Western Governors University

WGU Selected US Special Operations Command

US Special Operations Command announced a partnership with Western Governors University to offer WGU degree programs for members of the Special Operations Command through the "Operation Enlightened Warrior" program. Operation Enlightened Warrior is designed to make it easier for often deployed U.S. military to earn degrees. WGU is a leading provider of online competency-based degree programs, and the university's unique model allows active duty military to earn a degree in a flexible, online format that can fit their busy schedules.

WGU Offers Two New M.B.A. Degrees

Western Governors University reported another year of remarkable growth for its competency-based institution. Enrollment in WGU degree programs more than doubled from 700 students to more than 2,000. WGU is unique in providing competency-based degree programs leading to bachelor's and master's degrees.

Western Governors University defines success based on the ability to meet its mission.

Clara Loettj, President of the American Association for Higher Education

WGU Experiences Year of Impressive Growth

(Continued from page 2)

In January, WGU launched the "Transition to Teaching Scholarship program" which is a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which will provide over 600 scholarships to qualified students.

WGU Experiences Year of Impressive Growth

(Continued from page 3)

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, tuition revenues increased 400 percent, and university net assets increased 37 percent. In addition, the university funded over one million dollars in scholarships and added three new corporate sponsors to its National Advisory Board. Bringing the total to more than 20 organizations, each contributing $25,000 or more. Current National Advisory Board members include Bank of America, Convergys, Dell, Farmers Insurance Group, Gates Foundation, Google, Hewlett-Packard, Marriott Foundation, Oracle, Quest, Safeco, Salesforce.com, Simmons Capital, Skanska Foundation, Sun, Costco, Sun Microsystems, Time Warner, Wasatch Property Management and Zions Bank among others.

In the past year, over 100 students have graduated from WGU, bringing the total number of graduates to over 160. Forty years ago, WGU had only 225 students, and even as recently as two years ago reported enrollment of only 750. Two years ago, WGU offered nine degree programs; it currently offers 26 different bachelor's and master's degrees in three principal areas: business, information technology and education. The university also has more than 400 current teachers studying for master's degrees.

Western Governors University

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About Western Governors University

WGU has historically been a university in the U.S. offering online competency-based degree programs. The university was founded and is supported by 19 governors, most over 20 leading corporations and by foundations. WGU offers bachelor's and master's degrees in information technology, business and education. Major information is available at www.wgu.edu.

Dr. Joseph Stuart, dean for the JSOU said he and his team worked with the Region 4 Education Service Center for the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). "The Region 4 Education Service Center is a solution to this problem. We’re playing a vital role in assisting our nation’s teacher shortage by providing degrees and certifications leading to licensure in elementary education, math, science and social sciences," said President Mendenhall.

WGU also has more than 400 current teachers studying for master’s degrees.

(Continued from page 4)
to accelerate completion. And our online, mentor-based approach allows students to incorporate a rigorous MBA program into their busy schedules.

WGU offers a traditional Master of Business Administration and an MBA with an emphasis in Information Technology Management designed for experienced IT professionals. The MBA IT Management degree develops students’ core business skills while enhancing their IT managerial expertise. Both programs prepare students for mid-level to upper-level management positions in business, industry and nonprofit organizations. Graduates are eligible for CMTM™—a designation—a national recognition of business knowledge competence.

“We use a flexible approach targeted to students who can work independently—with mentor guidance—and who are prepared to do what it takes to demonstrate competency,” said Dr. Dennis Bentley, MBA program coordinator for WGU. “Because the programs are competency-based, students move through the curriculum with challenging assessments and projects incorporating real-world situations.”

Debbie Austin, a senior IT project manager and recent WGU graduate with a bachelor’s degree in Business IT Management, is beginning the university’s MBA in Information Technology program. “I know WGU’s flexible competency-based approach works,” said Ms. Austin. “I am looking forward to serving on the university’s new Board of Trustees because it offers the depth and intensity I am needing to advance my career.”

The competency-based university is attractive to students with extensive business backgrounds. Larry Braby, a former executive with the JC Penny Corporation, comes to WGU’s MBA program with more than 40 years of experience. “I’ve always wanted an MBA degree” shares Mr. Braby. “WGU’s program is an excellent way for me to achieve my goal.”

All WGU degrees benefit from the expertise of its National Advisory Board including business leaders from over 20 companies. The advisory board can produce highly competent graduates in one of the key reasons for this valuable business support. WGU uses competency assessments similar to how businesses recognize competence through such measures as IT or other professional certifications.

Governor Walker Praises WGU Graduates as Pioneers

Last July, 48 WGU graduates were invited to a ceremony at the Utah Governor’s mansion. Those attending the event received verbal accolades from distinguished leaders telling them WGU graduates are “making history.”

“You are somewhat pioneers to graduate from Western Governors University,” Utah’s Gov. Olene Walker said. “And you should be very proud. Graduation from the university wasn’t easy.”

