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# BRIDGING THE GAP WITH COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Presentation to the House Select Committee on Education Strategy and Practices  
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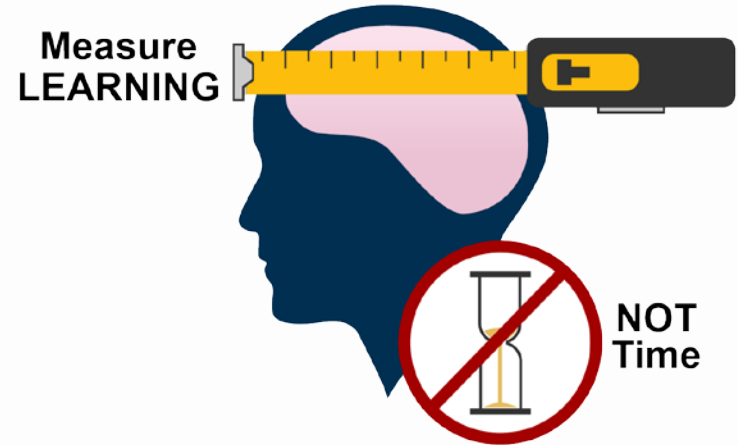
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# COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

Recognizes adults have different levels of knowledge and learn at different rates

- Market (employer) alignment
- Measure learning, not time
- No waiting to learn
- Individualized support
- Regular, substantive progress



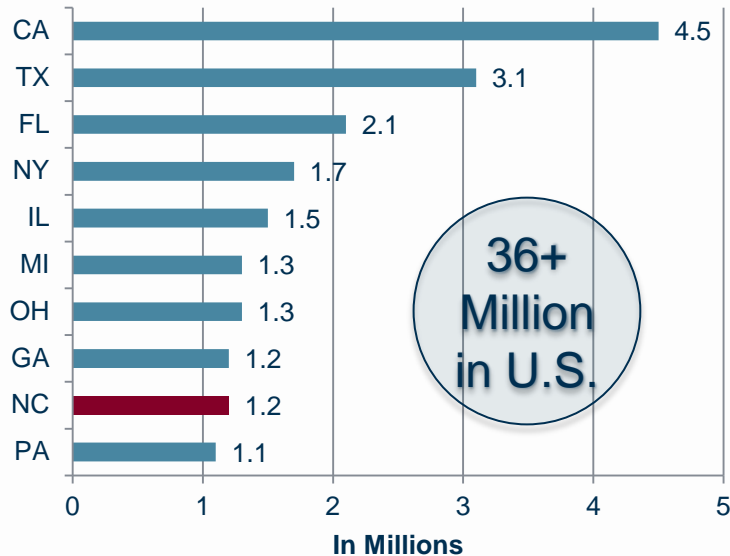
**ONLINE ≠ CBE**

# OUTLINE

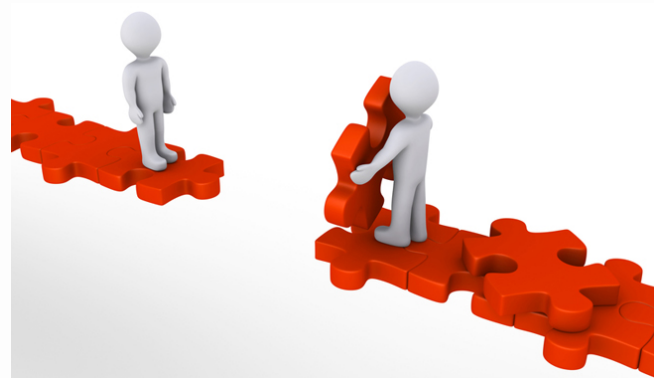
- **The Challenge**
- The WGU Model
- The Impact
- What We've Learned

