

GALLUP®



WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY

Beyond the Degree: Alumni Perspectives on Career Readiness, Value and Satisfaction

2024 ALUMNI SURVEY



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Executive Summary

For most college students, career advancement is their primary motivation for obtaining a degree or credential. A [2024 Lumina Foundation-Gallup study](#) found that 84% of U.S. adults without a college degree cited at least one career-related reason — such as earning a raise, promotion or a more fulfilling role — for enrolling in or considering a postsecondary program. Yet, the rising cost of higher education has made achieving these goals increasingly difficult. [Eighty-seven percent of U.S. adults](#) who were previously enrolled but left their postsecondary program cite cost as a “very” or “moderately” important reason they decided to leave.

[Western Governors University](#) (WGU) is a national nonprofit institution working to address these barriers by offering affordable, flexible degree programs designed to meet the diverse needs of today’s learners. Through an online, competency-based instruction model, WGU aims to equip students with career-relevant skills and tangible value upon graduation.

To investigate how effectively WGU is fulfilling this mission, the university partnered with Gallup to measure key aspects of the postgraduation lives of its alumni and compare those outcomes to bachelor’s degree holders nationally. Gallup conducted web-based surveys of WGU alumni who earned bachelor’s degrees between 2019 and 2023, and a national sample of individuals who earned bachelor’s degrees between 2019 and 2023. The 2024 WGU Alumni Survey finds that career outcomes and advancement are leading motivators for WGU students pursuing a bachelor’s degree, with affordability also emerging as a critical factor. The findings also indicate that WGU alumni not only derive economic and career value from their bachelor’s degree but also express satisfaction with WGU’s workforce-aligned curriculum and their overall student experience.



KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- 1 **WGU alumni see value in their education.** Sixty-nine percent of WGU alumni strongly agree their education was worth the cost, nearly double the rate of national alumni (35%). [See page 6.](#)
- 2 **WGU alumni report higher incomes after completing their undergraduate degree.** The median self-reported annual income of WGU “working learners”¹ increased by nearly \$15,000, from about \$75,000² while enrolled at WGU, to \$90,000 in 2024. [See page 8.](#)
- 3 **WGU alumni are more likely to be engaged at work than alumni nationally.** Among WGU alumni who completed their degree at age 25 or older and are employed full-time, 44% are engaged in their job, compared to 32% of national alumni. [See page 9.](#)
- 4 **WGU alumni use the job-relevant skills gained through their degree program in their current roles.** Among alumni who completed their degree at age 25 or older, three quarters (75%) of WGU alumni strongly agree or agree they gained important job-related skills while completing their degree, compared to 60% of national alumni. Forty-seven percent of these WGU alumni who are employed full-time are using or applying the skills they learned while earning their degree “very often” in their roles, compared to 39% of national alumni. [See pages 10 and 11.](#)
- 5 **WGU alumni are satisfied with their educational experience.** When asked how likely they are to recommend their alma mater to friends and family, 72% of WGU alumni report being highly likely to recommend WGU, compared to 41% of national alumni. [See page 14.](#)
- 6 **WGU alumni believe their university prioritizes students’ interests.** Seventy-six percent of WGU alumni strongly agree or agree that WGU has students’ best interests in mind, and 71% say their university is passionate about their financial wellbeing — both about twice the rates of national alumni. [See page 15.](#)
- 7 **WGU alumni report a strong sense of belonging while completing their degree.** Seventy-six percent of WGU graduates felt like they belonged at their university, compared to the national average of 63%. [See page 19.](#)

¹ For the purposes of this report, “working learners” refers to WGU graduates who self-report they were employed full-time while they were enrolled at WGU and were employed full-time at the time of the 2024 WGU Alumni Survey.

² Self-reported income while enrolled at WGU is adjusted for inflation and reported in 2024 USD.

Introduction

Since 2014, WGU has partnered with Gallup to survey its recent alumni about their experiences while attending the university, as well as their postgraduation wellbeing and employment. In its most recent survey, Gallup interviewed over 1,100 recent WGU alumni who completed their bachelor’s degree between 2019 and 2023 and compared their results to the responses of more than 1,400 national bachelor’s degree holders who also earned their degree during this same timeframe.

WGU graduates report satisfaction with the career-relevant curriculum, academic support and resources, mentorship program, the dedicated faculty and staff, and quality of instruction. These factors inform why WGU graduates are more likely to recommend their alma mater to a friend or family member, believe their education was worth the cost, and experience higher levels of wellbeing after completing their degrees compared to bachelor’s degree holders nationally.

FIGURE 1

Demographic Summary of Respondents

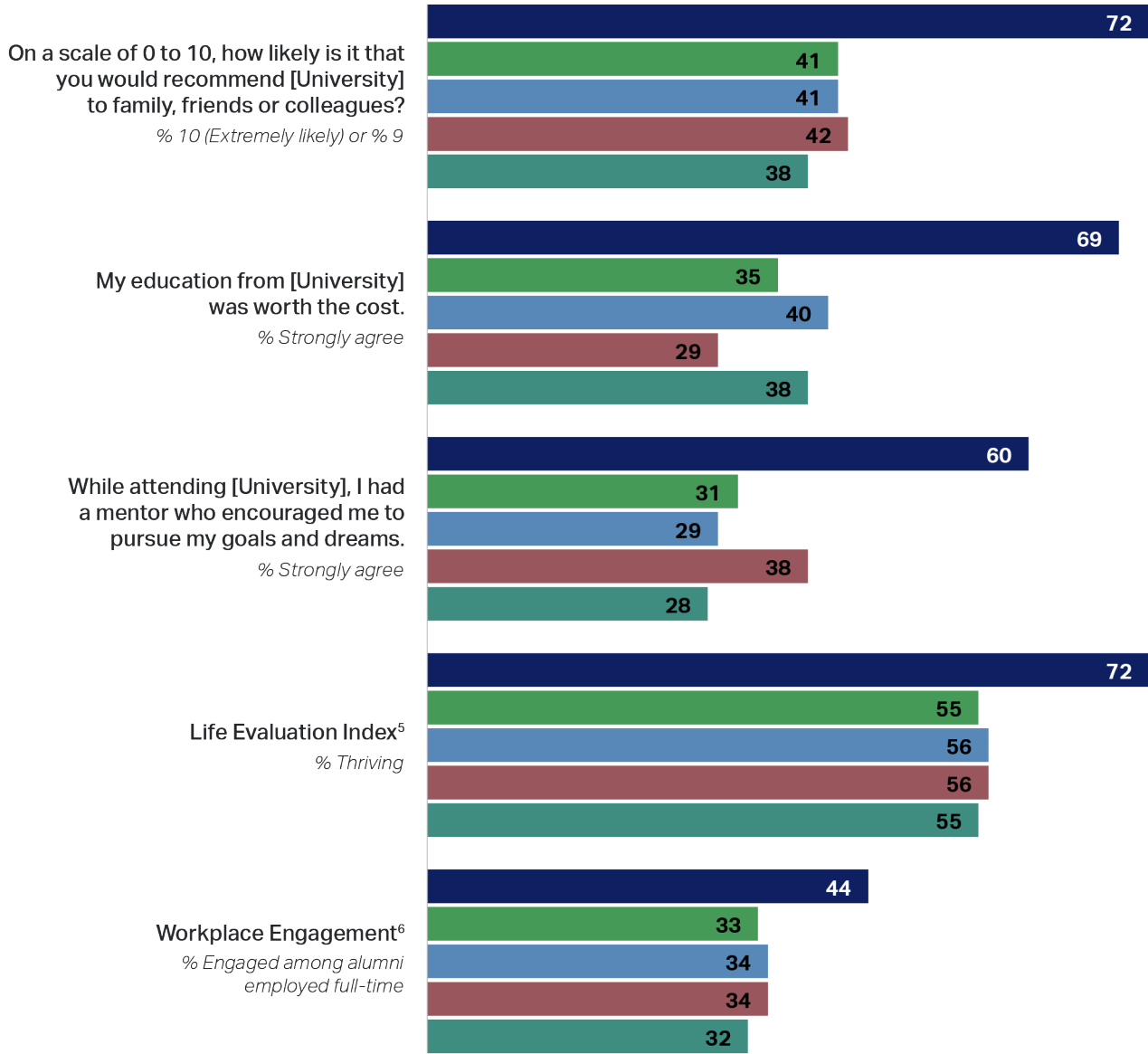
	WGU WGU graduates	National graduates overall	National graduates from public universities	National graduates from private, not-for-profit universities	National graduates, age 25+ at graduation
Total respondents	1,117	1,425	868	418	411
Median current age	44	26	26	25	34
Median undergraduate loan amount (2024 USD) ³	\$2,140	\$5,800	\$3,690	\$6,180	\$18,450
Female graduates	61%	53%	53%	53%	56%
First-generation graduates	61%	33%	32%	27%	56%
Historically underrepresented races/ethnicities ⁴	18%	25%	26%	23%	36%

