New Trustee Joins WGU Board

Emily Stover DeRocco, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, currently president of The Manufacturing Institute and senior vice president of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), has been elected to serve on the board of trustees of Western Governors University.

At the NAM, Ms. DeRocco oversees implementation of a strategic agenda on education, workforce development, research and innovation, and the design and operation of a new national center dedicated to fostering a new generation of manufacturing workers for the 21st century.

Supporting Alumni in Diverse Ways

WGU’s online education experience continues beyond graduation. WGU has created a unique alumni community that provides a place where graduates may share with their peers their professional experiences, practices, news, and success strategies, while asking advice, counseling with each other, sharing job opportunities, and connecting in other meaningful ways. Alumni mentors for each college are available to provide additional support.

Alumni can access resume and job search support plus interact with fellow alumni through the WGU Alumni website. The alumni website includes communities for graduates of each WGU college, which include career-related information, resources, blogs, and ways to connect to the alumni mentors and fellow graduates.

Some alumni volunteer to participate in the “Ask-a-Grad” program, where potential students can ask graduates about their WGU experience and how their degrees helped them advance in their careers. An alumni newsletter is sent quarterly via email.

Although the alumni community is relatively new, WGU has 2,086 registered alumni members; 26% have graduated from the College of Business, 15% from the College of Information Technology and 59% from the Teachers College.

WGU Partners with AARP Foundation on New Scholarship Program

The AARP Foundation—WGU Educational Assistance Scholarships, each worth up to $5,000, will be awarded to as many as 114 individuals facing financial hardship and special needs to help them develop marketable career skills to better support their families. The AARP Foundation—WGU Partners with AARP Foundation on New Scholarship Program program was especially active. One hundred forty (140) new students were awarded $7,500 WGU Scholarships for Rural Mathematics & Science Teachers, which are made possible through a $3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Over 300 Scholarships Awarded during Fiscal Year, a 250% Increase

The scholarship program at Western Governors University expanded dramatically during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008. During the year, WGU awarded 314 scholarships worth up to $4,630,000 to new students who started their WGU programs, which represents a 250% increase over the 90 scholarships awarded to new students the previous year. Hundreds of other scholarship applications are in the review stage.

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Other scholarship programs have been made possible through the generous support of National Advisory Board corporate members and other leading companies. These have included A&T, Zions Bank, Qwest, HCA, Rio Tinto (formerly Kennecott), American Express, CHF Healthcare, Morgan Stanley, PacificCorp, ABUP, andQualifier.

Summer Commencement Features Congressman Jim Matheson as Keynote Speaker

U.S. Representative Jim Matheson (D-Utah) delivered the commencement speech at the summer graduation ceremony for WGU on Saturday, July 19th, 2008 at Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City.

U.S. Representative Jim Matheson (D-Utah) delivered the commencement speech at the summer graduation ceremony for WGU on Saturday, July 19th, 2008 at Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City. Degrees were awarded to 642 graduates from 48 states. WGU awarded 401 undergraduate degrees and 241 graduate degrees.

“By enrolling in the education programs offered to you by Western Governors University, you’ve made a life-altering and life-enriching decision that education matters,” Matheson remarked. “Your presence here today signifies that you’ve taken to heart what many others before you have embraced recognizing an opportunity to better your life and the lives of the ones you love by pursuing education.”

More than 100 graduates from 29 states traveled to Utah to attend the ceremony, plus one person from the Galapagos Islands and one from Lincolnshire, England. WGU also broadcasted the ceremony live over the Internet via streaming video for graduates and family who were unable to attend in person.

WGU graduations can be very emotional events. Many students are thrilled to meet their fellow students and faculty face-to-face for the first time. Four selected graduates spoke about their WGU experiences, sharing their moving stories about the challenges they worked through to pursue their degree.

One speaker, Kimberly Lillywhite, shared with fellow graduates how she maintained her positive attitude after being diagnosed with spine cancer and was determined to complete her program despite regular chemotherapy treatments and medical illnesses. “I have been able to get past the roadblocks and become the best wife, mother and WGU college graduate,” Kimberly said during her speech.

Another speaker, Lisa Santiago, found alternative ways to communicate with remote faculty because she is hearing impaired and her primary language is American Sign Language (ASL). Lisa enrolled in WGU’s Teachers College to finish her degree online and achieve her dream of becoming a teacher for other deaf students. “I know I wanted to be a teacher for deaf students so I could serve as a successful role model,” she said. Assisted by an interpreter, she delivered her speech in ASL to her fellow graduates. (Read Lisa’s profile on page 2)

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WGU Introduces New Degrees in Science Education, Special Education and Health Informatics

There are thousands of teacher job openings every year, and school districts struggle to find qualified science teachers, especially in chemistry and physics. To help meet the demand, the WGU Teachers College now offers 10 accredited online science education degree programs designed for current or aspiring educators who wish to teach chemistry, physics, biology, earth science (geosciences) or general science.

The WGU Teachers College also introduced a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education and a Master of Science in Special Education. These programs will prepare individuals to teach students with mild to moderate disabilities.

New to the College of Health Professions is a B.S. in Health Informatics, which combines healthcare with information technology to provide the knowledge and skills needed to be a valuable designer and developer of health information systems. The program’s core components provide a rigorous knowledge base in IT fundamentals, IT management, and healthcare.

