New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, Co-Chair, Western Governors University

“Competency-based education is a concept whose time has come. It provides a way for us to educate adults efficiently and conveniently, and to keep our workforce competitive.”

Utah Governor Olene Walker and Senator Robert Bennett are assisted by members of the Salt Lake Area Chamber of Commerce in the ribbon cutting of the new offices of WGU.

“Western Governors University... offers the only accredited online competency-based degrees in the country. As the University’s website, www.wgu.edu, students can find competency-based degree programs, an online library, bookstore, and access to a personal WGU mentor who will guide a student through his or her customized degree program. WGU was founded and is supported by 19 states and provinces, as well as 34 leading corporations and foundations. WGU offers associate’s, bachelor’s and master’s degrees in three areas: IT, business and education.”

Mr. Rattie said online learning “provides the flexibility for Questar’s full-time employees who want to continue their education while still working.” The company also has an education reimbursement program which encourages employees to seek higher education.

Regarding the WGU model, he said, “For too long, we’ve had a ‘one size fits all’ mindset with respect to education. Now technology is driving change and it is good for education.”

Senator Robert Bennett and Utah Governor Olene Walker presided at the Ribbon Cutting Celebration this spring when Western Governors University officially opened new offices. The university, founded seven years ago, has experienced impressive gains and growth, requiring expansion into the 16,000 square foot office at 4001 South 700 East, Salt Lake City.

Enrollments in WGU degree programs also more than doubled in the past year. The University had a ‘one size fits all’ mindset with respect to education. Now technology is driving change and it is good for education.”

During the ribbon cutting, WGU President Robert Mendenhall credited Senator Bennett for drawing Washington’s attention to the successful programs initiated by WGU and for obtaining federal funds. He has long supported WGU and has been an advocate of competency-based learning. In an address to graduates, Senator Bennett referred to the accessibility and importance of the great resources of the Internet and told students: “I know of no place anywhere on the planet where you could have learned these lessons more fundamentally than at Western Governors University.”

Dr. Mendenhall also acknowledged that Gov. Walker has joined the board and has pledged her support for the University. The Governor said one of the most important roles WGU serves is providing bachelor’s and master’s degrees through the Teachers College to help meet the need for qualified teachers throughout the country.

In addition to the success of the Teachers College, enrollments in WGU’s business and information technology degrees also more than doubled in the past year. The University recently announced five new bachelor’s degrees in business, four new bachelor’s degrees in information technology and eight new degrees in teacher education, including degrees in secondary math and science. (See accompanying stories.)

WGU Prepares for Continuing Growth

Senator Robert Bennett and Utah Governor Olene Walker are assisted by members of the Salt Lake Area Chamber of Commerce in the ribbon cutting of the new offices of WGU.

The support of business partners and foundations has been instrumental in helping students obtain their degrees through WGU scholarship programs. Currently, there are 635 students on scholarships: 252 Bachelor’s Degree students, 132 Post Baccalaureate students, and 251 students studying for Master’s Degrees. Forty-four students on scholarship have already graduated.

IT Degrees Blend with Vendor Certifications

New Bachelor’s Degrees Give IT Professionals Leading Edge in Career Advancement

With employers requiring more skills and training today than just a vendor certification, information technology engineers and professionals need new educational credentials. According to the U.S. Dept of Labor, three of the ten fastest growing occupations are information technology-related and each requires a bachelor’s degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Feb. 2004).

To meet the growing demand, Western Governors University has introduced 4 new, online, competency-based Bachelor of Science Degrees in IT areas: Network Management, Software Development, Project Management, and Security. Each matches...
specific industry certifications, resulting in graduates who possess the college credential and industry certification employers are
requiring.

Bachelor of Science, Information Technology- Network Management

For individuals who already possess an IT industry certification in networking but lack a bachelor’s degree, or for professionals who are seeking advancement by their lack of academic credentials, the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology- Network Management can help advance a career, providing the broad skills and knowledge to accompany the IT expertise. Either the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) or Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert (CCIE) certifications satisfy the requirements of the Network Management area of study for the degree.

Bachelor of Science, Information Technology- Software Development

Individuals with a professional software development certification but lacking a bachelor’s degree necessary for career advancement can use their current certification toward the completion of a bachelor’s degree. Combined, the certification and bachelor’s degree dramatically enhance career and professional opportunities. Either of the following certifications will satisfy the requirements of the Software Development area of study for the degree: Microsoft Certified Solution Developer (MCSD) or Oracle Certified Professional Java Development.