3 Self-reported by respondents. Includes respondents who reported borrowing \$0 in undergraduate loans.
4 Includes respondents who identify as Black or African American, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Data Insights

FIGURE 2

■ WGU graduates ■ National graduates ■ National graduates from public universities
■ National graduates from private, not-for-profit universities ■ National graduates, age 25+ at graduation



5 Gallup measures life evaluation using a two-item index based on the [Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale](#). This index asks respondents to rate their current lives on a scale of 0 to 10, and to project how they will rate their lives in five years. Respondents who rate their current lives as a 7 or higher and their future lives as an 8 or higher are considered “thriving” in their evaluation.

6 Gallup measures employee engagement using the Q¹² survey, a proprietary index that determines the degree to which individuals are highly committed to and psychologically engaged with their work. In both the WGU Alumni Survey and the Gallup Alumni Survey, Gallup used an abbreviated three-item version of the Q¹² to measure workplace engagement.

Economic Value and Career Preparedness

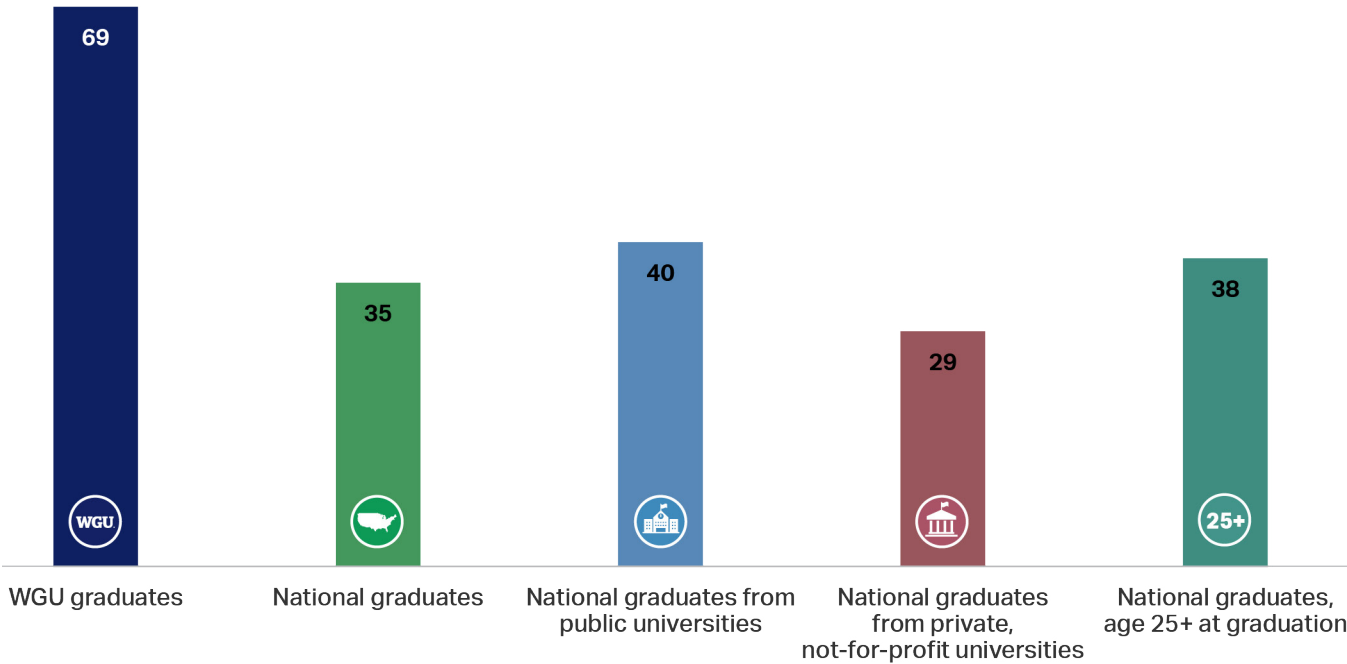
WGU is committed to preparing its graduates for success in many aspects of life following graduation. This commitment is reflected in the value its alumni see in the education they received: **WGU alumni are about twice as likely as bachelor's degree holders nationally to believe the education from their alma mater was worth the cost.** Sixty-nine percent of WGU alumni strongly agree that their education was worth the cost, compared to only 35% of alumni nationally.

Younger WGU alumni perceive slightly higher value in their education: Those who graduated at 26 or younger are much more likely than older age groups to strongly agree that the WGU education was worth the cost: 82% vs. 68%.

FIGURE 3

My education from [University] was worth the cost.

% Strongly agree




Return on Investment

AFFORDABLE EDUCATION

With the high cost of a degree being a primary barrier to enrollment and completion,⁷ WGU offers an affordable pathway to earning a bachelor’s degree that helps reduce the financial burden on students. WGU leverages a unique flat-rate-per-six-month-term tuition model that enables students to maximize the number of courses they complete each semester and can reduce the time to graduation. So, while the proportion of WGU graduates currently paying off their student loans is comparable to that of national graduates (28% vs. 26%), the median self-reported loan burden (adjusted for inflation) for WGU alumni (\$2,140) is less than half that of graduates nationally (\$5,800).⁸

FIGURE 4

Median Self-Reported Undergraduate Loan Amount, in 2024 USD

 Graduates of Western Governors University	\$2,140
Graduates nationally	\$5,800
National graduates from public universities	\$3,690
National graduates from private, not-for-profit universities	\$6,180



⁷ Lumina Foundation, & Gallup, Inc. (2024). *The state of higher education 2024: A valuable, but obstructed path to great jobs and lives.* <https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/State-of-Higher-Education-2024.pdf>

⁸ All loan figures are self-reported, adjusted for inflation and reported in 2024 USD.