WGU President Robert Mendenhall challenged graduates to continue their growth and learning stating, “the greatness of our university is judged by your success in life.”

Governor Walker praised WGU as a university that understands the value of educational degrees.

Texas Business Executive Transitions to Teaching; Gains Credentials and Certification via WGU

Retirement wasn’t all that great for Tomas Garcia, who had two distinguished careers, the first 15 years as an electrical and software senior engineer and then as a business executive with 21 years of national and international management experience, who built several companies into large profitable ventures. “After three years of retirement and travelling, I got up one morning and said, ‘I need to solve a problem or two’ instead of being retired,’” his wife suggested he become a schoolteacher.

Even though he held a bachelor’s degree from New Mexico State University in electrical engineering and an MBA from the University of Denver and completed all of the coursework for a MSIE from New Mexico State University, he did not have a teaching certificate. Last year, Tomas applied to be a substitute teacher in the El Paso Independent School District where he found his passion for teaching. He applied for certification. To gain his credentials, he attended the university in El Paso, but that interfered with his substitute teaching.

Though the office of certification of the El Paso Independent School District, he learned about Western Governors University. The university’s online and competency-based model is closely aligned with his need for flexibility and innovation. He attended a orientation, earned a scholarship and began studying with WGU last August. Tomas will have his certification within a year.

With his previous experience and enrollment in WGU’s Transition to Teaching scholarship program, Tomas has become a full-time teacher at Magnolia Middle School in Northwest El Paso, teaching math in grades 6, 7, and 8, as well as classes for special education students who are designated to go into mainstreaming. He has a new year contact with Magnolia staff who works toward his certification.

“I was a very positive thing,” Tomas says. “I am grateful to the school and the community leader and experience. I found when the students brighten up and I know I’ve got it.”

Tomas is one of more than 1,270 Texas teachers awarded Transition to Teaching Scholarships to prepare them to become Texas licensed teachers. The WGU program is one of 32 initiatives funded by the state’s Teacher Retention Grant Program. It is funded by a RISE fund the Texas Education Agency has allocated. WGU University offers a traditional Master of Business Administration and an MBA with an emphasis in Information Technology Management designed for experienced IT professionals. The MBA IT Management degree develops students’ core business skills while enhancing their IT managerial expertise. Both programs prepare students for mid-level to upper-level management positions in business, industry and nonprofit organizations. Graduates are eligible for CMTM™—a designation—a national recognition of business knowledge competence.

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Debbie Austin, a senior IT project manager and recent WGU graduate with a bachelor’s degree in Business IT Management, is beginning the university’s MBA in Information Technology program. “I know WGU’s flexibility, competency-based approach works,” said Ms. Austin. “I’m returning to this university’s new master’s program because it offers the depth and breadth I am needing to advance my career.”

The competency-based university is attractive to students with extensive business backgrounds. Larry Bosby, a former executive with the J.C. Penny Corporation, comes to WGU’s MBA program with more than 40 years of experience. “We always wanted an MBA degree,” says Mr. Bosby. “And WGU’s program is an excellent way for me to achieve this goal.”

All WGU degrees benefit from the advice of its National Advisory Board including business leaders from over 20 companies. The board emphasizes producing highly competent graduates, is one of the key reasons for the university’s business support. WGU uses competency assessments similar to how businesses recognize competence throughout measures as IT or other professional certifications.

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**Texas Business Executive Transitions to Teaching; Gains Credentials and Certification Via WGU**

Retirement wasn’t all that good for Tomas Garcia, who had two distinguished careers, the first 15 years as an electronic and software senior engineer and then as a business executive with 21 years of national and international management experience, who built several companies into large profitable ventures. “After three years of retirement and travelling, I got up one morning and said, ‘I need to solve a problem or two, instead of being retired.’” His wife suggested he become a schoolteacher.

Even though he had a bachelor’s degree from New Mexico State University in electrical engineering and an MBA from the Pennsylvania State University and completed all of the coursework for a MSIE from New Mexico State University, he did not have a teaching certificate. Last year, Tomas applied to be a substitute teacher in the El Paso Independent School District where he found the experience of teaching full grades. To gain his credentials, to become a licensed, certified teacher, he considered attending the university in El Paso, but that interfered with his substitute teaching.

Though the office of certification of the El Paso Independent School District, he learned about Western Governors University, the country’s only online competency-based university in his city. He attended an orientation, earned a scholarship and began studying with WGU last August. Tomas will have his certification within a year.

With his teaching experience and enrollment in WGU’s Transition to Teaching scholarship program, Tomas has become a full-time teacher at Magofflin Middle School in Northeast El Paso, teaching ninth-graders, 7, 8 and 9th grade classes (special education for students who are designated to go into mainstream). He has a one-year contract with Magofflin while he works toward his certification.

“Tomas is one of more than 170 Texans awarded Transition to Teaching Scholarships to prepare them to become Texas teachers. And more scholarships, valued at $4,000, are available.” (Continued on page 4.)
I love two and half hours from the nearest university. By learning online with WGU, I set my own hours of study and overcame geographical barriers while receiving an excellent education. This whole experience has been very rewarding.

