<sup>12</sup> survey, a proprietary index that determines the degree to which individuals are highly committed to and psychologically engaged with their work. In both the WGU Alumni Survey and the Gallup Alumni Survey, Gallup used an abbreviated three-item version of the Q<sup>12</sup> to measure workplace engagement.

7 Gallup. (n.d.). Indicators – Employee Engagement. <https://www.gallup.com/394373/indicator-employee-engagement.aspx>

## Career-Relevant Curriculum

Career development opportunities and a workforce-aligned curriculum at WGU drive its graduates to see the value of their education. Education and jobs are closely linked for WGU graduates. Eighty-six percent of WGU alumni who are working full time say their current job is very close or closely related to their field of study at WGU.

Career advancement and progression are also key motivators for WGU students. Roughly six in 10 (59%) WGU alumni pursued a bachelor’s degree to progress in their current career, 23% to change career paths and 18% to start a career.

WGU’s skills-based curriculum is designed to prepare students for workplace demands and equip them with the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Roughly three-quarters of WGU alumni who graduated at 25 or older strongly agree or agree they learned important job-related skills while earning their degree and that the knowledge they gained is relevant to their jobs. Each of these percentages is slightly above the national average.

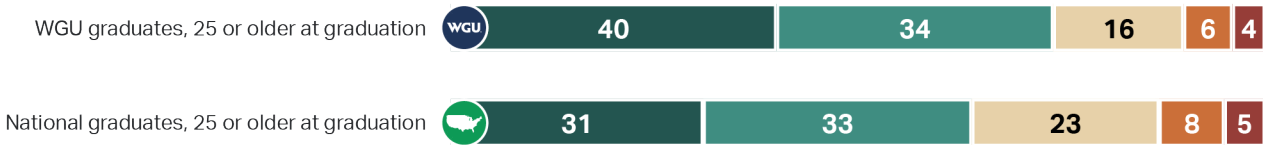
“ All course content prepared me for the job. ”

FIGURE 4

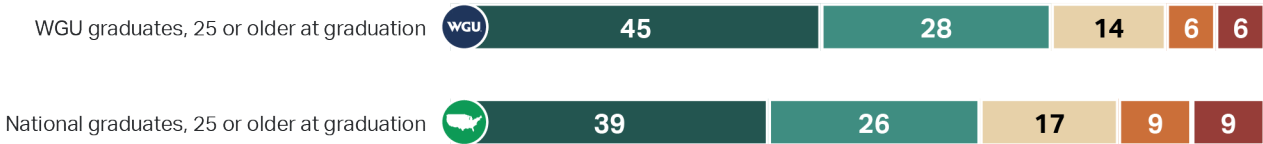
### Workforce-Aligned Curriculum

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree

I gained important job-related skills while completing my undergraduate degree at [University].



The knowledge and skills I learned at [University] are directly relevant to my current job/career.



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

As noted previously, 69% of WGU alumni strongly agree their education was worth the cost, compared with 38% of national alumni. WGU's workforce-aligned curriculum drives alumni's perceived value of their education. Alumni who report they gained important job-related skills<sup>8</sup> during their bachelor's degree program are more likely to strongly agree that their education was worth the cost. Eighty-one percent of WGU alumni who gained job-related skills<sup>9</sup> strongly agree that their education was worth the cost, while 33% of WGU graduates who did not gain job-related skills strongly agree their education was worth the cost — a 48-percentage-point gap. These findings underscore the strong relationship between acquiring tangible, job-related skills during their programs and alumni perceptions of educational value. National alumni report a similar pattern between the career relevance of their curriculum and the overall value of their degree.

FIGURE 5

**Graduates Who Gain Job-Related Skills While Completing Their Degree Are More Likely to Say Education Was Worth the Cost**

**% Who strongly agree their education was worth the cost**

Among all graduates



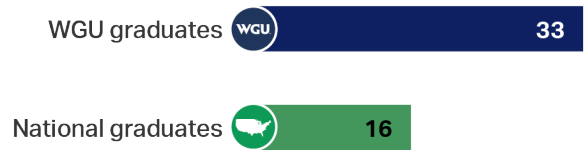
**% Who strongly agree their education was worth the cost, among graduates who agree they gained important job-related skills during their degree**

Among those who gained job-related skills



**% Who strongly agree their education was worth the cost, among graduates who disagree or are neutral on gaining job-related skills during their degree**

Among those who did not gain job-related skills



8 "Gained job-related skills" includes alumni who strongly agree or agree to "I gained important job-related skills while completing my undergraduate degree at [University]."

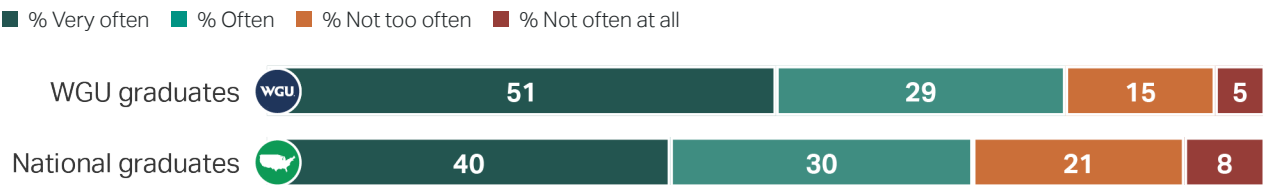
9 "Did not gain job-related skills" includes alumni who strongly disagree, disagree or selected the neutral response to "I gained important job-related skills while completing my undergraduate degree at [University]."

WGU alumni report that they frequently apply the important workforce skills that they learned while earning their degree in their current jobs. Among WGU alumni working full time who graduated at 25 or older, 80% report using skills they learned while earning their undergraduate degree very often or often in their current role, compared with 70% of national alumni. About half (51%) of these WGU alumni report using things they learned while at WGU very often.