INCOME INCREASES

As with college graduates nationally, many WGU students work full-time while obtaining their degree/credential. WGU alumni who graduated between 2019 and 2023 and were “working learners”⁹ report a median income while they were enrolled at WGU of approximately \$75,000.¹⁰ This figure is higher than the median personal income in the U.S. — likely due to the median age of WGU students at graduation (41, vs. 23 for graduates nationally) and the industries in which many working learners are employed, such as healthcare, finance and information technology. That said, these alumni report a median income in 2024 of \$90,000 — roughly \$15,000 more than their median income while enrolled at WGU.

WGU working learners who graduated in 2023 saw a significant increase in their income, even just one year after graduation. The median self-reported present-day salary among WGU working learners who graduated in 2023 is \$84,000 — an increase of almost \$17,000 from what they were earning while enrolled.

FIGURE 5

Change in Postgraduation Income by Graduation Year, in 2024 USD

Graduation year	Median self-reported income while enrolled at WGU	Median self-reported income at present (in 2024)	Income increase
2023	\$67,218	\$84,000	\$16,782
2022	\$62,060	\$85,000	\$22,940
2021	\$74,240	\$89,000	\$14,760
2020	\$89,540	\$99,000	\$9,460
2019	\$79,950	\$96,000	\$16,050

Importantly, while WGU alumni who graduated in 2022 and 2023 report some of the largest income increases following graduation, these working learners had lower salaries while enrolled at WGU compared to other years of graduates. Although earning a new credential often leads to an immediate increase in income, even when controlling for the number of years since graduation, WGU working learners report a median salary increase of just over \$4,900 annually.

9 For the purposes of this report, “working learners” refers to WGU graduates who were employed full-time while they were enrolled at WGU and were employed full-time at the time of the 2024 WGU Alumni Survey.

10 Self-reported income while enrolled at WGU is adjusted for inflation and reported in 2024 USD.

Engaged Employees

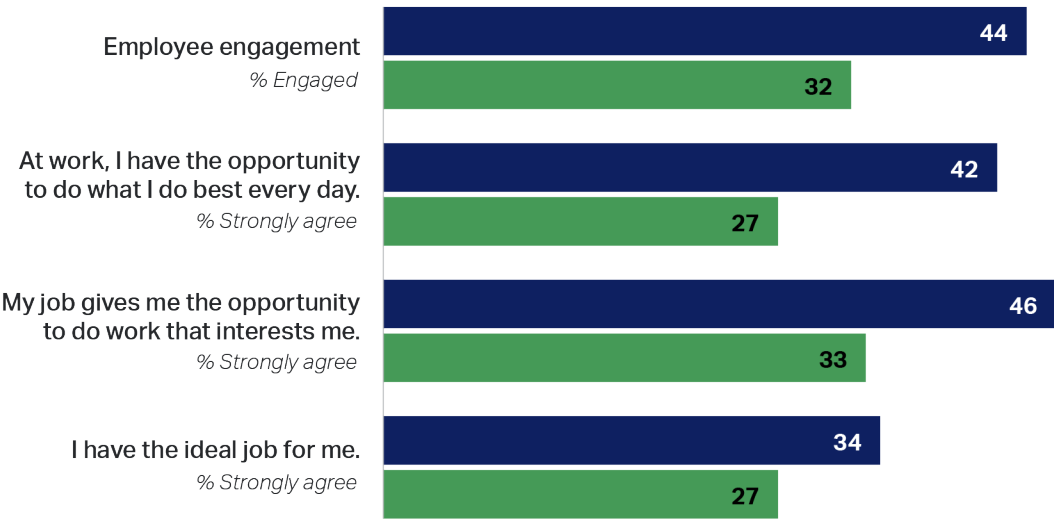
Gallup defines engagement as “the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace.” Gallup research finds that engaged employees — i.e., those psychologically committed to their job — have higher rates of wellbeing, retention and productivity than those who are disengaged at work. Indeed, currently enrolled students often report they are pursuing a postsecondary degree to obtain a *good* job rather than *just* a job, and frequently define the quality of that job by how engaged and purposeful they feel in their work.

Among WGU graduates currently employed full-time and who completed their degree at age 25 or older, just under half (44%) are engaged in their job, compared to approximately a third (32%) of national alumni. Forty-two percent of WGU graduates strongly agree they have the opportunity to do what they do best at work, 15 percentage points more than national alumni (27%). WGU graduates are more likely to strongly agree that they have the opportunity to do work that interests them (46% vs. 33%). **WGU graduates are also more likely than national alumni to strongly agree that they have the ideal job for them (34% vs. 27%).**

FIGURE 6

Employee Engagement and Workplace Satisfaction

■ WGU graduates, employed full-time and age 25+ at graduation ■ National graduates, employed full-time and age 25+ at graduation



Career-Relevant Curriculum

Current and prospective students cite career-related factors as key reasons they are pursuing or considering higher education. Among currently enrolled students and those considering enrolling in a certificate program, associate or bachelor’s degree program nationally, obtaining knowledge or skills and getting a higher-paying job are the **top two reasons** students considered obtaining a degree or credential in 2024. Likewise, career improvement and advancement are leading motivators for WGU students. Sixty-four percent of WGU alumni report having pursued a bachelor’s degree to progress in their current career, 21% to change career paths and 15% to start a new career.

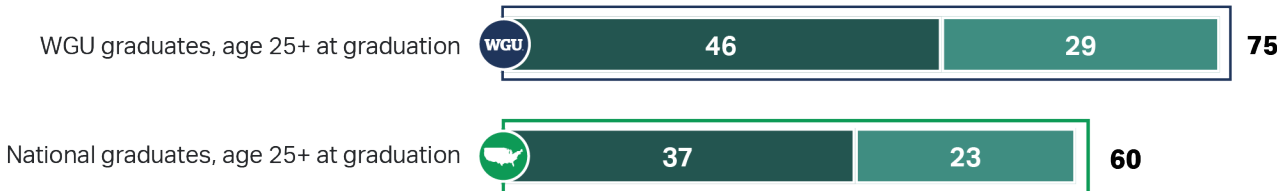
WGU is committed to giving its students opportunities to advance in their careers and achieve their goals by equipping them with tangible workforce skills. This commitment is reflected in WGU alumni’s reports of receiving a career-focused education that provided them with necessary job skills. Three-quarters of graduates who completed their degree at age 25 or older strongly agree or agree that the knowledge and skills they learned at WGU were relevant to their current job and that they gained important job-related skills while completing their education — 15 points higher than the national average. This is consistent for graduates of all ages; WGU graduates are more likely than national graduates to believe that they learned and gained skills directly relevant and important to their jobs while obtaining their bachelor’s degree.