# GAP IN PRODUCTION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES

U.S. adults with some college, no degree



By 2020, 5+ million shortfall in degree / certificate holders

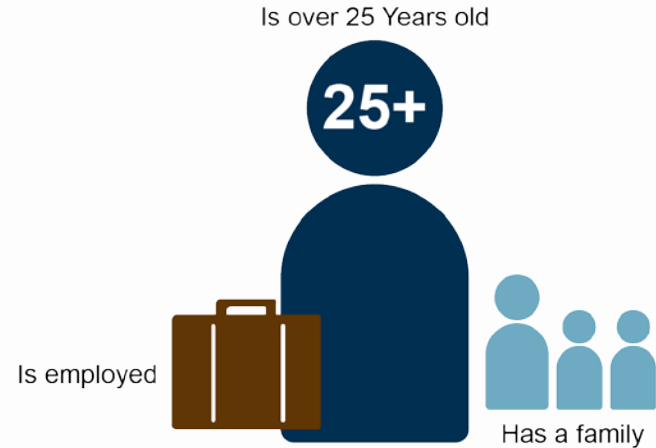


Source: Lumina Foundation

# NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS ARE THE MAJORITY

...and they have different needs

- Flexibility
- Access
- Affordability
- Recognition of knowledge and skills already acquired

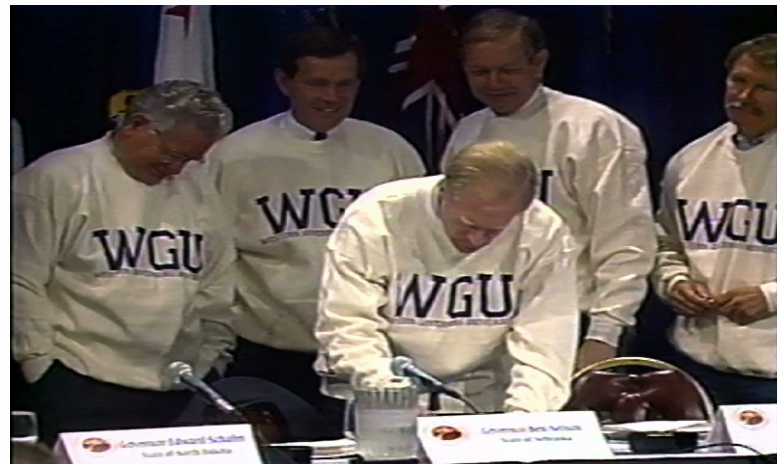


# OUTLINE

- The Challenge
- **The WGU Model**
- The Impact
- What We've Learned

# WGU

- Nonprofit, founded in 1997 by 19 governors
- Competency-based, all online
- 50+ degrees in high-demand fields in four Colleges :
  - Business
  - K-12 teacher education
  - IT
  - Health professions
- \$6,000 per year, “all you can learn”
- 70,000 students and 63,000 graduates in all 50 states



**Created to expand and enhance higher education opportunities for busy adults**



**WGU®**



# FACULTY AT WGU – SPECIALIZATION

## **Student Mentors** (Masters degrees or higher)

- Dedicated, regular one-to-one support for students

## **Course faculty** (PhDs or equivalent, with relevant expertise)

- Provide individualized instruction
- Lead group discussions
- Support students engaged in specific courses

## **Curriculum and assessment faculty**

- Select and develop course materials and assessments

## **Evaluators**

- Experts grading/evaluating students performance





# PROGRAM & COURSE DESIGN

- Required competencies defined and updated in collaboration with academic and industry experts
- Leverage best third-party course materials, where available
- 6-month terms, beginning each month
  - Allows for shorter cycle advancements in programs/courses
- Competency validated through expert assessments
  - Students move quickly through what they already know
  - Focus on what they don't know and need to master

