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WGU EARNS REGIONAL ACCREDITATION
Western Governors University (WGU) has earned accreditation from four regional accreditation agencies. WGU, a virtual university conceived by the governors of nineteen western U.S. states, grants degrees based on subject competency rather than on course credits. Because WGU lacks a single physical presence, it is the only institution to be accredited by more than one regional agency. Members of those four agencies formed a group called the Inter-Regional Accrediting Committee to evaluate WGU and decide on its accreditation. Sandra Elman, one of the members of the committee, said evaluating the program was difficult because of its structure. She said that ultimately WGU proved itself to the committee. Regional accreditation is seen

Information Technology in the News

SURVEY SHOWS INCREASED IT SPENDING THIS YEAR
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BANDWIDTH HOGS

CORNELL TO CHARGE BANDWIDTH HOGS

With expenses for providing Internet service rising an average of 40 percent per year, Cornell officials have implemented a new billing model. Formerly Cornell charged per port, though this became problematic when some users installed multiport repeaters, allowing them to run several computers on a single port. The new “pay by the drink” program retains the per-port charge but adds an Internet use fee, covering usage up to two gigabytes per month. Every megabyte of usage above that limit will incur a fee to the user. Officials said the new approach to billing is designed in part to recoup some of the costs of providing bandwidth but also to educate users about how much bandwidth they are using. With that information, said administrators, users can make informed decisions—and pay for them—regarding their use of the network. Officials at the school said that the two-gigabyte monthly limit will allow 90 percent of users to avoid paying an extra fee. (Chronicle of Higher Education, <http://chronicle.com/free/2003/03/2003030601t.htm>)

ANOTHER UNIVERSITY OPTS FOR CELLULAR PHONES

■ Marshall University will assign students moving into four new dormitories this fall cellular phones instead of land-line phones as part of an experimental program. About five hundred students will pay $30 each per month—as part of their residence fees—for cell phones and service. They will have to pay extra for voicemail and cannot use the phones outside a thirty-mile radius of the Huntington, West Virginia, campus. Students will have to return the phones to the university at the end of the year. The residence halls are wired for land-line phones and the Internet in case students don’t like the program. Land lines in existing residence halls help pay for phone service on the rest of the campus, so eliminating all land-line service could damage the university’s budget. (Chronicle of Higher Education, <http://chronicle.com/free/2003/03/2003031901t.htm>)

ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY PROJECT TO BUILD VAST ONLINE COLLECTION

A project at the new Alexandria Library in Egypt hopes to make virtually every existing text available online. The Alexandria Library Scholars Collective uses software called CyberBook Plus, designed to link archives of digital texts from around the world. In addition to offering a single point of entry to access most of the world’s texts, the software includes virtual lecture halls, a hub for international scholars, and a gateway for ordinary readers. David Wolff, of the online-learning venture Fathom, noted that doing any one of these successfully would be challenging. The challenges confronting the project include copyright, language barriers, and funding. The project’s primary sources of funding are currently the Egyptian government and UNESCO. (New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/01/arts/01ALEX.html> [registration required])

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