FIGURE 7

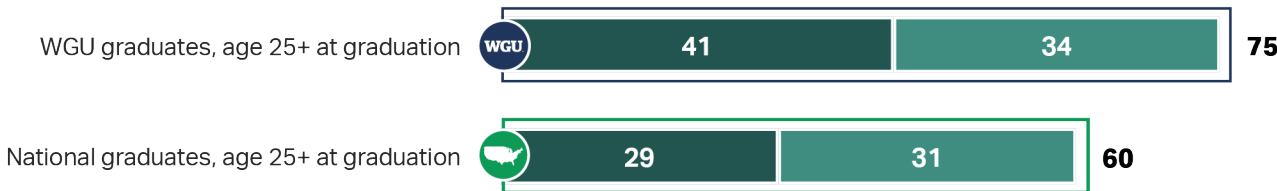
Workforce-Aligned Curriculum

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree

The knowledge and skills I learned at [University] are directly relevant to my current job or career.



I gained important job-related skills while completing my undergraduate degree at [University].



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may sum to +/-1 pct. pt.

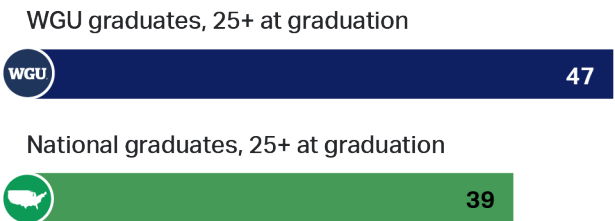
WGU alumni who graduated at or over age 25 also report frequently using the skills they learned while earning their degree. About half (47%) of these alumni who are employed full-time say they use or apply what they learned “very often,” compared to 39% of alumni nationally. This finding is also consistent for graduates of all ages.

“No other university provided the mix of flexibility, cost and performance-based progression.”¹¹

FIGURE 8

How often does your current role allow you to use or apply the things you learned while earning your undergraduate degree at [University]?

% Very often among respondents employed full-time



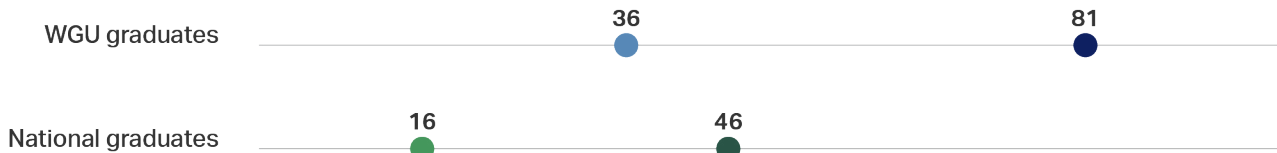
As noted previously, 69% of WGU alumni strongly agree their education was worth the cost, compared to only 35% of their peers nationally. Yet, the perceived value of their education among both groups ties back to the workforce-aligned curriculum and the tangible job skills they acquired. WGU alumni and alumni nationally who strongly agree or agree that they learned important job-related skills during their undergraduate program are much more likely to strongly agree that their education was worth the cost. Among WGU graduates who report gaining job-related skills, 81% strongly agree that their education was worth the cost, making them more than twice as likely to strongly agree their education was worth the cost as WGU alumni who do not report gaining job-related skills (36%). A similar pattern is present for bachelor’s degree holders nationally.

FIGURE 9

Graduates who gain job-related skills while completing their degree are more likely to say their education was worth the cost

% Who strongly agree their education was worth the cost

- WGU graduates who did **not** gain job-related skills
- WGU graduates who gained job-related skills
- National graduates who did **not** gain job-related skills
- National graduates who gained job-related skills



11 Qualitative quotes are pulled from WGU alumni who responded to the 2024 WGU Alumni Survey.

In addition to receiving workforce-aligned instruction, WGU alumni report being challenged academically during their studies. Eighty-three percent of WGU graduates strongly agree (52%) or agree (31%) they were academically challenged at their alma mater, compared to 77% of their national peers. WGU alumni are similarly likely as national alumni to rate the quality of the instruction and faculty expertise as “excellent.”

“ It was the only option that I could fit into my work schedule. It was a bonus that I received a great education. ”

FIGURE 10

I was challenged academically at [University].

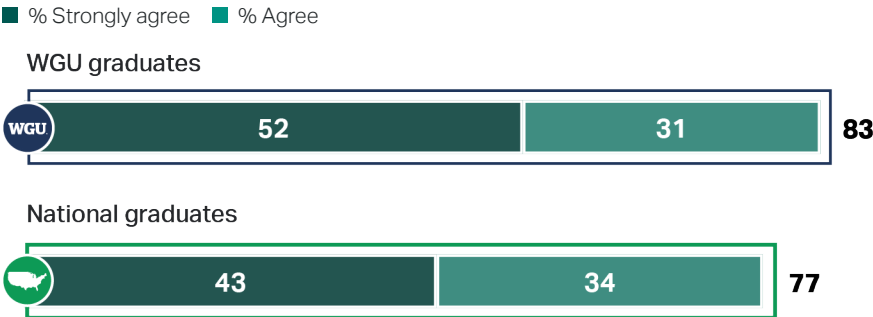
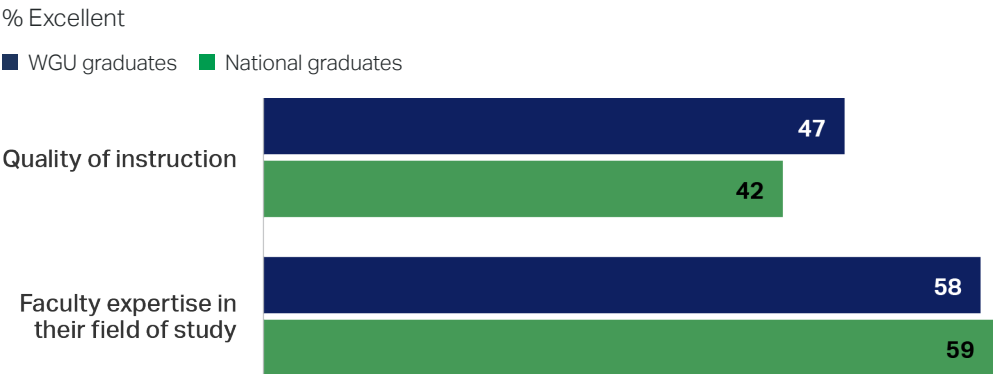


