



# WGU Missouri teams up with Carnegie Mellon University

December 1 2018 6:48 PM

ST. LOUIS - WGU Missouri and its parent university Western Governors University are teaming up with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) to develop an artificial intelligence-enabled career guidance technology that will ultimately enhance the support WGU students receive from career counselors and fellow students. The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded WGU's Center for Applied Learning Science (CALS) and CMU a \$700,000 grant to support the project partnership. The grant will be awarded to the two institutions over three years.

The aim of the project is to make career guidance more readily available to students by augmenting human effort with AI-enabled insight into data from past students who completed WGU degree programs. The research will build on a foundation in computational modeling informed by theories of human behavior and embodied within a novel paradigm of Socially-Sensitive Reinforcement Learning (SSRL).

"WGU is one of the nation's largest online universities, serving a population of working individuals seeking career transitions in the face of a dramatically changing career landscape," said Dr. Carolyn Rosé, Professor of Language Technologies and Human-Computer Interaction at CMU. "We're building a sociotechnical solution that can have a real-world impact on decision making. This partnership offers the opportunity for tremendous impact with populations who need the support most."

Data-driven learning about the student experience will help CMU researchers develop "Intelligent Coaching Agents," trained to guide students to practical resources, including human career coaches and peers, in order to lead them to decisions that ultimately improve their chances for success as they embark on or further their careers. Bringing together leaders in human-computer interaction, machine learning, AI and education, the project partnership aims to forge acceptable and effective paths toward career growth, community connection and wellbeing within a constantly changing career landscape.

“WGU is thrilled to be working in partnership with the team at Carnegie Mellon,” said Jason Levin, Executive Director of CALS at WGU Labs. “Their track record for creating new paradigms that leverage technology to advance human learning aligns perfectly with WGU’s mission and model. We have the opportunity to design a scientifically sound, data-driven model that improves the student experience and, most importantly, outcomes.”

The research project will eventually be put into practice at WGU and will be a part of the many resources the university offers to its students. While the project will be housed inside WGU systems, the resulting innovations have the potential to transform how technology is used to deliver career guidance within institutions of higher education, as well as in a workplace setting.

### **About CALS at WGU Labs**

The Center for Applied Learning Science (CALS), as part of WGU Labs, was launched in July of this year. Focused on improving student outcomes by combining technology, design thinking, and rigorous research methods, CALS collaborates with other institutions and organizations, leveraging the knowledge and experience gained through WGU's 106,000 enrolled students and 121,000 graduates. Learn more at [www.wgu.edu/cals](http://www.wgu.edu/cals).

### **About Carnegie Mellon University**

Carnegie Mellon ([www.cmu.edu](http://www.cmu.edu)) is a private, internationally ranked research university with programs in areas ranging from science, technology and business, to public policy, the humanities and the arts. More than 13,000 students in the university’s seven schools and colleges benefit from a small student-to-faculty ratio and an education characterized by its focus on creating and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.

### **About [WGU Missouri](http://www.wgu.edu)**

WGU Missouri is a competency-based, online university created to expand access to higher education for Missouri residents. The university offers more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the fields of business, K-12 teacher education, information technology, and health professions, including nursing. WGU Missouri faculty members serve as mentors, working one-on-one with students, offering guidance, support, and individualized instruction.

Established in 2013 through a partnership with nationally recognized Western Governors University, WGU Missouri is open to all qualified Missouri residents. The

university is nonprofit and self-sustaining on flat-rate tuition of about \$6,000 per year for most programs.

Degrees are granted under the accreditation of Western Governors University, which is accredited through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Nursing College programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE\*), and the Health Informatics program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM).

More information is available at [missouri.wgu.edu](http://missouri.wgu.edu) or by calling 855.948.8493.

\*Western Governors University offers nursing programs that are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (*One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 5380, Washington DC 20036, 202-877-6791*).