

Natural Resources and Environmental Issues

Volume 7 *University Education in Natural Resources*

Article 21

1998

Western Governors University: Implementation of the vision

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Recommended Citation

Livingston, Jeff (1998) "Western Governors University: Implementation of the vision," *Natural Resources and Environmental Issues*: Vol. 7 , Article 21.

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WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VISION

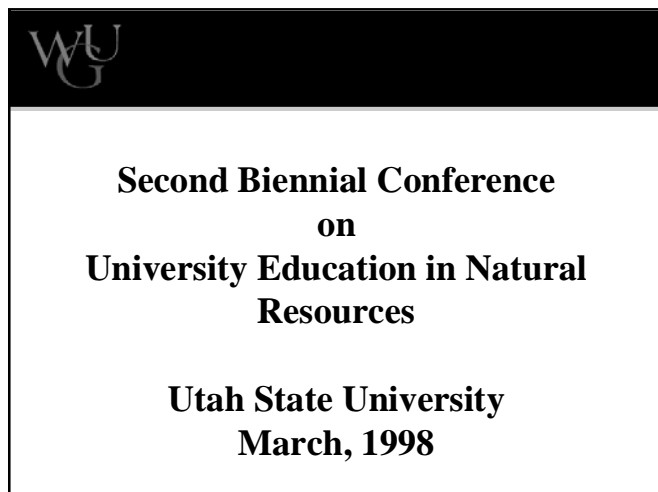
Jeff Livingston

This session will review factors that have impacted higher education and were considered by the governors of 17 states as they agreed to join the consortium to create Western Governors University. The institution was incorporated in Utah in January of 1997 and has since made significant progress toward implementation of the motivating vision of providing competency-based learning, using technology as a medium of delivery. Since its inception, WGU has been described as a metaphor for the future of higher education.

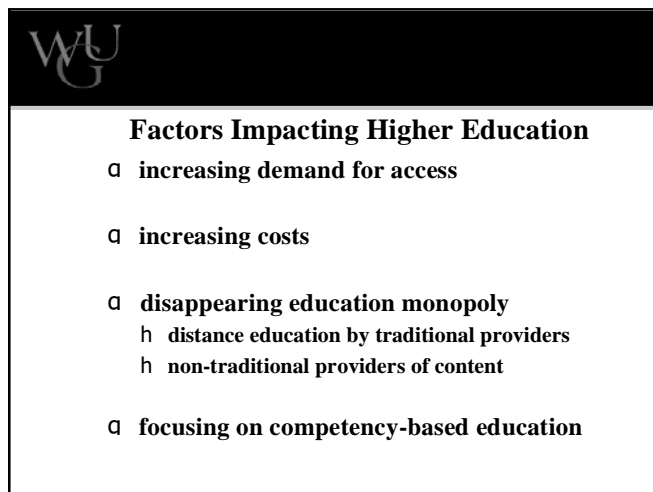
Implementation has included moving forward on such issues as developing competencies for both an Associate of Arts degree and an Associate of Applied Science degree as initial academic offerings, securing financial aid for students enrolled in a competency-based curriculum, seeking accreditation of an institution without an instructional faculty of its own, overcoming state licensure and registration barriers, and developing an appropriate fee structure for students and institutions providing academic content. Other issues include the imposing challenge of dealing with various constituencies in 16 states and 1 territory, creating a National Advisory Board of representatives from interested industries, and considering various non-profit/profit structures for creating the necessary financing options for this private, educational institution.

Following a computer slide show presentation, session participants will have the opportunity of discussing additional issues and questions of interest.

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WGU

Factors Impacting Higher Education

- expanding access to technology
 - h technologically literate students
 - h quality enhancement of instruction
 - h flexibility for individual learning styles
 - h availability of information resources
- moving from campus-centric to consumer-centric (competition or choice)
- changing role of faculty and staff

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WGU

Brief Background

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WGU

Goals

- expanding access through technology (wide variety; not just Internet)
- providing formal recognition of acquired skills and knowledge by focusing on competencies of students
- minimizing the costs of replication and duplication; not a replacement for traditional campus

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WGU

Academic Services Provided

- full spectrum of WGU credentials based on competencies and learning outcomes
- brokered programs and courses based on credit hours for transfer to a traditional institution
- WGU will not grant credit, be a credit bank, or award a credit-based credential