FIGURE 11

Instruction Experience



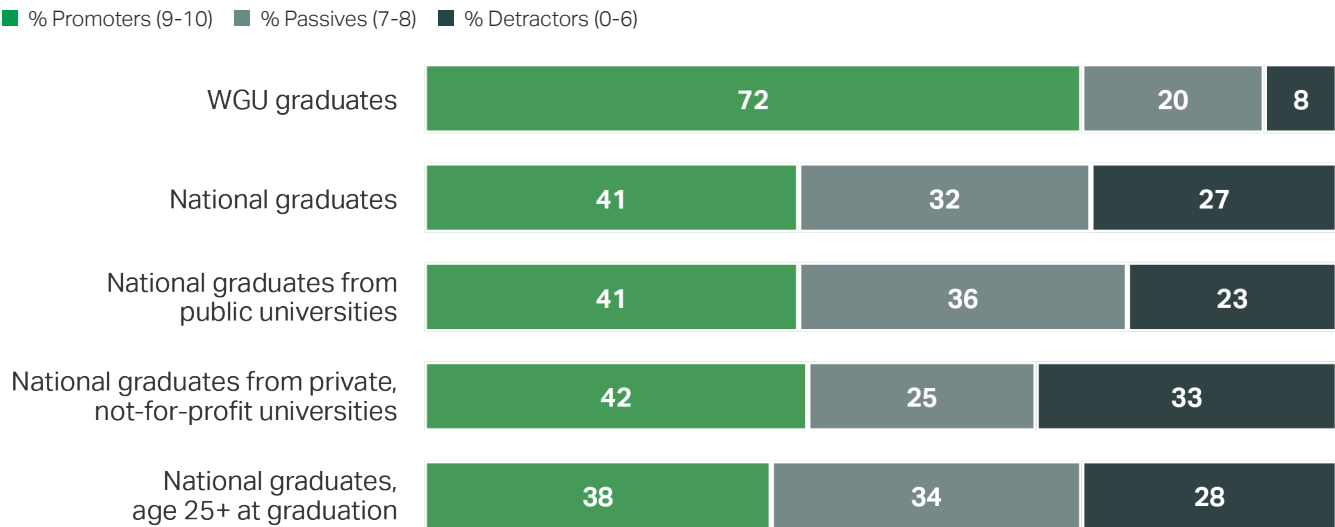
Cultivating an Exceptional Student Experience

Along with traditional metrics like job placement rates and average salaries, alumni satisfaction with their university experience and how enthusiastic graduates are about recommending their university to others are key indicators of whether a university delivers a high-value education.

On these measures, WGU alumni are more favorable toward their alma mater than the national average. When asked how likely they would be to recommend WGU to others, 72% of WGU graduates are highly likely to recommend their university to others, compared to 41% of national graduates.

FIGURE 12

On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend [University] to family, friends, and colleagues?



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

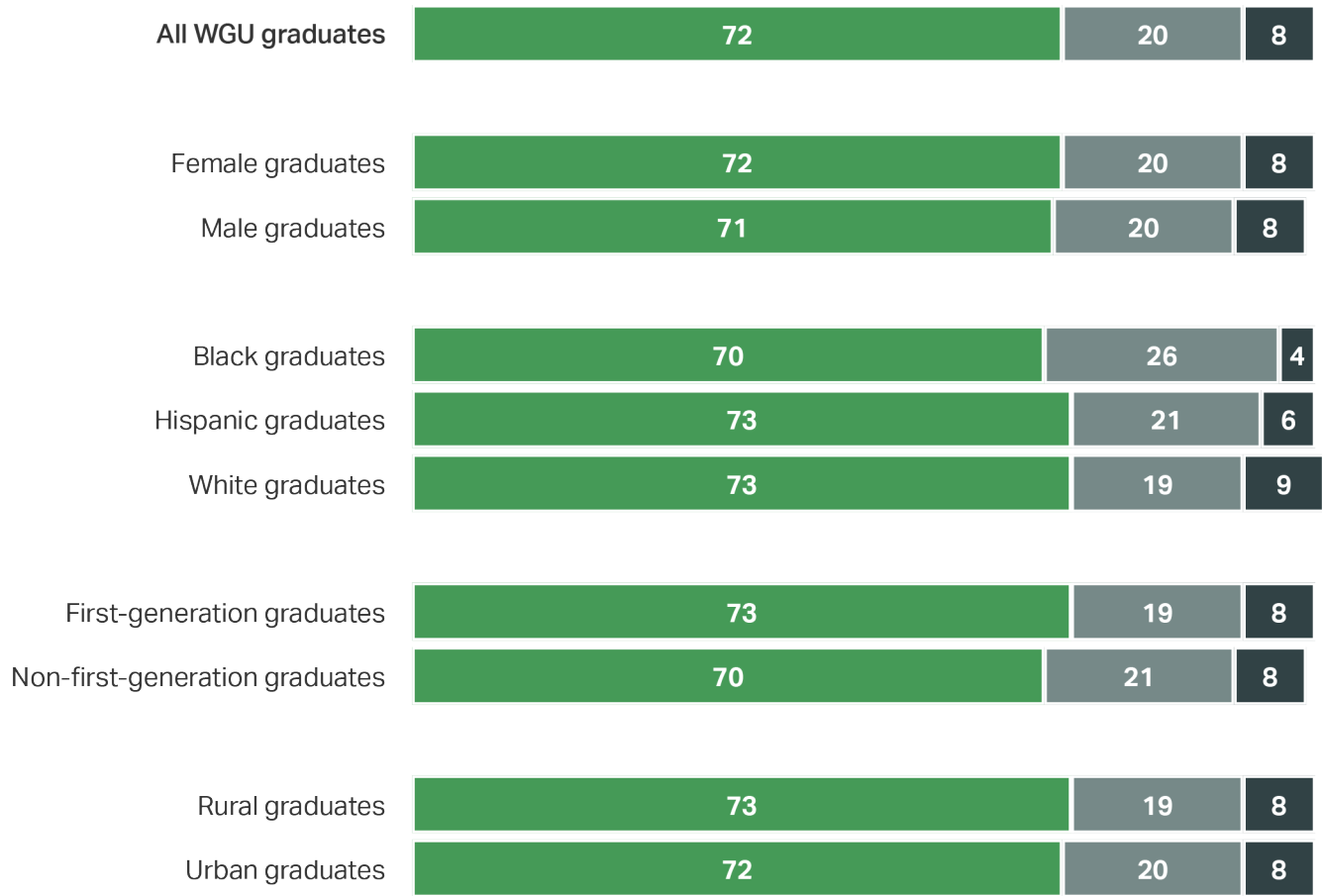
Female, Black, Hispanic and first-generation students are equally as likely to recommend WGU as White, male and non-first-generation students.

FIGURE 13

On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend [University] to family, friends, and colleagues?

% Among WGU graduates

■ Promoters (9-10) ■ Passives (7-8) ■ Detractors (0-6)



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%.

Institutional Support and Care

WGU alumni say their alma mater delivered practical, job-related instruction and created an environment where they felt supported while obtaining their degree — more so than their national peers. WGU graduates are more likely to rate the availability of student support services as “excellent” compared to alumni nationally (57% vs. 34%). Well over half (58%) of WGU alumni strongly agree they had the resources they needed to succeed academically — 18 percentage points more than graduates nationally.

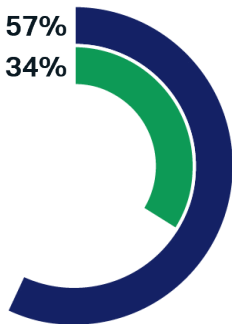
FIGURE 14

Student Support Services

■ WGU graduates ■ National graduates

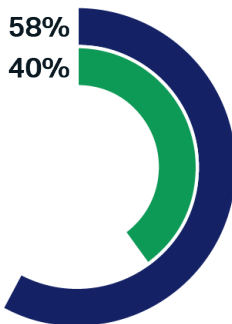
Availability of student support services

% Excellent



I had access to the resources I needed to be successful academically while completing my undergraduate degree at [University].

