

Western Governors University Announces Return of “Fund My Classroom” Program; Encourages K-12 Teachers to Apply for Grant Funding by April 17

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Nonprofit, fully online university plans to award up to \$100,000 in funding to K-12 teachers across Illinois, Missouri and Kansas to help bring innovative classroom projects and initiatives to life

ALTON – In a continued effort to show appreciation for area K-12 educators who have been navigating diverse styles of teaching to best lead students on their education

journey, Western Governors University (WGU) has announced the return of its “Fund My Classroom” initiative. The fully online, nonprofit university is pledging up to \$100,000 in grant money for K-12 teachers who need help funding their innovative classroom projects. Teachers can submit proposed projects online at wgu.edu/fundmyclassroom for the opportunity to receive full or partial funding. Applications are being accepted March 21 through April 17, and selected classroom projects will be announced during Teacher Appreciation Week, which runs May 2-6.

K-12 educators can request funding for any type of innovative classroom project they believe would provide an enriching classroom experience for their students – from books, supplies and equipment or technology to classroom experiences and field trips. To be considered, proposed projects must include a description, detailing how much funding is needed and how the proposed project will benefit students. Both public and private school teachers are encouraged to submit applications. Teachers do not have to be WGU students or alumni to apply.

“Teachers work tirelessly to ensure that students have the tools they need to reach their full potential, but they often have to spend their own savings to cover the costs of classroom projects that create an impactful learning experience,” said Dr. Angie Besendorfer, Regional Vice President of Western Governors University. “Through the Fund My Classroom grants, WGU is proud to give back to teachers as a way to thank them for their dedication to educating students. We look forward to learning about all the amazing projects being proposed this year and are excited to provide deserving teachers with the funds to bring so many of them to life.”

WGU’s “Fund My Classroom” initiative launched in Missouri in 2019 and was expanded to include select counties in Illinois in 2020. Last year was the first year the initiative was made available to teachers across the entire state of Illinois, where WGU awarded nearly \$90,000 in grant funding toward 87 classroom projects throughout Illinois, Missouri and Kansas. The university hopes to continue to fund dozens of projects across the three states again this year.

Some of the Illinois classroom projects selected for funding through WGU’s “Fund My Classroom” initiative last year included the following: a classroom set of 22 iPads to build overall student confidence and writing skills at St. Juliana Catholic School in Chicago’s Edison Park neighborhood; a Hydroponics STEM activity to promote scientific engagement through real-life observation for students at Nauvoo Elementary School in Nauvoo; a classroom set of Sam Kean’s *The Disappearing Spoon* at Carriel Junior High School in O’Fallon, to inspire students to read more science-based literature; an original, six-minute music video created by students at Senn High School

in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood, that responds to the impact racial trauma has on mental health; and a set of six Sphero Sprk+ robots to help students learn how to code at Unity High School in Mendon.

Anyone interested in nominating themselves, colleagues, family or friends can fill out the short application available at wgu.edu/fundmyclassroom. Nominees must reside in Illinois, Missouri or Kansas.

About WGU

Established in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors with a mission to expand access to high-quality, affordable higher education, online, nonprofit WGU now serves more than 131,000 students nationwide and has more than 257,000 graduates in all 50 states. Driving innovation as the nation's leading competency-based university, WGU has been recognized by the White House, state leaders, employers, and students as a model that works in postsecondary education. In just 25 years, the university has become a leading influence in changing the lives of individuals and families and preparing the workforce needed in today's rapidly evolving economy. WGU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, has been named one of Fast Company's Most Innovative Companies, and has been featured on NPR, NBC Nightly News, CNN, and in The New York Times. Learn more at www.wgu.edu.