FIGURE 6

How often does your current role allow you to use or apply the things you learned while earning your undergraduate degree at [University]?

Among those working full time and age 25 or older at graduation

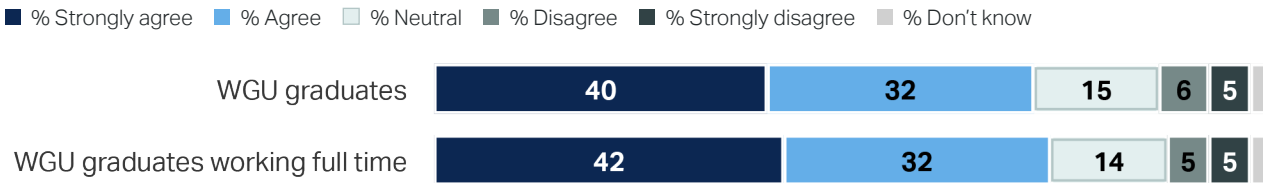


Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

WGU’s workforce-aligned curriculum aims to position students for success in their careers. Nearly three-quarters of WGU alumni report that WGU prepared them with skills to succeed professionally. Forty percent of alumni strongly agree that WGU prepared them well with the skills to succeed in their jobs, with another 32% agreeing, similar to WGU alumni who are currently working full time.

FIGURE 7

Western Governors University prepared me well with the skills to succeed in my job/career.

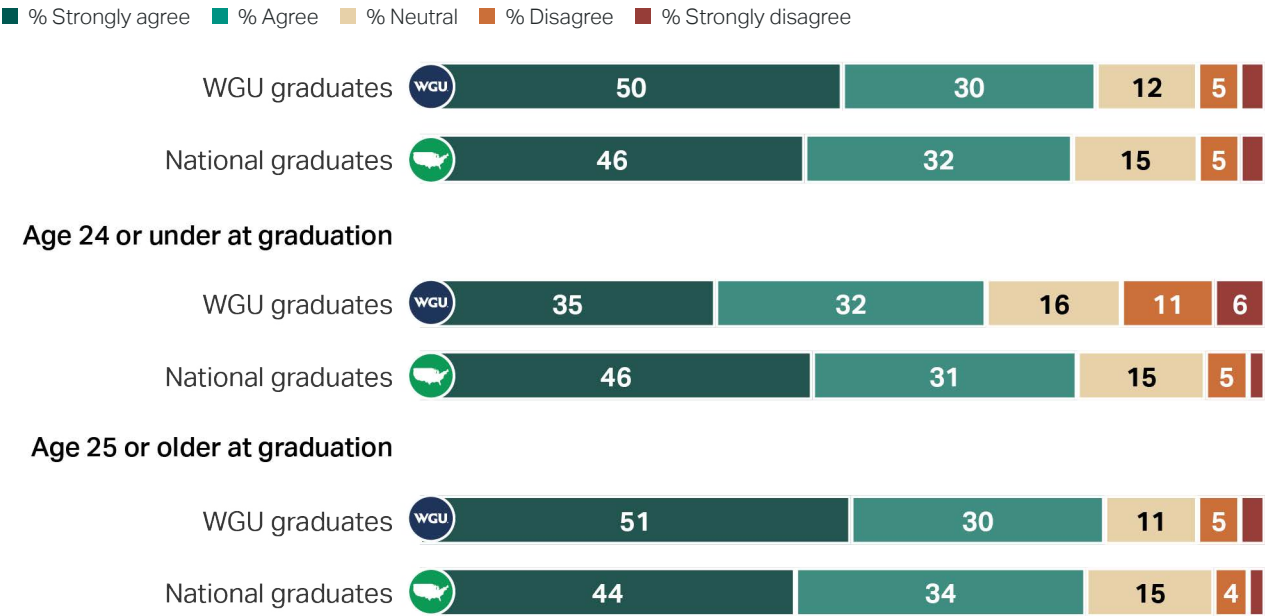


Note: Data labels less than 4% are not displayed. Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

Alongside developing and applying career-relevant skills, WGU alumni report that their academic experience challenged them throughout their studies. Eight in 10 WGU alumni strongly agree (50%) or agree (30%) they were academically challenged at their alma mater, similar to their national peers. WGU alumni who graduated at 25 or older are more likely to strongly agree (51%) that they were academically challenged, compared with WGU alumni who were 24 or younger at graduation (35%).

FIGURE 8

I was challenged academically at [University].



Note: Data labels less than 4% are not displayed. Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

## FROM WGU DEGREE ATTAINMENT TO CAREER OUTCOMES<sup>10</sup>

Earning a bachelor’s degree often represents a significant investment of time, effort and financial resources. For many graduates, the value of that investment is reflected not only in completing their degree, but also in the opportunities it creates for career advancement and professional growth. Eight in 10 WGU graduates strongly agree (51%) or agree (29%) that their alma mater prepared them well to earn their degree.

FIGURE 9



### Western Governors University prepared me well to earn my college degree.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree ■ % Don’t know



Note: Data labels less than 4% are not displayed. Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

WGU graduates report that their alma mater prepared them not only to find employment after graduation but also to secure positions that align with their interests and career aspirations. Roughly half of WGU graduates strongly agree or agree that WGU prepared them well to find a job after graduation (50%) and to find a job that they wanted (53%), with similar levels of agreement among WGU graduates who are currently working full time.

