October 7, 2013

Honorable George Miller  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.  20515-6100

Dear Representative Miller,

On behalf of the Western Governors’ Association (WGA), I am writing to request your support for expedited consideration of bipartisan legislation to create a demonstration project for competency-based education. Such an effort would empower innovative institutions of higher learning to explore methods of delivering education, measuring quality, and disbursing financial aid based on learning, rather than on time in the classroom. This project will help inform the design of requisite statutory and regulatory frameworks for the development of high quality, competency-based degree programs.

Competency-based education offers significant potential for delivering high quality education to millions of Americans who want to pursue a college degree. It promises substantial benefits for all students, because it allows them to study and learn at their own pace. It may be particularly attractive, however, for the 37 million American adults with some college but no degree, those with full time jobs, those serving as caretakers and those living in remote rural areas.

The Governors of the WGA created Western Governors University (WGU) more than 15 years ago to help pioneer distance learning in higher education. WGU adopted a competency-based model of educational services and has enjoyed great success. The student population has grown to 40,000 students across all 50 states. Moreover, the institution is self-sustaining on annual tuition of $6,000 per student, and the average time to earn a bachelor’s degree is three years. WGU demonstrates the viability of competency-based educational models. The proposed
demonstration project would provide for the creation of new innovations in competency-based education and for its expansion to other institutions of higher learning.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions or require further information, please contact me at your convenience. In the meantime, with appreciation and regards, I am

Respectfully,

James D. Ogsbury
Executive Director

Identical letter sent to Honorable John Kline, Chairman Committee on Education and the Workforce