# INDUSTRY-LEADING ASSESSMENTS

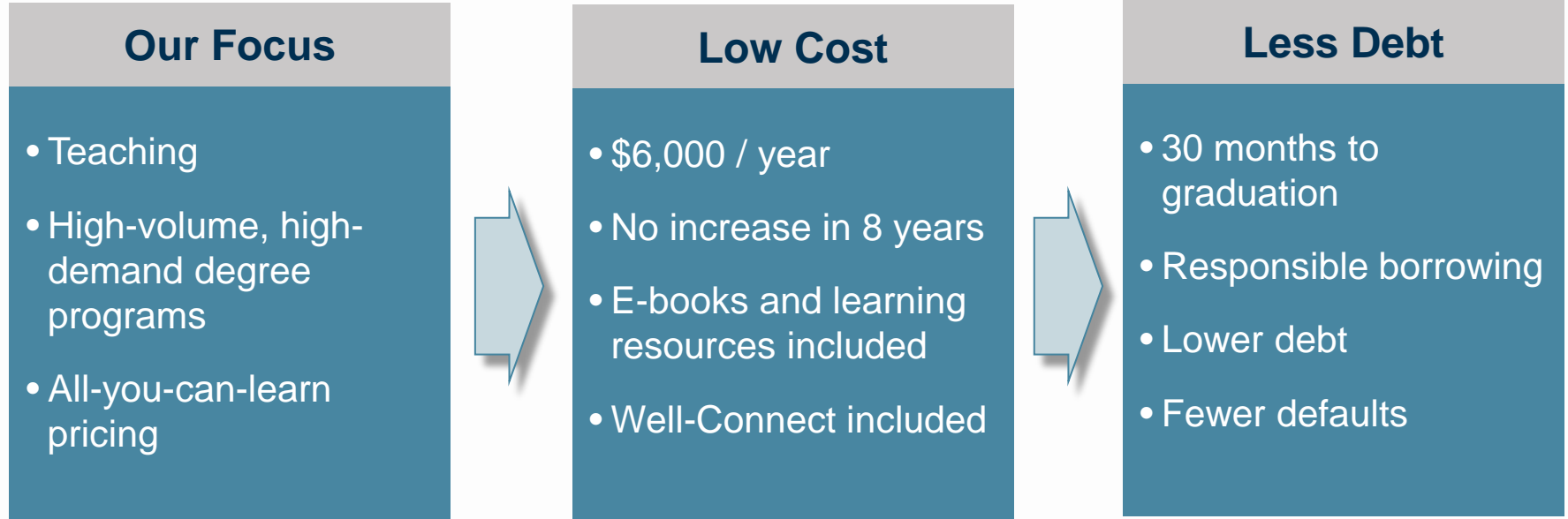
- Developed by assessment experts
- Designed to match required course competencies
- Industry-recognized certs and exams included in many courses
- Secure, online proctoring
- Robust student feedback provided by evaluation faculty

# STAGGERING STUDENT DEBT

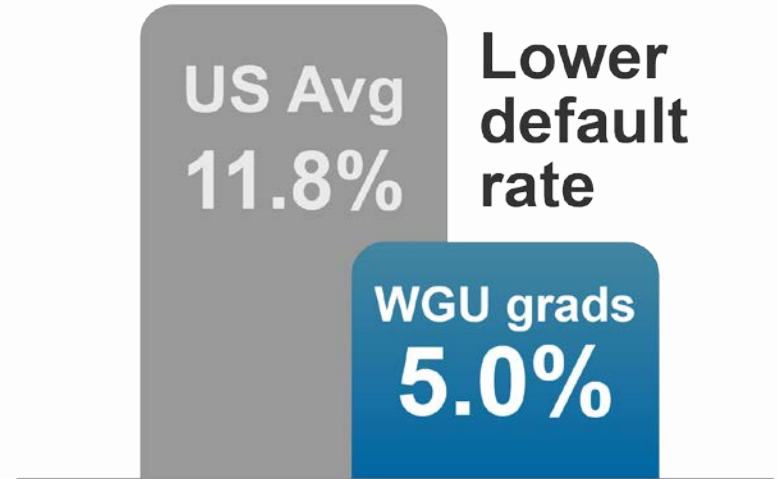
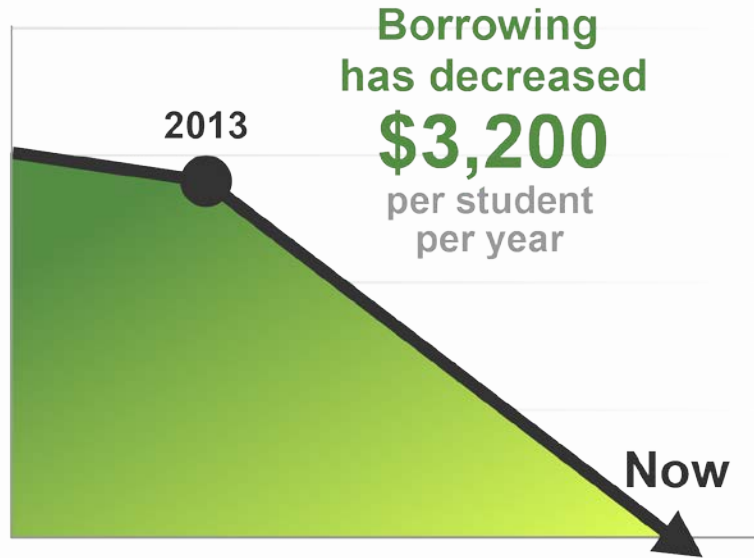
- Over **\$1.3 trillion**
- Increasing by **\$2,726 per second!**
- 2016 average education debt per Undergraduate = **\$37,200**