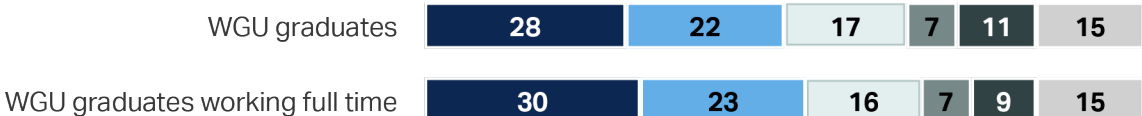
FIGURE 10



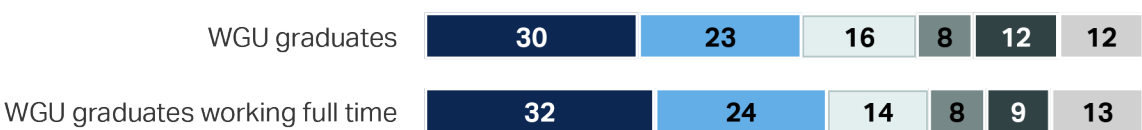
### WGU prepared me well ...

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree ■ % Don’t know

#### To find a job after graduation



#### To find a job that I wanted after graduation



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

<sup>10</sup> The items in this section were only asked of WGU alumni and do not have national comparison data available.

As previously mentioned, 79% of WGU graduates were working full time while they were enrolled. As such, many of these graduates might not have been looking for a new job after graduation. Among WGU graduates who were either employed part time or not employed while they were earning their degree and who are now working full time, 61% strongly agree or agree that WGU not only prepared them well to find a job after graduation but also prepared them to find a job they *wanted*.

FIGURE 11



**WGU prepared me well ...**

Among WGU graduates who were employed part time or not employed during enrollment and are now employed full time

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree ■ % Don't know

**To find a job after graduation**



**To find a job that I wanted after graduation**



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.



A graduate’s first job after earning their degree often represents an important milestone in realizing the return on their investment, signaling whether their education helped them to move into a new career path, advance within their current field or enter the workforce for the first time.

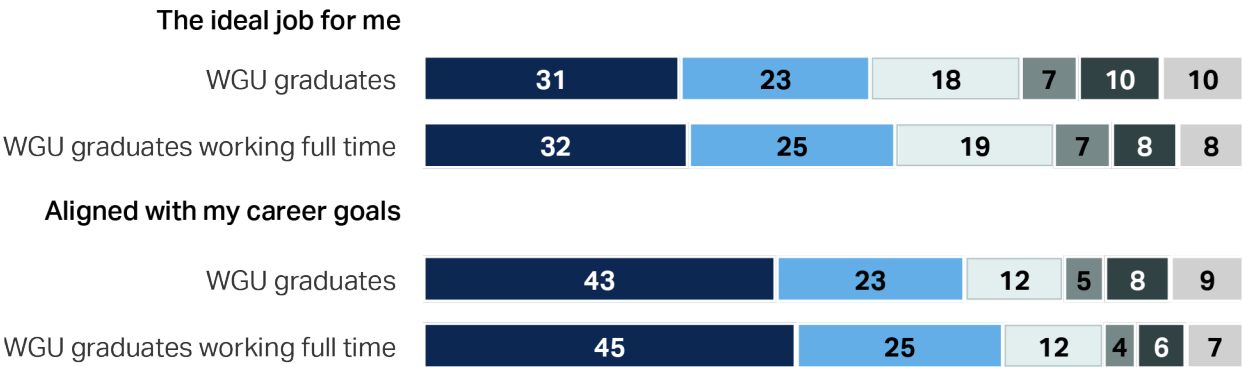
Over half of WGU alumni strongly agree (31%) or agree (23%) that their first job after graduating from WGU was the ideal job for them. The career-driven focus of WGU students is also reflected in how closely their roles following WGU align with their long-term goals. Two-thirds of WGU alumni strongly agree (43%) or agree (23%) that their first job after graduating from WGU was aligned with their career goals.

FIGURE 12



**My first job after graduating from Western Governors University was ...**

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree ■ % Don't know



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

# Foundations of the Student Experience

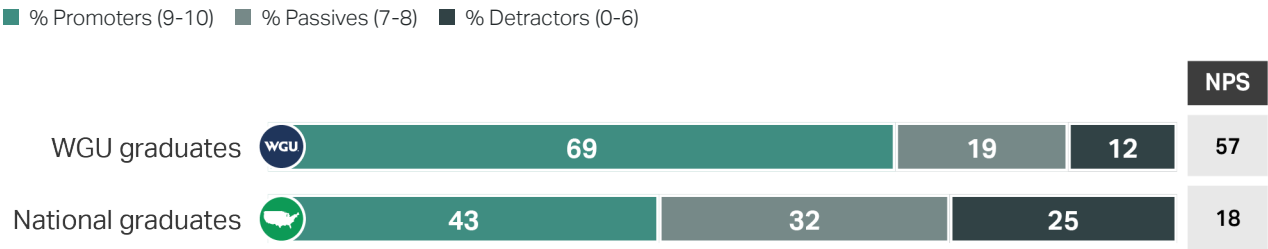
While traditional indicators such as job placement rates and salaries are often used to evaluate the value of higher education, alumni sentiment — including satisfaction with their university experience and willingness to recommend their institution — provides another important perspective on educational value.

“No other institution offered the combination of a competency-based model and the flexibility I needed to succeed.”

On this measure, WGU alumni view their alma mater more favorably than graduates nationally. When asked how likely they would be to recommend WGU to others, 69% of WGU graduates are promoters — those who rate their likelihood a nine or 10 on a 10-point scale — compared with 43% of national graduates. This is equivalent to a Net Promoter Score<sup>11</sup> (NPS) of 57 for WGU, compared with 18 for alumni nationally.

FIGURE 13

On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are extremely likely, how likely is it that you would recommend [University] to family, friends or colleagues?



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

11 Net Promoter Score is calculated as the difference between the percentage of promoters and detractors.

There is minimal variation in alumni's likelihood to recommend their alma mater across the WGU population. Between 66% and 72% of WGU graduates across gender, race, first-generation status and age are highly likely to recommend WGU to others.