Sandra Cipra, Elementary Teacher

WGU Partners with US Special Operations Command

U.S. Special Operations Command announced a partnership with Western Governors University to offer WGU degrees for members of the Special Operations Command through the “Operation Enlightened Warrior” program. Operation Enlightened Warrior is designed to minimize challenges for often-deployed USSOCOM members and their families by opening the door to earning degrees entirely online.

WGU’s online competency-based degree programs are ideal because they are accessible anywhere, at any time. “It’s an especially difficult time for military members to attend brick and mortar universities,” said Vice-Adm. Eric Olson, the USSOCOM deputy commander hosting leaders from WGU and three other universities in formalizing the new partnership. “We want our people to grow in every way while serving in special operations forces. Enlightened Warrior gives them a greater opportunity to earn a college degree.”

“Even deployed, our people can work on their degrees,” said Chief Master Sgt. Arnold L. Lane, the senior enlisted advisor for the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). “Being deployed a lot means it’s harder to go to school. WGU is a solution to this problem.”

Dr. Joseph Stuart, dean for the JSOU said he and his team reviewed more than 300 university programs before selecting WGU as one of four universities to offer degrees and courses tailored to SOF needs. Operation Enlightened Warrior is open to all members of USSOCOM around the world. WGU accepts military tuition assistance, Veterans Benefits, and other financial assistance programs.

About Western Governors University

WGU is the only accredited university in the U.S. offering online competency-based degree programs. The university was founded and is supported by 19 governors, as well as over 20 leading corporations and foundations. WGU offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Information Technology, Business and Education. More information is available at www.wgu.edu.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, tuition revenues increased from 700 students to more than 2000. WGU is unique in providing competency-based degree programs leading to teacher licensure in multiple states. “We’re playing a vital role in addressing our nation’s teacher shortage by providing degrees and certificates leading to licensure in elementary education, math, science and social science,” said President Mendenhall. WGU also has more than 400 current teachers studying for master’s degrees.

WGU Experiences Year of Impressive Growth

Western Governors University reported another year of remarkable gains for its competency-based institution. Enrollment in WGU degree programs more than doubled from 2,300 students to over 3,000 during 2004. According to Dr. Robert Mendenhall, president of the university, WGU is still growing enrollments at almost ten percent a month, adding 250 to 300 new students each month. “We are an extremely attractive option for working adults who have competencies but lack the academic credentials,” said President Mendenhall.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004, tuition revenues increased 400 percent, and university net assets increased 37 percent. In addition, the university funded over one million dollars in scholarships and added three new corporate sponsors to its National Advisory Board, bringing the total to more than 20 organizations, each contributing $50,000 or more. Current Advisory Board members include ATEI (Beaverton), Conways, Dell, Farmers Insurance Group, Gates Foundation, Google, Hewlett-Packard, Marriott Foundation, Oracle, Quest, Sallie Mae, Siebel Systems, Simmons Capital, Sloan Foundation, SunGard, Sun Microsystems, Thomson Corp., Time Warner, Warshaw Property Management and Zions Bank among others.

In the past year, over 100 students have graduated from WGU, bringing the total number of graduates to over 160. Four years ago WGU had only 125 students, and even as recently as two years ago reported enrollment of only 750. Two years ago, WGU offered nine degree programs; it currently offers 26 different bachelor’s and master’s degrees in three principal areas: business, information technology and education.

Earlier this year, WGU moved into 16,000 sq. ft. of new office space and is expanding to an additional 10,000 sq. ft. in January. WGU employs more than 50 faculty in 24 different states, and has total employment of over 140 people.

During 2004, enrollments in the WGU Teachers College increased from 700 students to more than 2000. WGU is unique in providing competency-based degree programs leading to teacher licensure in each state. “We’re playing a vital role in addressing our nation’s teacher shortage by providing degrees and certificates leading to licensure in elementary education, math, science and social science,” said President Mendenhall. WGU also has more than 400 current teachers studying for master’s degrees.

Texas Business Executive Transitions to Teaching...

Western Governors University offers Two New MBA Degrees

WGU is now enrolling students in two new online competency-based MBA degrees specifically designed for experienced business and information technology professionals seeking upward career mobility (see www.wgu.edu/mba). Competency-based education means students earn degrees by demonstrating what they know and can do rather than by simply accumulating a certain number of credit hours.

“Our challenging MBA programs are for individuals who already possess ‘real world’ experience but seek in-depth knowledge in management, leadership and strategy,” said Dr. Robert Mendenhall, president of the university. “The programs are flexible in two important ways. Business professionals with existing competencies can use knowledge they already possess to earn master’s degrees in business and information technology degrees more than doubled. The university currently offers seven different states, and has total employment of over 140 people.

“Western Governors University defines success based on the ability to master competencies.”

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