



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, March 23, 2006

Tuition, Mandatory Fee Rates Set for 2006-07

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – Undergraduate students at South Dakota’s public universities on average will pay 5.9 percent more in tuition and mandatory fees next fall. The South Dakota Board of Regents set the rates Thursday for the academic year beginning this summer.

“As a board, we remain committed to keeping tuition affordable for our students,” said Regents President Harvey C. Jewett. “We have worked very hard to keep our annual adjustments in the 5 percent to 6 percent range, at a time when many other states have imposed double-digit increases.”

The weighted cost of tuition and mandatory fees paid by each South Dakota student is expected to increase by about \$299 next year. That means the average in-state undergraduate student taking 32 credit hours a year will pay \$5,416.26 for tuition and the two mandatory fees paid by all students—the university support fee and the general activity fee.

Jewett said, “Our priorities are three-fold when setting a tuition rate—meet state salary policy adopted by the Legislature, continue efforts to make our faculty salaries more competitive regionally, and cover our costs, which continue to rise.”

Regents’ officials identified the most important cost drivers impacting tuition and fee rates in South Dakota as:

- **Salary policy and benefits package**—The Legislature this year approved a 3 percent salary hike and a 6.3 percent, or \$314.45, health insurance premium increase per employee. The regents only receive funding for state general-funded positions and must raise tuition, fees, and room and board to cover employees paid from those sources. The Legislature also approved a 2.5 percent adjustment to “job worth” for Career Service employees who fall below the mid-point of their salary range. But this particular salary increase does not cover any faculty or non-faculty exempt employees of the university system, so the regents must fund adjustments for those employees from other sources.
- **Inflationary increase**—The annual rate of inflation last fiscal year, as calculated by the state’s budget office, was 3 percent.

- **Salary Competitiveness Fee**—Since 1999, the Board of Regents has applied a special Salary Competitiveness Fee to help boost average salaries for its public university faculty relative to surrounding states. The additional 1 percent added for salary competitiveness this year will provide a total salary pool of 4 percent for faculty and non-faculty exempt employees. “Without this important enhancement program, our salaries would lag by nearly 25 percent,” Jewett said. “Focusing on salary competitiveness has helped us recruit new faculty members and reward those who perform well.”

Today’s action adjusts the general activity fee (GAF) to cover two new initiatives and complete the third year of another:

- At South Dakota State University, students sought a \$2.75 per credit hour increase in order to build and maintain an expanded wellness center facility they say will better meet future needs. Students convinced state legislators earlier this year to approve the \$12.1 million project as an addition to the current Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Center.
- At Northern State University, a \$1.00 GAF increase will generate about \$52,000 annually to equip and operate a new student wellness center. The center, located in the Dacotah Hall gymnasium, will be equipped with modern aerobic and strength training equipment when it opens this fall.
- The board approved the third, and final, year of a phased-in GAF increase designated to support Title IX compliance and equity in athletics at all six public universities.