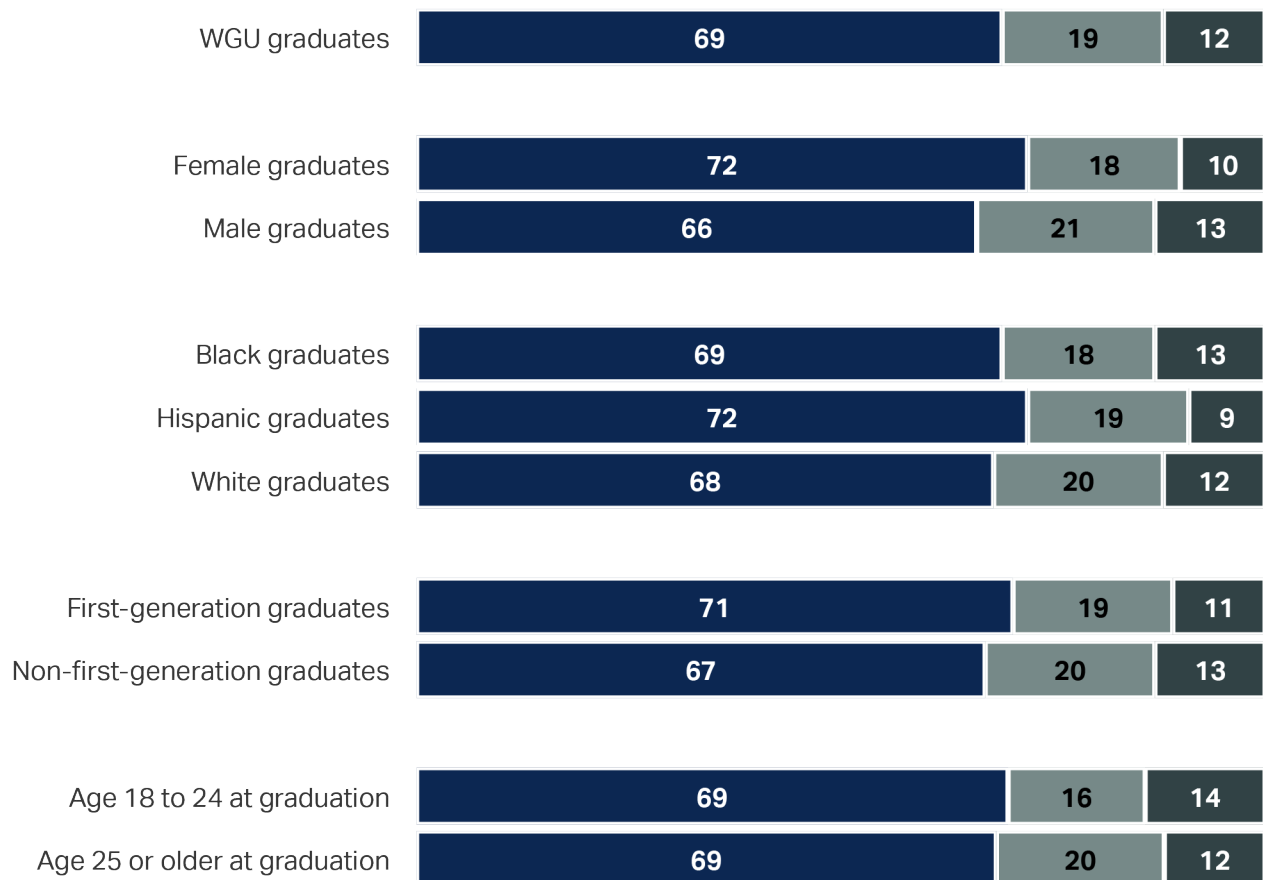
FIGURE 14



**On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are extremely likely, how likely is it that you would recommend [University] to family, friends or colleagues?**

Among WGU graduates

■ % Promoters (9-10) ■ % Passives (7-8) ■ % Detractors (0-6)



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST AND STUDENT SUPPORT

WGU alumni report that they received practical, job-related instruction in an environment where they felt supported. WGU graduates are more likely to rate the availability of student support services as excellent compared with national graduates (54% vs. 35%). Additionally, more than half (58%) of WGU alumni strongly agree that they had the resources they needed to succeed academically — 15 percentage points above their national peers.

“ Every single person I came into contact with from financial services to course instructors had my success in mind. I never felt looked over or unheard. ”

FIGURE 15

Student Support Services

Availability of student support services

% Excellent



I had access to the resources I needed to be successful academically while completing my undergraduate degree at [University].

% Strongly agree



Experiencing financial stress while pursuing a college degree is a reality for many students, and the cost of attendance remains one of the primary reasons currently enrolled students in the U.S. have considered stopping their coursework.<sup>12</sup> WGU alumni, however, report that their alma mater places emphasis on their financial wellbeing. WGU graduates are about three times more likely than national graduates to strongly agree their alma mater is passionate about their financial wellbeing. Forty-three percent of WGU graduates strongly agree and 28% agree that their university is passionate about their financial wellbeing, compared with 14% and 19%, respectively, among graduates nationally.

WGU alumni report that this sense of support extends beyond financial wellbeing and reflects a broader commitment to their success after graduation. Seventy-two percent of WGU alumni strongly agree (43%) or agree (29%) that their alma mater is passionate about their long-term success, 10 percentage points higher than national graduates (62%).