Bachelor of Science, Information Technology- Project Management

The Bachelor of Science in Information Technology-Project Management allows technology professionals to use their project management certification toward the completion of a bachelor’s degree, because it satisfies the requirements of the Project Management area of study. Combined, the PMP certification from the Project Management Institute and WGU bachelor’s degree create a resume dramatically stronger and enhances career and professional opportunities.

Bachelor of Science, Information Technology- Security

For IT industry security professionals who hold CISSP, GIAC or CCIE certification but lack a bachelor’s degree, the WGU Bachelor of Science in Information Technology-Security holds the certification training directly into a business degree. Any of the following certifications satisfy the requirements of the Security area of study for the degree: Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), GIAC Security Engineer (GSE), or Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert Security Track (CCIE Security Track).

GI Benefits For WGU

A program initiated 60 years ago to help educate members of the armed forces after leaving duty is now providing benefits for online education from Western Governors University. All WGU programs are now approved for VA benefits making it the first time they are available for competency-based university degrees rather than for class credits.

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the “Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944,” better known as the “GI Bill of Rights.” During the past six decades, the law has made possible the investment of billions of dollars in education and training for millions of veterans, and the nation has in return earned many times its investment in increased taxes and a dramatically changed society.

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the “Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944,” better known as the “GI Bill of Rights.” During the past six decades, the law has made possible the investment of billions of dollars in education and training for millions of veterans, and the nation has in return earned many times its investment in increased taxes and a dramatically changed society.

Scholarships for Teachers

Scholarships in the amount of $4,000 are now available for teachers who want to improve their career and salary potential with a Master of Education degree (M.Ed.).

The scholarships are available to Utah, Nevada and Wyoming teachers. Together, the scholarship and competency-based program make it possible for teachers to achieve a master’s degree and start earning a higher income.

The M.Ed. is a flexible program tailored to the teacher. It includes Research Fundamentals, Management & Innovation, plus two of the three following areas of study: Instructional Design, Measurement and Evaluation, and Technology Integration. The $4,000 scholarship is also available for the Master of Arts in Learning and Technology degree.

In addition to the scholarships, federal financial aid and VA Benefits are available for qualified students.

Here’s What Students Are Saying About WGU:

• Although more challenging than a set schedule of classes, learning online was a great experience for me. During the time I worked on my degree, I was able to build a new home and do a number of other things that rigid scheduled classes would not accommodate. Working with a mentor was a valuable experience. Being the oldest graduate from WGU to date (I am 59 years old), I would never have been able to complete a master’s degree without the flexibility afforded by WGU.

Golden Adams

• My experience as a student at Western Governors University was extremely positive. My mentor Dr. Mingming Jiang was a superb example of what Western Governors University stands for: attention to detail through individualized training. Dr. Jiang assisted me in every detail of the program spending numerous hours with me through email and telephone conversations. She helped ensure that I produced quality projects and prepared me for each competency test. I met numerous individuals while taking online classes and continue to foster those friendships.

Jim Nolan Langston

• Learning online was great. It fit into my schedule of full-time work and balancing my family life along with studying the same course. I was able to get a good grasp of the material and be comfortable with our week's worth of monthly discussions, as well as take an online class during the same term and get their viewpoint on the subject. The immediate feedback from my mentor was fantastic and I felt very comfortable throughout the online environment. Thank you for an amazing experience.

Kase Hawke

Professionals are Earning Online Competency-based Business Degrees

“I actually feel differently about myself, not that lack of self-esteem has ever been a big issue for me. I have a greater sense of validation regarding my skills both personally and professionally,” says Vicki Simek of Vineland, New Jersey, about her recent bachelor’s degree in business from Western Governors University.

Vicki needed a business degree to advance her career. “The head of the department in which I currently work as a contract employee feels that I would be the natural selection to succeed him when he retires in the next few years. I’d like to have that job,” she said.

This is just one reason people are returning to college to get a business degree. Some successful business people just want to have a degree to round out their knowledge in a chosen field, and some find a hole in their resume that needs filling. Others, like Texas inventor-entrepreneur Grayson Bax of Lubbock, say that in today’s competitive business environment, academic credentials are critical in landing a position and advancing a career. Grayson needed a bachelor’s degree from an accredited university before pursuing his goal of a post-graduate degree.