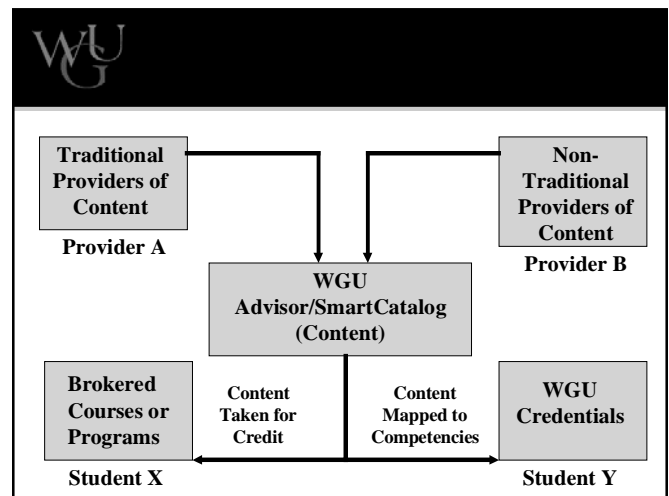
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WGU


Academic Content

- WGU will not employ teaching faculty and will not develop its own courseware
- all academic content, both for the WGU credential and the brokering function, will be furnished by other providers through a solicitation process
- providers must meet WGU quality standards

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Initial Academic Offerings

- **WGU competency-based associate of arts degree (general education component)**
- **WGU competency-based associate of applied science degree for electronics industry**
- **brokering of credit hour programs and courses for transfer**


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Traditional Faculty

Functions	WGU Counterparts
□ Curriculum Design/Oversight	→ □ WGU Program Councils
□ Instructional Delivery	→ □ Education Providers
□ Developmental Advising	→ □ WGU Advisor/Mentors
□ Assessment of Student Performance	→ □ WGU Assessment Council
□ Academic Planning and Coordination	→ □ WGU Associate and Academic Officers


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Next Two Phases

- **21 pilot institutions; providing content and/or enrolling students; February 1998**
- **test systems and integration; provide input on policies and procedures**
- **solicit content from providers; early 1998**
- **open WGU to broader audience of providers/students later in 1998**

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Response to Vision and Goals

- **16 states and 1 territory in consortium; others expressing interest**
- **interest from multiple states and countries**
- **business/industry support**
- **reduced barriers**
- **a metaphor for what is coming**

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States	States
□ Alaska	□ Nevada
□ Arizona	□ New Mexico
□ Colorado	□ North Dakota
□ Guam	□ Oklahoma
□ Hawaii	□ Oregon
□ Idaho	□ Texas
□ Montana	□ Utah
□ Nebraska	□ Washington
□ Others	□ Wyoming


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International Interest

- **collaborative agreements with institutions in:**
 - h Great Britain
 - h Japan
 - h British Columbia
 - h Mexico
- **discussions with Korea, Russia, China, Malaysia**


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Accreditation/ Federal Financial Aid

- four associations for the participating states
- joint accreditation/inter-regional accrediting committee
- common standards and requirements for eligibility, candidacy, and accreditation
- DoEd willing to work with WGU through experimental site status for financial aid


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Market for Academic Content


- English 101 from many qualified providers
- WGU will not choose a best provider; rather will list all English 101 courses
- WGU will provide information to student: tuition, technology, success rate, schedule
- student makes informed choice; resulting in market for academic content

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The Business Enterprise

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Incorporation


- incorporated with administrative offices in Utah; academic offices in Colorado
- board of trustees created; 4 governors, 3 higher education officials, and 7 business leaders
- staff appointments as appropriate; transitioning from contractors to staff

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Outsourced WGU Functions

- instructional delivery
- assessment
- bookstore
- information resources
- administrative (“backroom”) functions


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Initial Revenue Sources

- state amounts received/committed \$1,700,000
- foundation grants: \$750,000
- corporate donations (cash and in-kind): \$3,600,000
- \$3 million curriculum development grant from Colorado

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On-Going Revenue Sources

- tuition--determined by providing entity
- fees from students
- fees from providers
- fees and revenues from local center
- fees from other business services


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Partners	Partners
-IBM*	-3COM*
-Sun Microsystems*	-Apple Computer*
-Micron	-US West
-AT&T*	-Matrixx Marketing
-International Thomson Publishing*	-KPMG*
-Microsoft*	-Novell*
	-Sloan Foundation*

*members National Advisory Board


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Industry/Business Interest

- believe in vision of WGU
- desire competency-based education for in-house education and training
- anticipate revenue opportunity with WGU


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Issues and Considerations

- tuition (resident/non-resident)
- financial aid (state/federal)
- state licensing/registration barriers
- state subsidy for WGU students
- strategic use of WGU services


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Issues and Considerations

- communicating to various constituencies
- WGU corporate structure for various services
- business planning and strategy (central and local)
- business partnerships (nature and form)

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For additional information:

www.westgov.org/smart/vu/vu.html

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