% Strongly agree

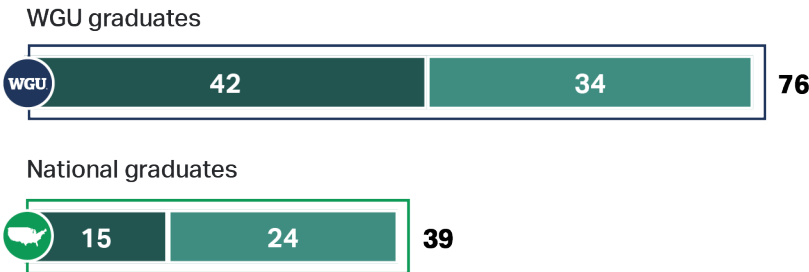


WGU aims to create a student-centric experience, and the data support the effectiveness of these efforts. Seventy-six percent of WGU alumni strongly agree or agree that WGU has students’ best interest in mind when making decisions, almost double that of national alumni (39%).

FIGURE 15

When making a decision that affects students, [University] has students’ best interests in mind.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree



The financial and emotional burden of earning a degree can greatly affect students. Eighty-seven percent of U.S. adults no longer enrolled in their degree programs say cost is a “very” or “moderately” important reason why they left their program — the most selected reason. About three-quarters (74%) say emotional stress, and 64% say personal mental health reasons are contributing factors to why they are not currently enrolled in their postsecondary pathway.¹²

Institutional support around financial and mental wellbeing can contribute to alumni satisfaction with their alma mater. WGU graduates are about twice as likely as graduates nationally to feel like their alma mater is passionate about their financial wellbeing (71% vs. 34%). Additionally, about three in four WGU graduates strongly agree (46%) or agree (28%) that their alma mater is passionate about the mental health of their students — 20 percentage points above national graduates.

This institutional care extends beyond the undergraduate experience and into alumni’s post-graduation future. About three-quarters (76%) of WGU graduates strongly agree (46%) or agree (30%) that their alma mater is passionate about their long-term success, more so than national graduates.

“Because I couldn’t afford to quit working full time, I needed a school that was flexible, online and affordable. After researching several options, WGU was the best fit for my personal goals and life at the time.”

FIGURE 16

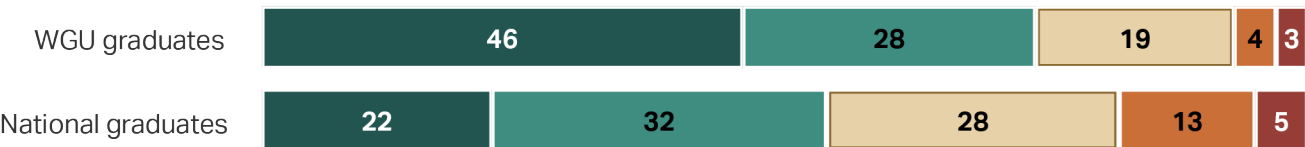
[University] is passionate about the _____ of its students.

■ % Strongly agree ■ % Agree ■ % Neutral ■ % Disagree ■ % Strongly disagree

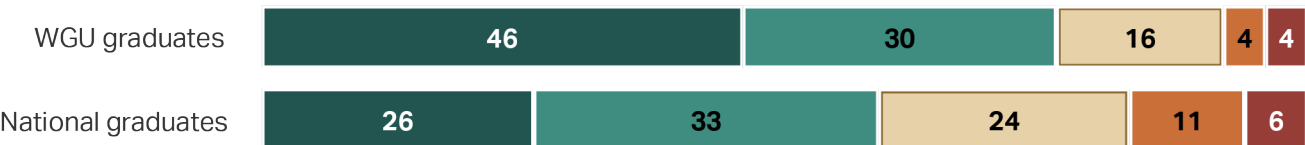
FINANCIAL WELLBEING



MENTAL HEALTH



LONG-TERM SUCCESS



12 Marken, S., & Hrynowski, Z. (2024, June 18). Cost leading reason college students are stopping out. Gallup News. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/646088/cost-leading-reason-college-students-stopping.aspx>

Dedicated Faculty and Staff

Professors and staff with whom students interact on a daily basis are critical to the higher education experience. WGU alumni place high value on their relationships with their instructors.

WGU graduates are 20 percentage points more likely than alumni nationally to say they were treated with respect by faculty and staff. This feeling of respect is fairly consistent across segments of the WGU student population, including those from groups often not reached by higher education institutions. For example, Hispanic WGU graduates report having experienced a notably high level of respect from faculty (80%) and staff (86%).

FIGURE 17

I was treated with respect by [faculty/staff] members while obtaining my undergraduate degree at [University].

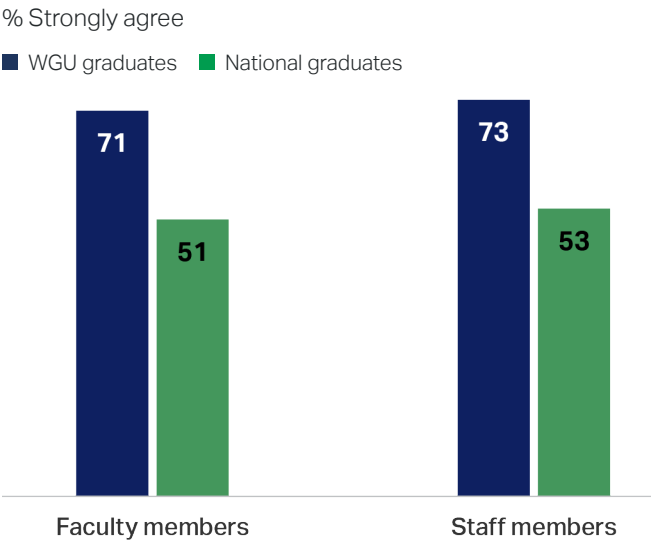


FIGURE 18

I was treated with respect by [faculty/staff] members while obtaining my undergraduate degree from [University].

% Strongly agree among WGU graduates

	Faculty members	Staff members
All WGU graduates	71	73
Female graduates	70	72
Male graduates	72	75
Black graduates	68	69
Hispanic graduates	80	86
White graduates	70	72
First-generation graduates	72	74
Non-first-generation graduates	70	72

Beyond feeling respected, WGU alumni feel like their professors cared about them. WGU graduates and graduates nationally feel similarly that their professors cared about them as people (61% vs. 64%), suggesting that online learning does not necessarily prevent faculty and students from establishing meaningful relationships.

Among WGU alumni, an especially high percentage of Black graduates strongly agree or agree that their professors cared about them (74%). First-generation students also feel this high level of care from their professors.

FIGURE 19

My professors at WGU cared about me as a person.

Among WGU graduates

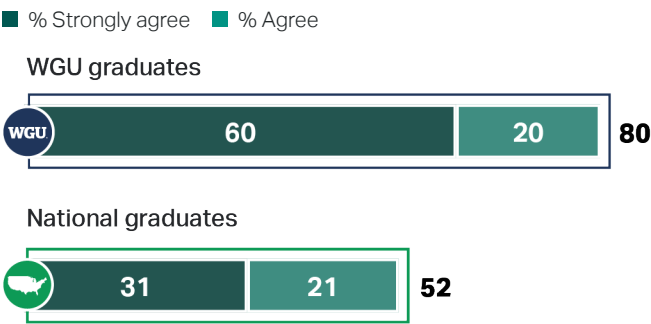
	% Strongly agree	% Agree	Total %
All WGU graduates	31	30	61
Female graduates	33	32	65
Male graduates	29	28	57
Black graduates	40	34	74
Hispanic graduates	34	28	62
White graduates	30	30	60
First-generation graduates	32	32	64
Non-first-generation graduates	30	27	57

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may sum to +/-1 pct. pt.

