



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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State Universities Examine Ph.D. Programming

VERMILLION, S.D. – Research productivity is linked closely to doctoral-level programs offered by the state’s public universities, the South Dakota Board of Regents was told Thursday.

“To better position South Dakota as a significant research state, and move toward Governor Rounds’ 2010 economic development goals, we need to initiate new Ph.D. programs and strengthen others,” said Robert T. Tad Perry, the regents’ executive director.

Seven new Ph.D. programs could be implemented over the next several years, based on a preliminary list developed by regents’ staff and university officials. The programs being suggested are in engineering systems, applied math and statistics, computer science, biomedical engineering, nanoscience, information systems, and a structured M.D./Ph.D. degree.

Perry stressed these programs would be developed only if they are consistent with state priorities and can be supported financially. A request for new funding from the Legislature could be made, he said, as well as campuses helping pay for the programs through reallocations and other fund sources.

The universities also identified another list of Ph.D. programs that could be implemented over a longer timeframe, perhaps within five to 10 years. Those programs are in chemistry, nursing, systems engineering, and bioscience engineering.

“With support from the Legislature and Governor Rounds, we’re seeing a renewed emphasis on university research and what it means to the state’s economy and development,” said Regents President Harvey C. Jewett.

Jewett said it’s time to move the state forward in the research and development arena. “In large measure due to the lack of Ph.D.-level work at our universities, South Dakota falls to the bottom on most measures of research activity,” he said. Those measures include the percentage of doctoral-degree holders in the workforce, academic research and development funding measured by gross state product, academic patent applications, and publishing of academic research and articles.