



# News Release

Contacts: Jack R. Warner, Executive Director and CEO  
[jack.warner@sdbor.edu](mailto:jack.warner@sdbor.edu)

Janelle Toman, Director of Communications  
[Janelle.toman@sdbor.edu](mailto:Janelle.toman@sdbor.edu)

Telephone: (605) 773-3455

Fax: (605) 773-5320

[www.sdbor.edu](http://www.sdbor.edu)

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## **Warner Awarded Honorary Doctorate**

MADISON, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents awarded its highest honor Wednesday to Jack R. Warner, who will retire June 30 as the regents’ executive director and chief executive officer.

The honorary degree, Doctor of Public Service, was presented to Warner in “recognition of extraordinary service and leadership to the South Dakota system of public higher education.” The degree was presented to Warner at the Board of Regents’ regular board meeting today in Madison. The title is reserved for individuals whose exceptional personal and professional contributions have merited special acknowledgement.

Warner’s six years as chief executive officer is the second longest tenure of an executive director in the history of the South Dakota public university system. Warner leaves at a time when the state’s public universities are serving record numbers of students and pursuing new strategies, under his leadership, to ensure that students arrive at college better prepared for academic work, move successfully through their coursework, and graduate on time.

Warner has been a leader in national organizations, advocating on behalf of higher education and focusing a national spotlight on South Dakota institutions. While in South Dakota, he served on the executive committee and as chair of the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization. He currently serves on the executive committee for the National Association of System Heads.

Regents’ President Randy Schaefer said Warner’s achievements will have a lasting impact on higher education and the two special schools in South Dakota. “Our system is serving more non-traditional students and moving more courses and degrees online to meet unique student needs,” Schaefer noted. “During Dr. Warner’s time here, we have enhanced affordability by reducing credit hours needed to graduate, improved efficiency by merging the administrations for the two special schools serving the deaf and the blind and visually impaired, expanded research and economic development initiatives, and improved student success.”

During his public service in South Dakota from 2009 to 2015, Warner worked with 15 regents and 13 institutional executives.