Two New Academic Leaders Join WGU

Craig D. Swenson

Craig D. Swenson, Ph.D., joined WGU as its new Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs in May of 2006. Craig joined the university after a distinguished career as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Phoenix system and president at Apollo Publishing and Learning Technologies. Prior to that, he served in various executive communications positions with First Interstate Bank. He taught at the University of Utah, Brigham Young University, Union Graduate Institute and Capella University. Craig did extensive academic writing over the past 15 years, including articles in Change, CAEL, Educause Journal of Excellence in Higher Education and other professional publications.

Ruki Jaryaman

Ruki Jaryaman, WGU's new Director of Information Technology Programs, has an eclectic background. She holds a doctorate in political science from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, and also a master of IT industry certifications such as MICE IT, MCT, and CPA. Ruki initially started out as an adjunct professor at Brigham Young University where she taught Political Science and International Relations, but she switched her career emphasis to Information Technology. She worked at KON Education Services where she was a technical trainer and a virtual administrator. Later, she became a senior leader at KON in Utah. Prior to joining WGU, Ruki worked as Director of Customer Solutions for Toma Corporation, a software firm.

New Board of Trustee Members...

Integrated Health System and was V.P.-San Francisco Market Leader for Kaiser Foundation Hospitals and Health Plan. He serves the Hospital Council of Arizona and the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and has served on the University's Board of Education.

In addition to heading Simmons Media Group LLC, Mr. Simmons also heads two affiliated companies, Western Broadcasting LLC and Creekwood Communications. He was born and raised in Utah and attended the University of Utah and BYU. Simmons graduated from Harvard Business School in 1985. He is an appointee to the Utah State Board of Economic and Educational Development, and serves on the board of directors of First National Bank of Utah and on the governing boards of numerous community groups.

In addition to Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Simmons, the current board includes Jim Garinger, former Governor of Wyoming and Director, Policy and Public Sector, ESRI; Dr. Carl A. Cohn, Superintendent, San Diego Unified School District; Dr. Therese Crane, Senior Education Advisor, Infotech Strategies, Inc.; Robert Evanson, former President, McGraw-Hill Education; Governor Jon Huntsman Jr., of Utah; Kim Jones, VP Academic and Research Computing, Sun Microsystems; Dr. Clara M. Lovett, President Emerita, Northern Arizona University; Dr. Mark Milliron, Endowed Fellow Director, National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, University of Texas-Austin; Governor Janet Napolitano of Arizona; Dr. Samuel H. Smith, President Emeritus, Washington State University; Dr. Craig D. Swenson, Ph.D. joined WGU as its new Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs in May of 2006. Craig joined the university after a distinguished career as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Phoenix system and president at Apollo Publishing and Learning Technologies. Prior to that, he served in various executive communications positions with First Interstate Bank. He taught at the University of Utah, Brigham Young University, Union Graduate Institute and Capella University. Craig did extensive academic writing over the past 15 years, including articles in Change, CAEL, Educause Journal of Excellence in Higher Education and other professional publications.

Bucking the Trend - No Tuition Increase

Going against the national tide, WGU is not increasing tuition in 2006. Most colleges and universities are artificially raising tuition 8-12 percent and have done so the past three to four years. Nationally, tuition at both public and private colleges has been increasing at more than double the overall rate of consumer inflation for several years.

In this era of escalating college costs, including high student loan debt, WGU is closely aligning higher education provider keeping the current rate of $2,790 per six-month term with MBA students slightly higher at $3,250 per six-month term. WGU's tuition remains attractive compared to the national average of $2,125 per year for private colleges and $1,540 per year for public 4-year colleges (CollegeBoard, Fall 2005 data). Many states established higher education at a level higher than WGU's total tuition. WGU does not receive any state funding.

Western Governors University...

Phenomenal 3 Years for Western Governors University

WGU has undergone tremendous growth over the past three years. Overall, enrollment went up from 950 at the end of June 2003 to 5,500 at the end of June 2006. Teachers Certification enrollment increased from 600 to 3,100 between June 2003 and June 2006, a total increase of 410%. There was an increase of 89% for the Business College which had 140 enrolled in June 2003 and 1,300 in June 2006, and the IT College enrollment went from 100 to 750 for the same period, a 650% increase. Graduates increased from 40 (through June 2003) to 1,000 (through June 2006). Revenues are now substantially over that same period, from $6 million in fiscal year 2003 to $33 million in fiscal year 2006. To keep up with the growth, WGU staff grew from 70 to 300 during that same period.