WGU Supports Military Spouses: Providing an Education Without Boundaries

WGU has been a strong supporter of spouses of active-duty military, and many spouses find WGU’s flexible degree programs a perfect fit with their sometimes tumultuous lives. With WGU’s programs, spouses don’t need to delay earning their degree because of the extra family responsibilities they take on when a spouse is deployed, and, because there isn’t a residency requirement, they can complete their degree from remote locations.

Many spouses have an interest in the WGU Teachers College, and during the past year, WGU has awarded 103 Spouses to Teachers Supplemental Scholarships worth $1,500 each. WGU also created a broader WGU Spouses to Graduates Scholarship worth $1,500 that can be used for all the other non-teaching degrees.

In large part because of WGU’s support of spouses, WGU has twice been named among the Top Twenty Military Friendly Colleges and Universities by Military Advanced Education magazine.

The ethnic mix of WGU’s student body includes those who identify themselves as African American (9%), Hispanic (5%), Asian/Pacific Islander (2%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (1%). Enrolling more ethnic Americans remains a high priority for WGU.

The founding governors might be surprised by the wide geographic dispersion of WGU students. WGU today serves students in all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and 3 U.S. territories, plus over 150 U.S. military and family members overseas. Many of the high-population states, such as Texas, California, and Florida, are well represented. A few states, most notably Georgia and Utah, have disproportionately high enrollment.

Key Demographic Facts About Western Governors University Student Body (As of June 2008)

- **Age (Avg)**: 36 years
- **Student Status**: Graduate students 29%, Undergraduates 71%
- **Gender**: Females 62%, Males 38%
- **Employment**: Work full-time 66%, Work part-time 17% Not employed 17%
- **Ethnicity**: White, non-Hispanic 67%, Ethnic minority/other 13% Unknown 14%
- **Urban/Rural**: Urban/suburban 78%, Rural 22%
- **College Expo**: First-generation college attendees 41%
- **Income (Avg)**: Household <$35K 37%, $35K-65K 36%, $65K+ 26%
**Gregory Rondot**  
**Student Spotlight**

WGU Information Technology student Gregory Rondot clearly fits the image of the exception. As an IT professional, he has over 15 years of experience in technology and management. Though he has held several positions in the IT field, Gregory is driven by his continued desire to learn and grow in his career.

Gregory explains, "I have a passion for IT and enjoy the challenges that come with it. I thrive on the excitement of solving complex problems and implementing innovative solutions." He attributes his success to his dedication and hard work.

Gregory is an example of how WGU can provide flexibility for those looking to advance their careers. He has been able to continue his education while working full-time, thanks to WGU’s flexible online format.

**Lisa Santiago**  
**Graduate Spotlight**

Lisa Santiago’s journey to Salt Lake City from New York City was exhausting but one she’ll never forget. She had been invited to speak at WGU’s graduation ceremony in her primary language, American Sign Language. Lisa is deaf.

Although she attended a special school for the deaf through grade six, her subsequent experience with mainstream public school, including other universities, was frustrating and unsatisfactory. That is, until she came to WGU.

Lisa enrolled in WGU’s Teachers College in September, 2005 to finish her degree online and achieve her dream of becoming a teacher for deaf deaf students. "I knew I wanted to be a teacher for deaf students so I could serve as a successful role model," said Lisa.

Lisa was thrilled to meet her WGU mentor at graduation the following year. "I owe my success to my mentor, Lisa said. "She would give up her time to explain the things in more detail that I didn’t understand right away.”

Lisa has worked as a teacher’s aide in a school for over ten years. Now, having earned her Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies degree, Lisa has her own classroom at St. Joseph’s School for the Deaf in Bronx, New York. **WGU Supports Military Spouses: Providing an Education Without Boundaries**

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**WGU Serves a Diverse Student Body**

The Demographics of WGU Students

For WGU’s founding governors, expanding access to quality higher education was fundamental to the mission of the university. The broad diversity of WGU’s student body today reflects that commitment. As of the end of the fiscal year in June, 76 percent of WGU’s student body is one or more of the populations typically underserved in higher education: ethnic minority (19%), low income (49%), rural (22%), or first-generation college attendees (41%).

Because WGU’s mission is to help primarily working adults complete degree programs that will contribute to their career success, students enter WGU at multiple points in their lives. Not surprisingly, the age range of students is consequently quite broad. The average age of all WGU students is 36, with about 39% of the student body ages 30-39. However, 30% of the student body is under age 30 and another 31% is 40 or older. There are even 50 students who are 60+.

The age diversity cuts across all four of WGU’s colleges.

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**“With the unexpected complications that I faced, I don’t know that there is any other program in the world where I could have accommodated my special circumstances except WGU.”** — Anne Wolf, Graduate

**“Even though I am deaf, I am very proud of myself because I have proven that I am capable of earning a very challenging degree just like people who can hear.”** — Lisa Santiago, Graduate
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During the year WGU awarded scholarships under 11 different programs, each of which serves a special audience. One daughter graduated alongside her father as both received master's degrees. In the audience were her sister and brother-in-law who are also enrolled at WGU and, if all goes as planned, will graduate next year.

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