The unique competency-based business degrees offered by Western Governors University were a perfect fit. WGU grants degrees and certificates based completely on ‘competencies’—the ability to demonstrate skills and knowledge on a series of assessments carefully selected to measure a student’s mastery of a field of study—not on required courses.

With a customized degree program accelerated by what he already knew, Grayson expects to earn his bachelor’s degree in business this year. “Having blazed my own trail and having an entrepreneurial mentality, sitting in a classroom imposed on me more time than I would allow. I am able to focus my time and energy at WGU on the areas in which I need to gain skills and knowledge,” he says. “It’s so efficient and student-friendly. All the experience and competence I’ve gained means less time in college.”

In addition to two existing degrees in Information Technology Management and Human Resource Management, Western Governors University now offers five new bachelor’s degree programs in Business Management, Finance, Marketing Management, Business Professional Studies, and Management Accounting. Detailed information is available online at www.wgu.edu.
specific industry certifications, resulting in graduates who possess the college credential and industry certification employers are requiring.

**Bachelor of Science, Information Technology - Network Management**

For individuals who already possess an IT Industry certification in networking but lack a bachelor’s degree, or for professionals who are striving in advancement by their lack of academic credentials, the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology - Network Management can help advance a career, providing the broad skills and knowledge to accompany the IT expertise. Either the Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE) or Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert (CCIE) certifications satisfy the requirements of the Network Management area of study for the degree.

**Bachelor of Science, Information Technology - Software Development**

Individuals with a professional software developer certification but lacking a bachelor’s degree necessary for career advancement can use their current certification toward the completion of a bachelor’s degree. Combined, the certification and bachelor’s degree dramatically enhance career and professional opportunities. Either of the following certifications will satisfy the requirements of the Software Development area of study for the degree: Microsoft Certified Solution Developer (MCSD) or Master CIW Enterprise Developer.

**Bachelor of Science, Information Technology - Project Management**

The Bachelor of Science in Information Technology - Project Management allows technology professionals to use their project management certification toward the completion of a bachelor’s degree, because it satisfies the requirements of the Project Management area of study. Combined, the PMP certification from the Project Management Institute and WGU bachelor’s degree can create a resume dramatically stronger and enhances career and professional opportunities.

**Bachelor of Science, Information Technology - Security**

For IT industry security professionals who hold CISSP, GIAC or CCIE certification but lack a bachelor’s degree, the WGU Bachelor of Science in Information Technology - Security holds the certification training directly into a business degree. Any of the following certifications satisfy the requirements of the Security area of study for the degree: Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), GIAC Security Engineer (GSE), or Cisco Certified Internetworking Expert - Security Track (CCIE Security Track).

---

**GI Benefits For WGU**

A program initiated 60 years ago to help educate members of the armed forces after leaving duty is now providing benefits for online education from Western Governors University. All WGU programs are now approved for VA benefits making it the first time they are available for competency-based university degrees rather than for class credits.

On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the “Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944,” better known as the “GI Bill of Rights.” During the past six decades, the law has made possible the investment of billions of dollars in education and training for millions of veterans, and the nation has in return earned many times its investment in increased taxes and a dramatically changed society.

In addition to two existing degrees in Information Technology - Project Management and Human Resource Management, Western Governors University now offers five new bachelor’s degree programs in Business Professional Studies, and Management Accounting. Detailed information is available online at www.wgu.edu.

---

**Scholarships for Teachers**

Scholarships in the amount of $4,000 are now available for teachers who want to improve their career and salary potential with a Master of Education degree (M.Ed.).

The scholarships are available to Utah, Nevada and Wyoming teachers. Together, the scholarship and competency-based program make it possible for teachers to achieve a master’s degree and start earning a higher income.

The M.Ed. is a flexible program tailored to the teacher. It includes Research Fundamentals, Management & Innovation, plus two of the three following areas of study: Instructional Design, Measurement and Evaluation, and Technology Integration. The $4,000 scholarship is also available for the Master of Arts in Learning and Technology degree.

In addition to the scholarships, federal financial aid and VA Benefits are available for qualified students.

**Here’s What Students Are Saying About WGU:**

- “Although more challenging than a set schedule of classes, learning online was a great experience for me. During the time I worked on my degree, I was able to build a new home and do a number of other things that rigid scheduled classes would not accommodate. Working with a mentor was a valuable experience. Being the oldest graduate from WGU to date (I am 59 years old), I would never have been able to complete a master’s degree without the flexibility afforded by WGU.”