College of Health Professions Sets to Open...

It's new, it's innovative and it's on its way! WGU's College of Health Professions is set to open later this year, with an MBA in Healthcare Management. This will be followed early next year with an M.S. in Health Education and an M.S. in Nursing, followed by undergraduate level programs, including B.S in Health Informatics in summer 2007 and a B.S in Nursing degree completion program, planned for winter 2007. WGU President Robert Mendenhall says, “The College’s primary focus is on adults who are already working in health and health-related positions, but need access to additional education to further their career goals.” The College of Health Professions offers the first, accredited, online competency-based...
“People who are called to the health-care professions to ease pain and suffering and to improve the lives of others deserve our help as well as our respect, and WGU is an innovative way to serve those who can’t further their health-care education in the traditional way.”  —James LeVoy Sorenson

**Student Spotlight**

Ervin Willis

If you ask Ervin Willis a question in Arabic, he'll understand you completely and answer you right back. That's because as a military veteran (Navy, Army, and National Guard), his crucial duty has kept him to the forefront of the globe, bringing his skills in communications, intelligence, biomedical technology and electronics to bear in the toughest of situations. Part of his service was in the U.S. Special Operations.

In between his active tour of duty, Willis earned many credits at several U.S. colleges and universities. After serving in Iraq in 2003 and leaving the military, Willis started working toward an IT certification. The Special Forces' Enlightened Warrior educational project within WGU, Willis says, "It was the answer of you laying down what you know and moving forward on the program and a student is rewarded for his efforts." Willis completed his Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree with an emphasis in Network Management in June.

I believe I got an excellent value here mainly because of the flexibility issue. It's something I would recommend to any vet... and vets—well, all about results!"

**Sorenson Legacy Foundation Supports WGU College of Professions Launch**

The Sorenson Legacy Foundation has donated $150,000 to help start the new online College of Health Professions.

The foundation is a charitable organization established by the James LeVoy Sorenson family to promote altruistic and compassionate health care. The foundation is a complement to the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, a charitable organization established by the James LeVoy Sorenson family to promote altruistic and compassionate health care.

Linda Clark

Linda Clark, mother of three grown children, a full-time agent and a full-time teacher, has developed her own psychology program called "Super Phonics to the Rescue." It deals with word analysis strategies using learning modality and word choice with visual graphics. Shes already sold more than 100 programs to parents and teachers and will market it nationally soon. "I have one student tutor who has Fragile X Syndrome and was totally non-reader. At 18 years old, he graduated in the first grade and continues to make steady progress." Linda Clark is excitedly.

Linda is also now the proud recipient of a Master of Education in Measurement and Evaluation, having graduated from WGU in July. She started teaching in 1979 and through the years has earned teacher awards and nominations, but she earned an advanced degree. Linda's schedule doesn't fit well with readings and classes, so WGU suited her. "Way cool," she says. "The classes are not easy. You have to study for those assessments. But it was so convenient. I did many conferences all in my pajamas!"

With her phonics program, she'll sit on her way to becoming a classroom innovator.

"You broke the bonds of whatever had prevented you from earning that degree earlier in your life, whether it was time, lack of access or the demon of low self-confidence." You took a leap of faith in yourselves, and in us. You are risk-takers," he told the audience.

Dr. Johnstone delivered the commencement address, speaking to a standing-room-only crowd of graduates and families. "You took a leap of faith in yourselves, and in us. You are risk-takers," he told the audience. "You broke the bonds of whatever had prevented you from earning that degree earlier in your life, whether it was time, lack of access or the demon of low self-confidence."

**WGU College of Health Professions Launch**

Western Governors University has added new members to its fledgling board of "trustees," which is composed of educators, industry leaders, and governors. David E. Simmons, President and CEO of Simmons Media Group LLC, and Frank D. Alvarez, President and CEO of TMC Healthcare, have been elected to the governing board. WGU President Robert Mendenhall says, “Both Mr. Simmons and Mr. Alvarez bring considerable expertise to the university at a time of rapid growth, especially as we open our new College of Health Professions.”

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Since 1998, Mr. Alvarez has overseen a medical device company that today is standard equipment in operating rooms and intensive care units. He is known foremost for developing the computerized heart monitor, he also invented the first disposable paper surgical mask, the first plastic venous catheter and the first blood recycling system for trauma and surgical procedures.