FIGURE 16

[University] is passionate about the \_\_\_\_ of its students.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree

FINANCIAL WELLBEING



LONG-TERM SUCCESS



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

12 Marken, S. (2025, May 1). One in three college students consider leaving program. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/659897/one-three-college-students-consider-leaving-program.aspx>

The emotional burden of earning a degree can greatly affect students. Emotional stress and mental health are the two most important reasons currently enrolled students in the U.S. say they have recently thought about leaving their program.<sup>13</sup> Support for students’ mental wellbeing is closely tied to how WGU graduates evaluate their educational experience. Approximately three in four WGU alumni strongly agree (46%) or agree (27%) that WGU is passionate about their mental health.

FIGURE 17



**Western Governors University is passionate about the mental health of its students.**

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

Read more on alumni wellbeing in the Graduating Thriving Alumni section on [page 24](#).

WGU alumni’s positive experiences with instructional and wellbeing support are reflected in their perceptions of the university’s decision-making. WGU graduates are almost twice as likely as national graduates to strongly agree or agree that their alma mater has students’ best interests in mind when making decisions (72% vs. 38%).

FIGURE 18

**When making a decision that affects students, [University] had students’ best interests in mind.**

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

13 Marken, S. (2025, May 1). One in three college students consider leaving program. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/659897/one-three-college-students-consider-leaving-program.aspx>

## Dedicated Faculty and Staff

For WGU alumni, their sense of being respected during their degree program strongly influences their overall satisfaction with and perception of the value of their educational experience. Daily interactions with professors, instructors and staff are fundamental components of earning a degree.

WGU alumni are more likely to strongly agree that they were treated with respect by faculty and staff than their national peers. This high level of feeling respected is fairly consistent across all segments of the WGU student population.

FIGURE 19

**I was treated with respect by [faculty/staff] members while obtaining my undergraduate degree at [University].**

% Strongly agree

### Faculty members



### Staff members



TABLE 2

**I was treated with respect by [faculty/staff] members while obtaining my undergraduate degree at Western Governors University.**

% Strongly agree among WGU graduates

|                                | Faculty | Staff |
|--------------------------------|---------|-------|
| All WGU graduates              | 70      | 71    |
| Female graduates               | 70      | 71    |
| Male graduates                 | 71      | 72    |
| Black graduates                | 67      | 67    |
| Hispanic graduates             | 74      | 76    |
| White graduates                | 69      | 70    |
| First-generation graduates     | 72      | 72    |
| Non-first-generation graduates | 67      | 69    |

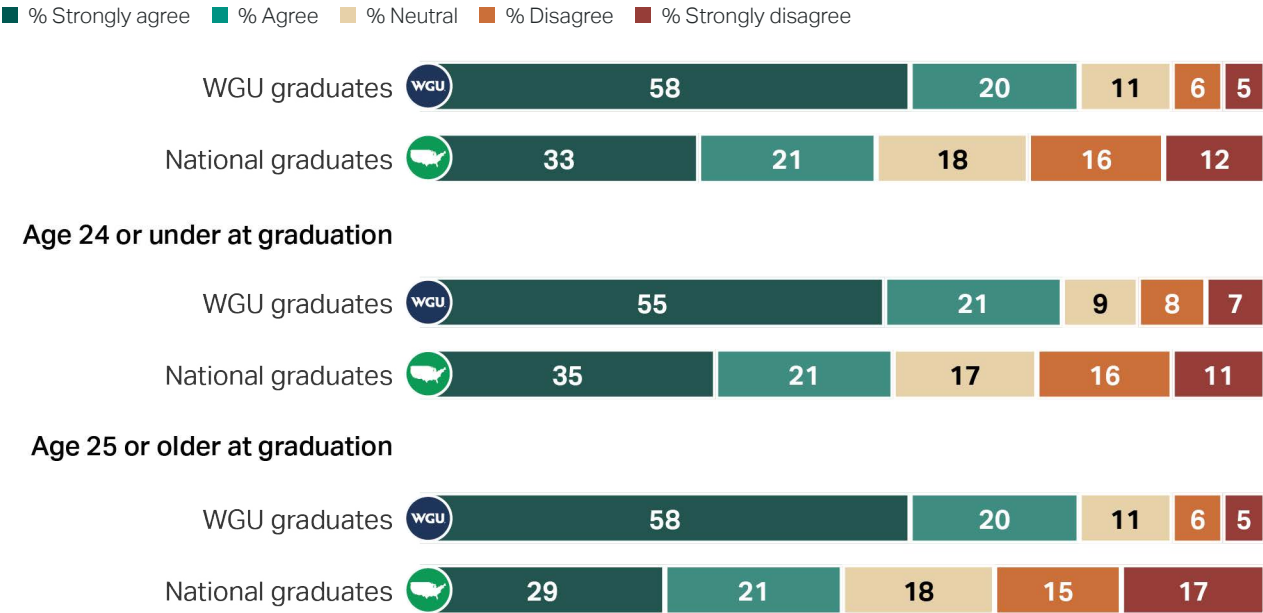
Guidance and support from WGU faculty and staff extend beyond feelings of respect and classroom instruction. To enhance the student experience outside the classroom, WGU assigns a program mentor to each enrolled student. These mentors provide comprehensive guidance, helping students navigate their academic journey through planning and resources that promote personal wellbeing, academic persistence and professional development. These efforts are reflected in alumni experiences: Roughly eight in 10 (78%) WGU alumni strongly agree or agree that they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams — 24 percentage points higher than national alumni (54%).

“I was blessed with a fantastic mentor who encouraged me when she could see that I was falling off track with my progress.”

WGU alumni report similar levels of mentorship regardless of the age at which they graduated. Over half of WGU alumni who graduated at age 24 or younger (55%) and those who graduated at 25 or older (58%) strongly agree they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals.

FIGURE 20

While attending [University] I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.



Note: Responses may sum to 100% ±1 due to rounding.