# WGU – A LOW-COST OPPORTUNITY



# WGU RESPONSIBLE BORROWING INITIATIVE



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# DELIVERING A BETTER STUDENT EXPERIENCE

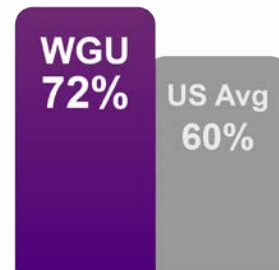
Job-Related Knowledge



Challenging Work



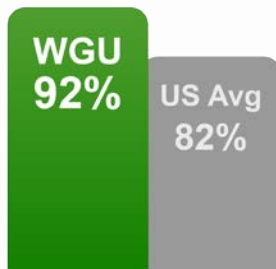
Quality of Faculty Interactions



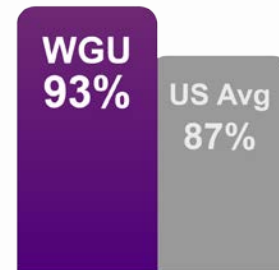
Quality of Academic Support



Would Attend Again



Rating of Entire Experience



**WGU**

Source: National Survey on Student Engagement

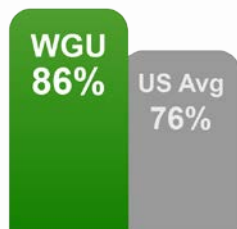
# DELIVERING VALUE TO GRADUATES

WGU graduates find the jobs they seek.

Employed Full Time



Employed in Field



... And earn more.



Higher Raises

WGU Grads: **\$14,700**

U.S. Avg: **\$8,900**

Source: Harris Online poll



# GREAT JOBS, GREAT LIVES

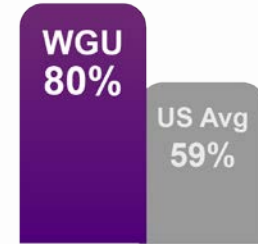
Perfect School for Me



A Mentor Encouraged Me



Passionate About My Success



Academically Challenging



Worth the Cost

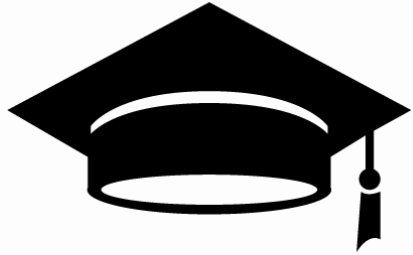


# DELIVERING VALUE TO EMPLOYERS

- **100%** said WGU grads **were prepared** for their jobs.
- **98%** said WGU grads meet or exceed expectations; **92%** **said they exceed.**
- **93%** rate WGU grads' **job performance excellent** or very good.
- **94%** rated WGU grads' **soft skills equal to or better** than other grads.



# WHY IT WORKS



**Learn as Fast  
as You Want**

**Lower Cost  
to Students**



**More Student  
Support**



**WGU®**

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# WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- CBE is not for everyone; complements existing options
- Standardization works best
- High demand, high volume
- Source best content, experience
- Reinvent faculty model
- Student motivation/engagement vital to success
- Advanced analytics improve student experience, increasing retention and graduation



# OUR ROLE IN SUPPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION

- Expand and enhance higher education opportunities
  - For those who need it
  - Those we need (in the workforce)
- Partner with education institutions and employers in North Carolina and throughout the country
  - Articulation agreements
  - Assistance in developing CBE programs
  - Field experience and recruitment partnerships
- State-sponsored WGU provides local access, support, affordability for prospective students
  - Currently six states: TN, IN, MO, TX, NV, WA

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# QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

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