Mr. Simmons believes in WGU's new colleges and its unique approach to education. "People who are called to the health-care professions to assist and suffering and to improve the lives of those who can’t help them need our help as well as our respect," said Mr. Simmons. "And WGU is an innovative way to serve those who can’t further their health-care education in the traditional way."

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**July 2006 Graduation Marks 10-Year Vision and Largest Class Ever at WGU**

Ten years ago, 10 governors had a vision: to create an online, competency-based university that would improve quality and expand access to higher education, allowing students to learn at their own pace and convenient to them. The vision became reality and 10 years later, WGU had its largest graduating class—392 students from 43 states and 3 countries.

Seventy-two of the graduating students from all over the country made the trip to Salt Lake City to receive their diplomas July 28th at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center. A total of 323 undergraduate degrees and 69 graduate degrees were conferred, including 283 degrees from the WGU Teachers College, 5 business degrees, and 47 information technology degrees.

It was the first opportunity for many students to meet their fellow students and faculty members face-to-face.

This graduation also marked a special transition for Dr. Douglas Johnstone, the university’s first provost. Recently named Provost Emeritus of WGU, he will be retiring at the end of this year. He led WGU for seven years, through its formative development, accreditation, the growth in degree programs from 35, and the accelerated growth of the past three years.

Dr. Johnstone delivered the commencement address, speaking to a standing-room-only crowd of graduates and families. "You took a leap of faith in yourselves, and in us. You are risk-takers," he told the audience. "You broke the bonds of whatever had prevented you from earning that degree earlier in your life, whether it was time, lack of access or the demon of low self-confidence."

Ervin Willis faced a similar challenge to this class—to live up to the responsibilities of increased citizenship, which includes carrying out those responsibilities by applying their new knowledge in their personal and work lives.

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Linda Clark is excitedly.

Linda is also now the proud recipient of a Master of Education in Measurement and Evaluation, having graduated from WGU in July. She started teaching in 1979 and through the years has earned teacher awards and nominations, but she earned an advanced degree. Linda’s schedule doesn’t fit well with readings and classes, so WGU suited her. “Way cool,” she says. “The classes are not easy. You have to study for those assessments. But it was so convenient. I did many conferences all in my pajamas!”

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**WGU Briefs...**

• GetEducated.com names WGU a "Best Buy" in summer 2006. This follows its listing of WGU #4 on the Best Buy list for nationally accredited distance MAs in spring 2006.

• 30 of WGU’s faculty members or academic administrators have published academic papers or made professional presentations nationally thus far in 2006.

“I’m delighted by the opportunity to serve on the board of trustees for WGU. I believe WGU represents a major paradigm shift for higher education and that during our lifetimes we will see it model the norm for millions of college students.”

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In between his active tour of duty, Willis earned many credits at several Phoenix area colleges and universities. After surviving in Iraq in 2003 and leaving the military, Willis started working toward an IT certification. The Special Forces Educational Technology Enrichment Educational Project (STEEN) at the University of Phoenix helped in this process. Willis says, “It’s an armada of you laying down what you know and moving forward on the program and a student is rewarded for his effort.” Willis completed his Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree with an emphasis in Network Management in June.

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The Sorenson Legacy Foundation has donated $50,000 to help start the new School of College of Professions. The foundation is a charitable organization established by the late John Sorenson who was a true philanthropist. Mr. Sorenson, a Utahn, is one of America’s top technology pioneers and invested many medical devices, including his own, Mr. Sorenson, a veteran, is one of America’s top technology pioneers and invested many medical devices, including his own.

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Since 2006, Mr. Alvarez has overseen three hospital regional systems serving Tucson, southern Arizona and northern New Mexico at TMC Healthcare. The company is the region’s largest independent healthcare provider. Prior to 1998, Mr. Alvarez headed Maricopa County.

Continued on page 4.

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Bucking the Trend – No Tuition Increase

Colleges at the national level (WGU is not) are increasing tuition in 2006. Most colleges and universities artificially ratchet tuition up 8-12 percent and have done so the past three to four years. Nationally, tuition at both public and private colleges has increased at more than double the overall rate of consumer inflation for several years. In this era of escalating college costs, including high student loan debt, WGU is able to lower the cost of higher education by keeping the current rate of $2,790 per six-month term, with MBA students slightly higher at $3,250 per six-month term. WGU’s tuition remains attractive compared to the national average of $3,549 per year for private colleges and $2,220 per year for public colleges.

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