## Belonging

Alongside feeling respected by faculty and staff and having a mentor, a sense of belonging also impacts WGU alumni’s likelihood to recommend the university and the value they see in their WGU education.

About three-quarters (73%) of WGU alumni report that they felt like they belonged at their alma mater, compared with 65% of their national peers. About half (48%) of WGU alumni strongly agree that they belonged at WGU. Across segments of the WGU student population, there is a high sense of belonging, though female, Black and first-generation graduates report a particularly high sense of belonging at WGU.

TABLE 3

**I felt as if I belonged at Western Governors University.**

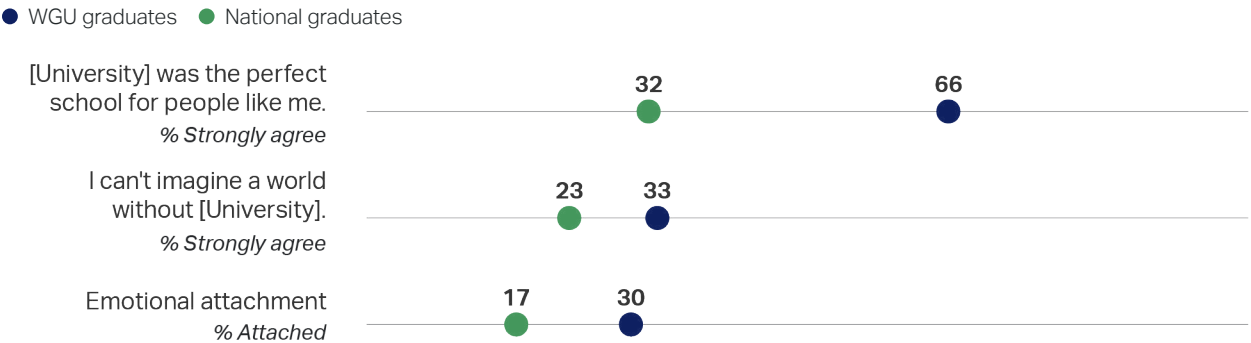
Among WGU graduates

|                                | % Strongly agree | % Agree | % Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| All WGU graduates              | 48               | 25      | 73      |
| Female graduates               | 49               | 27      | 76      |
| Male graduates                 | 47               | 22      | 69      |
| Black graduates                | 52               | 25      | 77      |
| Hispanic graduates             | 52               | 21      | 73      |
| White graduates                | 47               | 25      | 72      |
| First-generation graduates     | 51               | 24      | 75      |
| Non-first-generation graduates | 44               | 26      | 70      |
| Age 24 or under at graduation  | 53               | 15      | 68      |
| Age 25 or older at graduation  | 48               | 25      | 73      |

A sense of belonging and community can contribute to graduates feeling emotionally attached to their institution. WGU alumni are over twice as likely as alumni nationally to strongly agree that their university was the perfect place for people like them (66% vs. 32%). One-third of WGU alumni strongly agree that they can't imagine a world without their alma mater, 10 percentage points above the national average (23%). Thirty percent of WGU alumni strongly agree with both statements and are considered emotionally attached to their alma mater, while 17% of national alumni are attached to their university.

FIGURE 21

Emotional Attachment

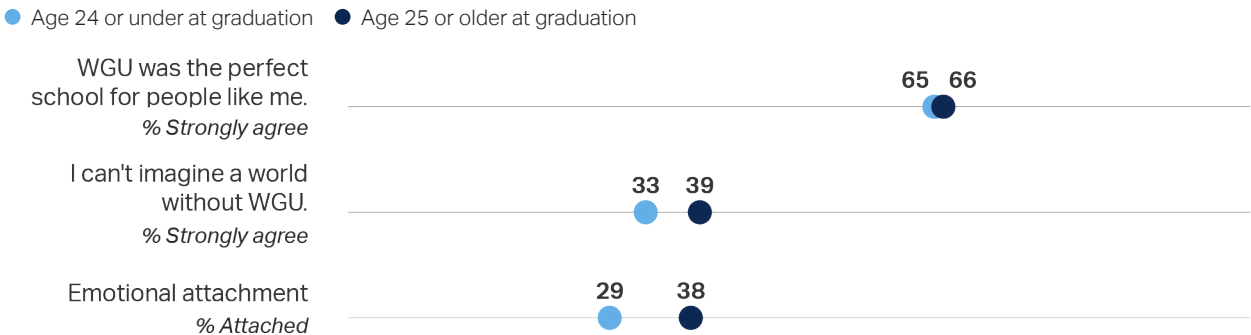


Among WGU alumni, roughly two-thirds of both alumni who graduated at 24 or younger and those who graduated at 25 or older strongly agree that WGU was the perfect place for people like them. Thirty-nine percent of WGU alumni who graduated at 24 or younger could not imagine a world without WGU, compared with 33% of WGU alumni who graduated at 25 or older. Thirty-eight percent of WGU alumni who graduated at 24 or younger are emotionally attached to WGU, slightly higher than the 29% of WGU alumni who graduated at 25 or older who are attached.

FIGURE 22

Emotional Attachment

Among WGU graduates



# Graduating Thriving Alumni

One of Gallup’s primary measures of wellbeing — the Life Evaluation Index<sup>14</sup> — measures an individual’s overall wellbeing through their levels of satisfaction with their current life and their optimism for the next five years. Gallup research indicates that higher levels of wellbeing are associated with greater happiness, improved health and increased productivity in both personal and professional life.

