



News Release

Contacts: Robert T. Tad Perry, Executive Director
tadp@sdbor.edu

Janelle Toman, Director of Information & Institutional Research
janellet@sdbor.edu

T: 605.773.3455

F: 605.773.5320

www.sdbor.edu

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849 Opportunity Scholarships Awarded

VERMILLION, S.D. – Slightly more than 8 percent of South Dakota’s high school graduates from last spring have qualified for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, a state-funded scholarship worth up to \$5,000 over four years.

The South Dakota Board of Regents, which administers the program, said 849 incoming freshmen qualified for the scholarship this fall at one of 17 participating higher education institutions in South Dakota. Last year, there were 829 scholarships awarded in the fall semester, plus another 12 in the spring, for a total of 841 students over the course of the year.

Looking back to last year’s inaugural class of scholarship recipients, a total of 614 who received the scholarship in its first year of funding are again eligible this fall. The 227 students who are not eligible, either permanently or temporarily, translate into an attrition rate of about 27 percent. Only 40 of those students, or 5 percent, lost the scholarship because they were no longer enrolled in any of the participating higher education institutions in South Dakota.

“This tells me that the Opportunity Scholarship is meeting its goal to encourage students to remain in South Dakota for higher education,” said Regents President Harvey C. Jewett. “It is also very encouraging that 80 percent of the remaining 187 classified as currently ineligible are still enrolled in their respective institutions this fall.”

Of those losing eligibility, half of the students (114) lost the scholarship because they did not meet the required 3.0 grade point average at the end of the spring term. It is important to note that these recipients could regain their eligibility and have the scholarship reinstated if they raise their GPAs back to at least 3.0, Jewett said.

Another 73 students lost eligibility because they did not attempt or complete the required 15 credit hours in either the fall 2004 or spring 2005 semesters.

The South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship was established in 2004 to provide state scholarship support to qualifying high school graduates who complete a rigorous college-prep curriculum and maintain certain academic standards. The following table shows the participating institutions, the number of new students receiving scholarships this fall, and the total number of 2004 and 2005 recipients at each institution:

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Number of Scholarship Recipients Attending Various Institutions		
Participating Institution	# Students New Fall 05	Total Recipients (Includes 2004 & 2005)
Augustana College	62	120
Black Hills State University	47	67
Colorado Technical University	1	3
Dakota State University	29	46
Dakota Wesleyan University	10	19
Lake Area Technical Institute	6	7
Mitchell Technical Institute	0	2
Mount Marty College	15	32
National American University	0	2
Northern State University	30	56
Presentation College	5	7
SD School of Mines and Technology	87	128
SD State University	354	618
Southeast Technical Institute	4	5
University of Sioux Falls	27	50
University of South Dakota	171	299
Western Dakota Technical Institute	1	2
Total	849	1463