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Speaker biographies

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The Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education

Session 4

"Innovative Models for Delivery"

Robert W. Mendenhall

Robert W. Mendenhall is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Western Governors University (WGU). WGU is a private, not-for-profit, online university offering competency-based degrees. It was founded and is supported by 19 governors as well as 24 leading corporations and foundations, and is the only competency-based university with accreditation status. It currently offers degrees at the Associate's, Bachelor's and Master's level in business, information technology and education. WGU's mission is to expand access to higher education and promote competency-based degree programs.

Dr. Mendenhall has more than 20 years of experience in the development, marketing and delivery of technology-based education. Prior to joining WGU, he had his own consulting business and previously was general manager of IBM's K-12 education division. He has served as executive vice president of Jostens Learning Corporation. From 1980 to 1992, he was a founder, president and CEO (from 1987) of Wicat Systems, Inc., a leader in providing computer-based curriculum, instructional management and testing to schools, and technology-based training to government and industry.

Dr. Mendenhall has served on the NGA/ASTD Commission on Technology & Adult Learning, on IBM's Education Advisory Council, on the National Forum on 21st Century Skills Education Advisory Board, and on a Technology Working Group for the California Postsecondary Education Commission. He has also served on the Boards of the Department of Business and Economic Development for the State of Utah, the Oquirrh Institute, and the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation.

Jonathan Grayer

Jonathan Grayer is Chairman and CEO of Kaplan, Inc., one of the world's leading providers of educational services. Grayer has overseen Kaplan's expansion from an \$80 million test preparation company in 1994 to a diverse education corporation with more than \$1.1 billion in revenue in 2004. Kaplan has 900,000 students, 20,000 employees and 3,000 classroom locations.

Grayer's vision is helping to transform the for-profit education industry. Under his leadership, Kaplan has embraced an aggressive, outcomes-based approach that has served as a model in the education community. The Company continues to explore untapped markets, and has pioneered new territory in postsecondary education, K12 programs, online learning, and professional training in the U.S. and abroad. Kaplan is a subsidiary of The Washington Post Company (NYSE: WPO).

Grayer joined The Washington Post Company in 1990 in the marketing department of Newsweek, Inc., where he became Newsweek's Marketing Director. He joined Kaplan in 1991 as regional operations director, and held several titles before assuming responsibility as president and CEO in July 1994. Grayer became Chairman and CEO in February 2002. He received an A.B. degree from Harvard College and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

Grayer serves on the boards of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, the New York City Partnership, and New School University. In September 2005, he was named by U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings to the Commission on the Future of Higher Education.

Stephen G. Shank, JD

Steve Shank founded Capella Education Company, the parent company of Capella University, in 1991. In addition to his duties as chairman and CEO of Capella Education Company, he has served as chancellor of Capella University since 2001. Prior to founding Capella, Shank served for 12 years as chairman and chief executive officer of Tonka Corporation. During this time, The Wall Street Transcript twice recognized Shank as the industry's most outstanding chief executive officer. Shank began his career as an attorney with the Minneapolis law firm of Dorsey & Whitney. He holds a master's degree from Fletcher School, a joint program of Tufts and Harvard Universities, and a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School.