



Provost Address

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When I reflect on 2021 and all that WGU has achieved, I am in awe. I am in awe of our students who have relentlessly persevered as they strive for greatness. I am in awe of our faculty members who work tirelessly to serve our students on their paths for personal and professional growth. I am in awe of our staff members who support student success in so many meaningful ways, both directly and indirectly. And I am in awe because we have accomplished so much together despite the unavoidable and continued challenges presented by the pandemic over the last year.

As you'll discover in WGU's 2021 Annual Report, we have achieved great things despite the cascading obstacles presented by COVID-19. These achievements are a testament to the resilience of WGU's employees and students and they should be celebrated. Let me highlight a few of WGU's accomplishments from 2021.

We surpassed the quarter-million alumni milestone with the graduation of Marissa Price of Olympia, Washington. This milestone represents 250,000 lives changed and countless more impacted by WGU's mission to make higher education more accessible.

Marissa dealt with many life-changing events that could have derailed her dream

of graduating, but with the help and encouragement of her Program Mentor, she stayed on course and was able to finish her bachelor's degree in human resources management in her own time.

We also received a \$4.9 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help close educational gaps in underserved populations across the country.

In 2020, WGU became a founding member of the Open Skills Network, and last year, co-founding member Walmart provided an \$850 thousand grant to OSN for a significant expansion of its mission to accelerate the adoption of skills-based education and hiring.

Our Environmental Barriers program has helped thousands of students overcome the toll of COVID-19 while also supporting students impacted by disasters.

Jacque Cash in the Teachers College is just one student our EVB team assisted last year. Jacque was evacuated multiple times due to the destructive Dixie Fire in California, and ultimately she lost her job, home, and all her possessions. The EVB Team will continue to support Jacque through her 2022 journey as she recovers.

And our faculty members have remained resilient and committed to the success of our students while facing a number of pandemic induced challenges, such as sudden changes to routines at home, managing childcare obstacles, or enduring illness and even loss. I cannot express enough gratitude to each and every one of you.

Looking ahead, WGU will continue to prioritize the student-centered experience by expanding credential offerings beyond the degree, creating the ability to personalize and stack courses and credentials to meet specific job needs, mapping skills to opportunity, and delivering actionable alerts to students based on the skills they've acquired.

And we will develop ways to further accommodate students seeking an early college experience.

The many achievements we reach as a university are a tribute to each one of our students, employees, and generous partners.

As you can see, we are well positioned for an even greater 2022 as we celebrate together WGU's 25th anniversary. Without each of you, none of this would be possible.

Thank you.



Marissa Price, WGU's 250,000th graduate.



Jacquie Cash at WGU's Seattle commencement ceremony in 2018.