  **Golden Adams**

- “My experience as a student at Western Governors University was extremely positive. My mentor Dr. Mingming Jiang was a superb example of what Western Governors University stands for: attention to detail through individualized training. Dr. Jiang assisted me in every detail of the program spending numerous hours with me through email and telephone conversations. She helped ensure that I produced quality projects and prepared me for each competency test. I met numerous individuals while taking online classes and continue to foster those friendships.”

  **Jim Nolan Langston**

- “Learning online was great. It fit into my schedule of full time and balancing my family life along with getting my masters degree. I was able to do well with independent study and work as fast as I could. I was able to build a sense of community with others around the country who were studying the same course and get their viewpoints on the subject. The immediate feedback from my mentor was fantastic and I felt very comfortable with our weekly discussions, and assessment review sessions. WGU has awesome mentors, especially Sydney Parent.”

  **Vicki Simek**
Mr. Rattie said online learning “provides the flexibility for Questar’s full time employees who want to continue their education while still working.” The company also has an education reimbursement program which encourages employees to seek higher education.

Regarding the WGU model, he said, “For too long, we’ve had a ‘one size fits all’ mind set with respect to education. Now technology is driving change and it is good for education.”

Mr. Rattie said online learning “provides the flexibility for Questar’s full time employees who want to continue their education while still working.” The company also has an education reimbursement program which encourages employees to seek higher education.

“Competency-based education is a concept whose time has come. It provides a way for us to educate adults efficiently and conveniently, and to keep our workforce competitive.”

New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, Co-Chair, Western Governors University

Western Governors University National Advisory Board

The WGU National Advisory Board was created in order to enhance the implementation of the WGU mission, and aid in the strategic planning process of the WGU. The NAB serves at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees and consists of a diverse group of industry representatives. The primary aim of the NAB is to foster a global and visionary perspective consistent with the successful implementation of Western Governors University.

WGU's Innovations Appeal to Forward Thinking Corporations

The visionary aspect of WGU has caught the attention of many forward-thinking businesses who are interested in innovative approaches to education and training. Among them is Utah-based Questar Corporation, a firm with 2,000 employees in 11 Western states which produces, transports and distributes natural gas to more than 750,000 homes and business in the Intermountain West. "Our firm has been involved with WGU for many years because it fits the educational needs of some of our professional employees and we believe WGU effectively customizes education to fit the needs of working people," says Questar Chairman, President and CEO Keith Rattie.

He specifically likes the emphasis on skills-based learning, as opposed to time-in-seat credits, and WGU’s ability to capitalize on Internet technology.

"The WGU method is a revolutionary idea and we support efforts like this because they are new approaches that get results,” Mr. Rattie said.

Senator Robert Bennett and Utah Governor Olene Walker presented at the Ribbon Cutting Celebration this spring when Western Governors University officially opened new offices. The university, founded seven years ago, has experienced impressive gains and growth, requiring expansion into the 16,000 foot office at 4001 South 700 East, Salt Lake City.

Enrollment in WGU degree programs is growing by 10% monthly and now is over 2,000 students from all 50 states and 8 different countries.

During the ribbon cutting, WGU President Robert Mendendaal credited Senator Bennett for drawing Washington’s attention to the successful programs initiated by WGU and for obtaining federal funding. He has long supported WGU and has been an advocate of competency-based learning. In an address to graduates, Senator Bennett referred to the accessibility and importance of the great resources of the Internet and told students: “I know of no place anywhere on the planet where you could have learned these lessons more fundamentally than at Western Governors University.”

Mr. Rattie also acknowledged that Gov. Walker has joined the board and has pledged her support for the University. The Governor said one of the most important roles WGU plays is providing bachelor’s and master’s degrees through the Teachers College to help meet the need for qualified teachers throughout the country.

In addition to the success of the Teachers College, enrollments in WGU’s business and information technology degrees also more than doubled in the past year. The University recently announced five new bachelor’s degrees in business, four new bachelor’s degrees in information technology and eight new degrees in teacher education, including degrees in secondary math and science. (See accompanying stories.)

Dr. Mendenhall also acknowledged that Gov. Walker has joined the board and has pledged her support for the University. The Governor said one of the most important roles WGU plays is providing bachelor’s and master’s degrees through the Teachers College to help meet the need for qualified teachers throughout the country.

IT Degrees Blend with Vendor Certifications

Western Governors University...