**WGU graduates report high satisfaction with their work lives as well as strong levels of overall wellbeing.**

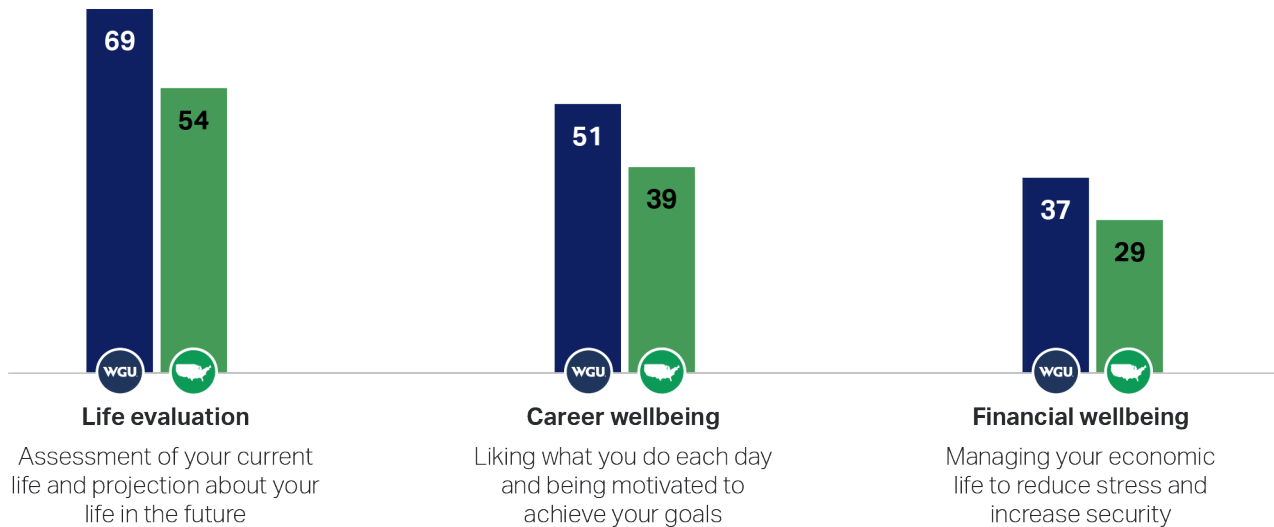
Sixty-nine percent of WGU alumni who were at least 25 when they graduated are thriving overall, compared with 54% of their national peers who graduated within the same age group. WGU alumni of this graduation age group are also more likely to be thriving in their careers and financial wellbeing. Among all WGU graduates who graduated at 24 or younger, the levels of thriving across life evaluation, career wellbeing and financial wellbeing are consistent with WGU alumni who graduated at 25 or older.

FIGURE 23

**Wellbeing**

% Thriving among those aged 25 or older at graduation

■ WGU graduates ■ National graduates



14 Gallup measures life evaluation using a two-item index based on the [Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale](#). This index asks respondents to rate their current lives on a scale of 0 to 10 and to project how they will rate their lives in five years. Respondents who rate their current lives as a seven or higher and their future lives as an eight or higher are considered “thriving” in their evaluation.

# Expanding Access to Higher Education

WGU provides higher education options to students who might not have been able to attain further education otherwise. Forty-four percent of alumni say that if WGU were not an option, they either would not have been able to earn a degree elsewhere (20%) or are unsure whether they could have (24%).

“ I would not have had the same level of flexibility and support anywhere else, and I probably still would not have my degree today if not for WGU. ”

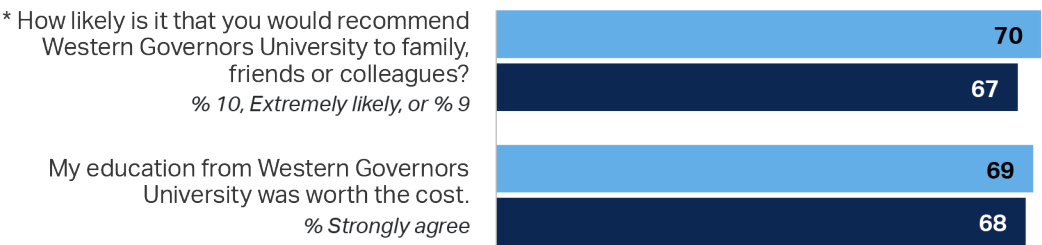
Data collected from WGU alumni suggest that WGU provides comparable experiences and outcomes for students from groups historically underserved by higher education.<sup>15</sup> These graduates are just as likely as their peers to recommend WGU to others and report their WGU education was worth the cost.

FIGURE 24



## Satisfaction With WGU Education

■ WGU graduates from historically underserved groups ■ WGU graduates from historically well-served groups



\* On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 means you are not at all likely and 10 means you are extremely likely

15 Graduates from historically underserved groups identify as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous, being from two or more races, rural, first generation or low income (annual household income of less than \$35,000).

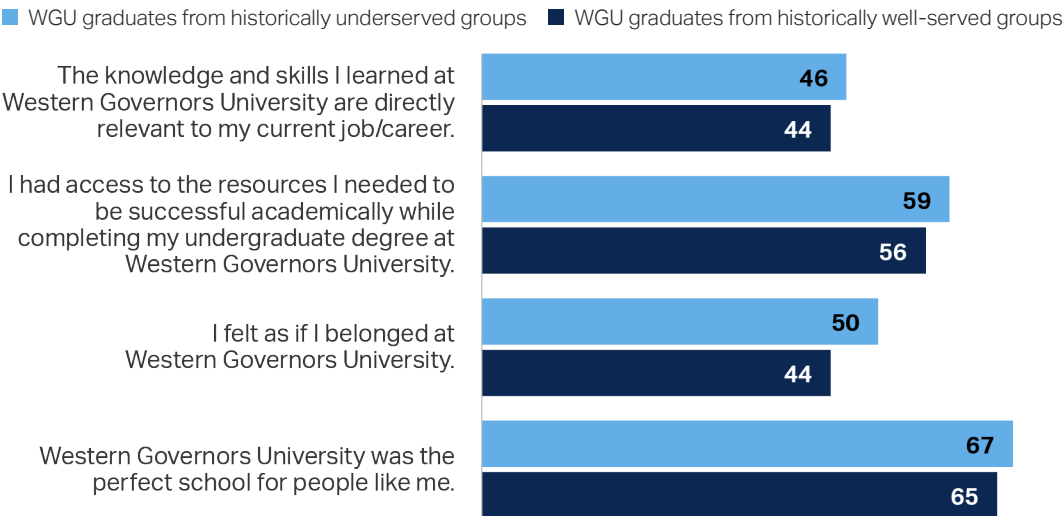
Across a spectrum of educational experiences — from learning important workforce skills to student support resources to feeling a sense of belonging — WGU alumni from historically underserved groups report perceptions similar to their peers.