To enhance the student experience beyond the classroom, WGU assigns a Program Mentor to each enrolled student. These mentors provide holistic support, guiding students along their academic pathway through planning and resources that support personal wellbeing, academic persistence and professional growth. These directed efforts contribute to WGU alumni being more likely than the national average to report having a mentor who encouraged them: Eight in 10 WGU alumni strongly agree or agree that they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams — 28 percentage points higher than their peers nationally.

FIGURE 20

While attending [University], I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may sum to +/-1 pct. pt.

Belonging

Feelings of respect, care and support can foster a strong sense of community and belonging, which are essential for full engagement in coursework and the overall higher education experience.

About three-quarters (76%) of WGU graduates say they felt like they belonged at WGU, compared to the national average of 63%. About half of WGU graduates across various groups strongly agree that they belonged at WGU.

FIGURE 21

I felt as if I belonged at Western Governors University.

Among WGU graduates

	% Strongly agree	% Agree	Total %
All WGU graduates	49	27	76
Female graduates	50	28	78
Male graduates	47	26	73
Black graduates	54	27	81
Hispanic graduates	52	25	77
White graduates	48	27	75
First-generation graduates	49	27	76
Non-first-generation graduates	49	27	76
Rural graduates	50	28	78
Urban graduates	48	27	75

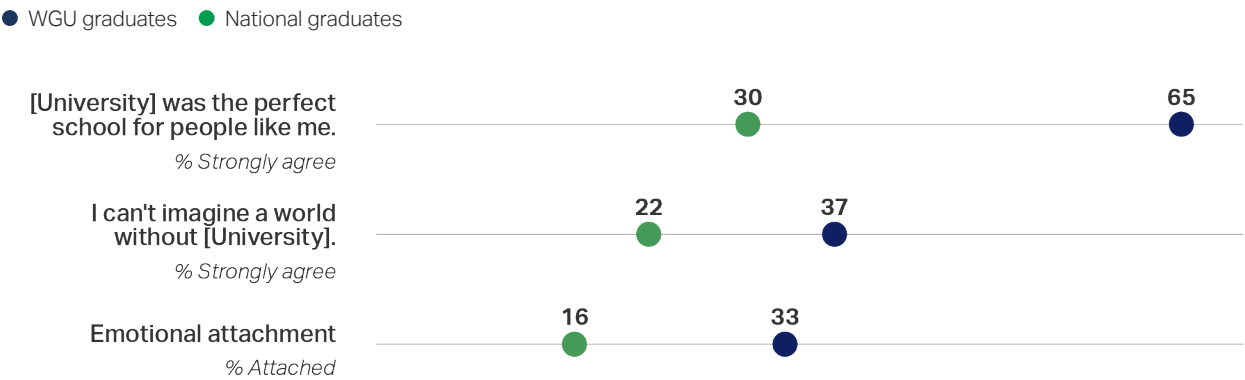
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may sum to +/-1 pct. pt.

Belonging can translate into feeling emotionally attached to an institution. WGU alumni are about twice as likely as alumni nationally to strongly agree that their alma mater was the perfect place for them (65% vs. 30%). Thirty-seven percent of WGU alumni strongly agree that they can't imagine a world without their alma mater — 15 percentage points more than national alumni (22%).

One-third of WGU alumni strongly agree with both of these statements and are considered emotionally attached; only 16% of alumni nationally are attached to their alma mater.

FIGURE 22

Emotional Attachment



Expanding Access to Higher Education

Nearly one in five WGU alumni (19%) say they would not have been able to earn an undergraduate degree if WGU were not an option, and an additional 23% are unsure whether they would have been able to attain their degree if not for WGU.

WGU provides comparable experiences and outcomes for students from groups historically underserved by higher education.¹³

These graduates are just as likely as their peers to believe their WGU education was worth the cost and to recommend WGU to others.

“ I struggled for nearly two decades to complete my degree at traditional institutions, but I excelled at WGU due to their competency-based approach. ”

FIGURE 23

Satisfaction With WGU Education

Among WGU graduates

■ Alumni from historically underserved groups ■ Alumni from historically well-served groups



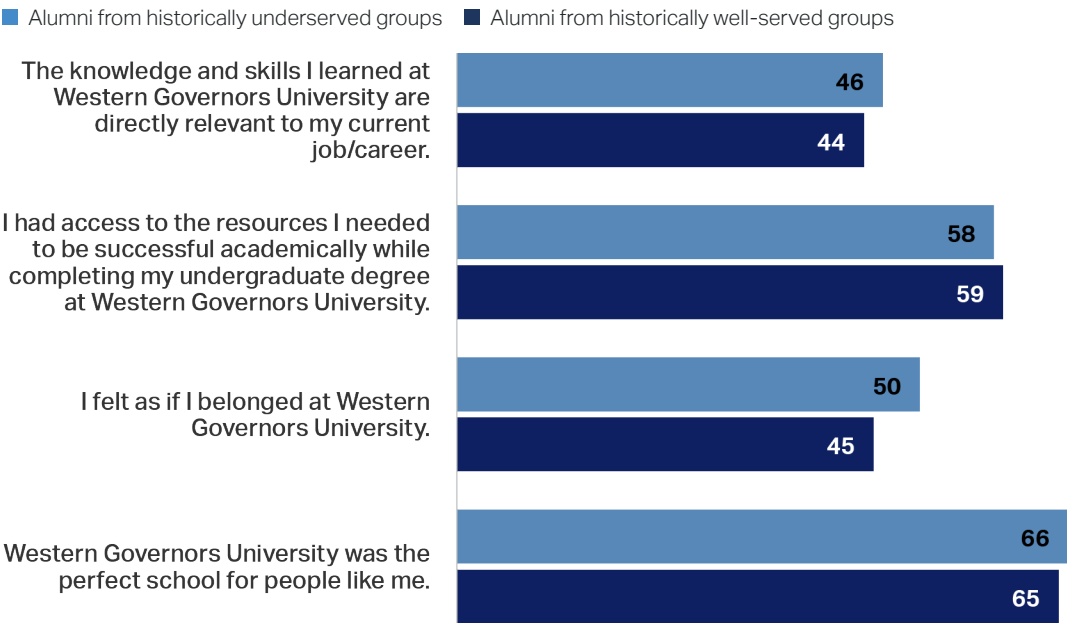
¹³ Graduates from historically underserved groups identify as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous, being from two or more races, rural, first-generation or low-income (annual household income of less than \$35,000).

Notably, alumni from historically underserved groups are similarly likely as other alumni to feel like they belonged at WGU and thought it was the perfect place for people like them.

FIGURE 24

Academic Experience and Belonging

% Strongly agree among WGU graduates



And while WGU alumni from historically underserved groups are less likely than their peers to be thriving financially, graduates from these groups still exceed the average for alumni nationally on this measure by eight percentage points. They also have similar levels of overall life and career wellbeing and employee engagement as WGU graduates from other groups.