FIGURE 25

Academic Experience and Belonging

% Strongly agree among WGU graduates



WGU graduates, regardless of their background, also report high levels of wellbeing and employee engagement.

FIGURE 26

Wellbeing

% Thriving among WGU graduates

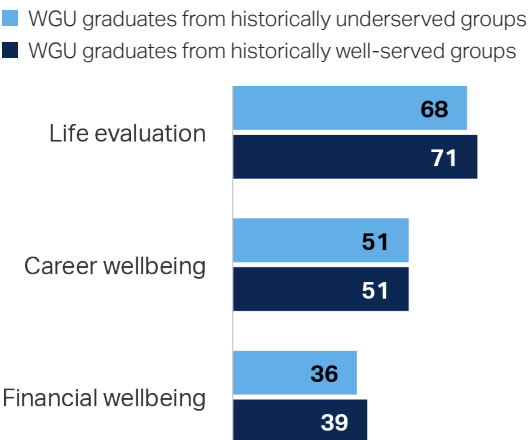
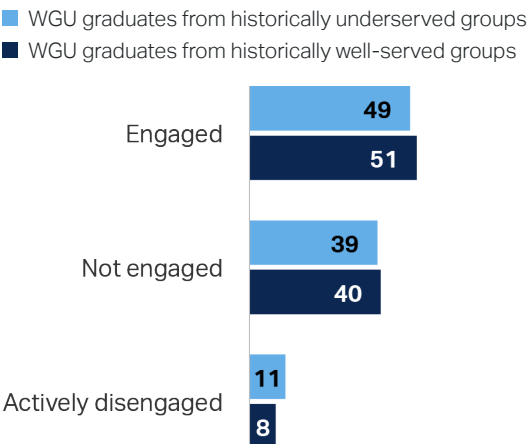


FIGURE 27

Employee Engagement

% Among WGU graduates employed full time



# Conclusion

The 2025 WGU Alumni Survey highlights the relationship between a workforce-aligned, skills-based curriculum and a supportive, student-centered experience. Graduates report strong returns on their educational investment, including career advancement and high levels of workplace engagement. At the same time, mentorship, academic support and a sense of belonging are associated with higher levels of satisfaction with their education. Taken together, the results reinforce WGU's differentiated value: an affordable, workforce-aligned model that supports students during their education and continues to shape their career and wellbeing outcomes after graduation.



# Methodology

Results from this study are based on 2,492 web survey responses from WGU alumni who received their bachelor's degree between 2020 and 2024, are aged 18 or older, and have access to the internet. Gallup conducted the survey from Nov. 17 to Dec. 15, 2025. WGU provided a simple random sample of over 54,000 alumni email addresses. Alumni were included in the study if the institution had an email address on file.

Results from the national study used for comparison purposes — the Gallup Alumni Survey — are based on 1,534 web surveys from respondents who received a bachelor's degree between 2020 and 2024, are aged 18 or older, have internet access and live in one of the 50 U.S. states or the District of Columbia. There were 395 graduates from the national sample who were age 25 or older at graduation. Results were collected over multiple fielding periods, including Nov. 18 to Dec. 1, 2021; Nov. 21 to Nov. 30, 2022; Nov. 21 to Nov. 29, 2023; Jan. 8 to Jan. 27, 2025; and Nov. 10 to Dec. 1, 2025.

All reported margins of sampling error for the Gallup Alumni Survey include the computed design effects for weighting.

For results based on the total sample of 2,492 respondents with a bachelor's degree from WGU, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 2.0$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the 1,534 respondents from the Gallup Alumni Survey with a bachelor's degree conferred between 2020 and 2024, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.0$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the 395 respondents from the Gallup Alumni Survey with a bachelor's degree conferred between 2020 and 2024 when age 25 or older, the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 5.7$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Additional respondent group sizes include 154 WGU alumni aged 24 or younger at graduation, 1,627 WGU alumni working learners, 1,826 WGU alumni employed full time and aged 25 or older at graduation, and 256 national alumni employed full time and aged 25 or older at graduation.

# About Western Governors University

WGU's mission is to change lives for the better by creating pathways to opportunity. That mission drives lasting impact for individuals and communities while strengthening the talent economy of tomorrow.

Established in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors, the nonprofit was founded on the belief that talent is universal, but opportunity is not — and that education is a powerful catalyst for upward mobility and workforce resilience. Purpose-built as a tech-enabled, competency-based university, WGU expands access to affordable, high-quality education through workforce-aligned programs and pathways that deliver value for students, particularly those not well-served by traditional higher education.

By continually reimagining how education is designed, delivered, and accessed, WGU connects talent to opportunity and advances economic mobility for individuals and families. This model prepares learners for in-demand roles and supports a workforce equipped to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving economy. Learn more at [wgu.edu](https://wgu.edu).

# About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 90 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.

Gallup partners with higher education institutions to improve the employee experience and student experience through advice and analytics about the university culture, employee engagement among faculty and staff, and the curricular and programmatic experiences in which students engage.

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