FIGURE 25

Wellbeing

% Thriving among WGU graduates

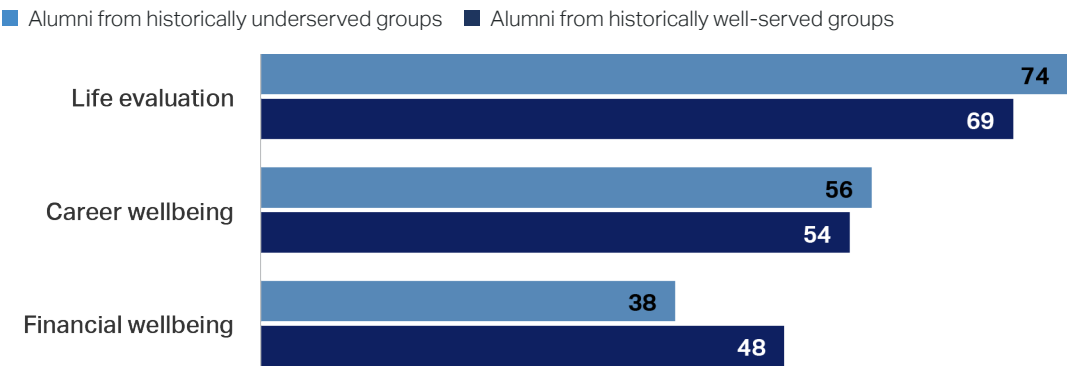
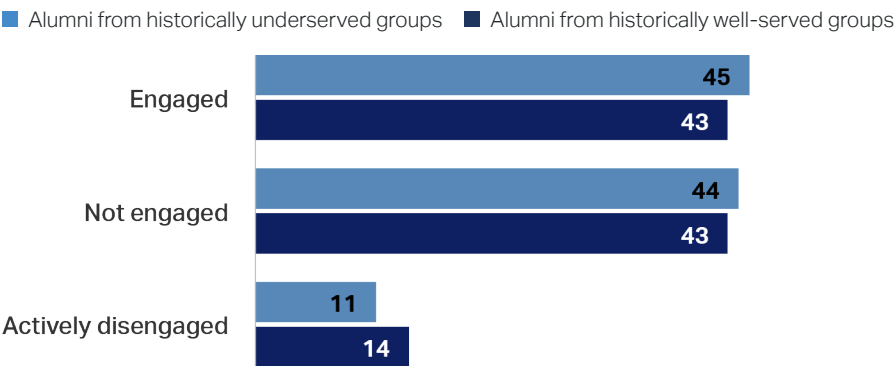


FIGURE 26

Employee Engagement

% Among WGU graduates employed full-time



Thriving Alumni

Gallup’s **wellbeing** metric — the Life Evaluation Index¹⁴ — measures an individual’s overall wellbeing through their levels of satisfaction with their current life and their optimism about the next five years. Gallup research finds that individuals with high levels of wellbeing tend to experience greater happiness, better health and higher productivity at home and in the workplace. WGU graduates are not only satisfied with their work lives; they also report high levels of wellbeing overall.

Compared to alumni nationally, WGU alumni are much more likely to rate their present life and hope for the future highly on the Life Evaluation Index.

Approximately three-quarters (73%) of WGU alumni who were at least 25 when they graduated are thriving, compared to 55% of national alumni of the same age. WGU alumni are also more likely to thrive in their career and financial wellbeing.

“

WGU allowed me the flexibility and affordability to go to school full time while working full time and taking care of my family and continuing to be active in my community.

”

FIGURE 27

Wellbeing

% Thriving among those age 25+ at graduation



14 Gallup measures life evaluation using a two-item index based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale. This index asks respondents to rate their current lives on a scale of 0 to 10, and to project how they will rate their lives in five years. Respondents who rate their current lives as a 7 or higher and their future lives as an 8 or higher are considered “thriving” in their evaluation.

Methodology

Results from this study are based on 1,117 web survey responses from WGU alumni who received their bachelor's degree between 2019 and 2023, are aged 18 or older and have access to the internet and live in one of the 50 U.S. states, District of Columbia, a U.S. territory or on a military base. Gallup conducted the survey from Nov. 18 to Dec. 18, 2024. WGU provided a simple random sample of over 52,000 alumni email addresses. Alumni were included in the study if the institution had an email address on file and they had not previously opted out of receiving surveys from Gallup.

The data contained within this report are all self-reported unless noted otherwise.

Results from the national study used for comparison purposes — the Gallup Alumni Survey — are based on 1,425 web surveys from respondents who received a bachelor's degree between 2019 and 2023, are aged 18 or older, have internet access and live in one of the 50 U.S. states or the District of Columbia. Of these, 868 graduated from public universities and 418 graduated from private, not-for-profit universities. There were 411 graduates from the national sample who were age 25 or older at graduation. Results were collected over multiple fielding periods, including Oct. 21 to Nov. 4, 2019; Nov. 18 to Dec. 1, 2021; Nov. 21 to Nov. 30, 2022; Nov. 21 to Nov. 29, 2023; and Jan. 8 to Jan. 27, 2025.

All reported margins of sampling error for the Gallup Alumni Survey include the computed design effects for weighting.

For results based on the total sample of 1,117 respondents with a bachelor's degree from WGU, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the 1,425 respondents from the Gallup Alumni Survey with a bachelor's degree conferred between 2019 and 2023, the margin of sampling error is ± 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the 868 respondents from the Gallup Alumni Survey with a bachelor's degree from a public university conferred between 2019 and 2023, the margin of sampling error is ± 4.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the 418 respondents from the Gallup Alumni Survey with a bachelor's degree from a private, not-for-profit university conferred between 2019 and 2023, the margin of sampling error is ± 6.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For results based on the 411 respondents from the Gallup Alumni Survey with a bachelor's degree conferred between 2019 and 2023 when age 25 or older, the margin of sampling error is ± 5.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Additional respondent group sizes include 96 WGU alumni aged 26 or younger at graduation, about 600 WGU alumni working learners with available income information, 818 WGU alumni employed full-time and aged 25+ at graduation, and 270 national alumni employed full-time and aged 25+ at graduation.

About Western Governors University

Western Governors University (WGU), the nation's leading nonprofit, online university, is transforming higher education to be more student-centric, affordable, accessible to all and relevant to the workforce. Established in 1997 by 19 visionary U.S. governors, WGU creates life-changing pathways to opportunity for those underserved by traditional institutions — working adults, historically underrepresented communities and a diverse, growing number of learners looking for a flexible, online model that better suits their life circumstances. WGU's competency-based education model means students must demonstrate mastery of the skills required by their programs and can accelerate through courses as soon as they prove they've mastered the material.

Accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, WGU operates in all 50 states and offers more than 80 programs in health, education, technology and business. WGU serves more than 190,000 students nationwide, with more than 370,000 alumni, and has awarded more than 420,000 degrees. Learn more at wgu.edu.

About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.

Gallup partners with higher education institutions to improve the employee experience and student experience through advice and analytics about the university culture, employee engagement among faculty and staff, and the curricular and programmatic experiences in which students engage.

GALLUP®

World Headquarters

The Gallup Building
901 F Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

t +1.877.242.5587

f +1.888.500.8282

www.gallup.com