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### **GOV. ROUNDS URGES STUDENTS TO APPLY FOR NEW GRANTS**

*Students should apply at [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov)*

**PIERRE, S.D.**—Gov. Mike Rounds today urged qualified Pell Grant-eligible students in South Dakota to apply for new grants worth between \$750 and \$4,000 that will help make college more affordable. The new Academic Competitiveness (AC) grants and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grants provide \$790 million in funding this fall and \$4.5 billion over the next five years.

A federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Federal Pell Grant recipients meeting academic criteria may be eligible for the new aid programs in 2006-07. Academic Competitiveness Grants of \$750 will be awarded to first-year students who graduated from high school after Jan. 1, 2006, and who completed a rigorous secondary school program of study. The second-year students must have graduated from high school after Jan. 1, 2005, in a rigorous secondary school program and have at least a cumulative 3.0 GPA after their first year of college to qualify for the \$1,300 Academic Competitiveness Grant.

National Smart Grants of \$4,000 per year will be available to eligible students for their third and fourth year of college if they are pursuing a major in mathematics, science, technology, engineering, or a critical foreign language and have at least a cumulative 3.0 GPA in college.

“In South Dakota, our strategy is to encourage students to get very serious about college while still in high school,” Gov. Rounds said. “Both the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship and the state’s new high school graduation standards have put the right emphasis on taking rigorous high school courses to better prepare yourself for higher education.

“These new federal grants will reward college students who excelled, while helping to make higher education more affordable,” said Gov. Rounds. “These grants will encourage academic excellence and make careers in science and math more attractive. I urge every student to look at the Web site and check their availability as soon as possible.”

There are two options for students from South Dakota to qualify for Academic Competitiveness grants in the 2006-07 school year:

- ***Take a set of courses in high school, with passing grades, in the following areas:***
  - Four years of English;
  - Three years of math (including Algebra I and a higher-level course, such as Algebra II, Geometry, or Data Analysis and Statistics);
  - Three years of science (including at least two courses from biology, chemistry, or physics);
  - Three years of social studies; and
  - One year of a foreign language.
- ***Take Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and earn certain test scores.*** This program requires a minimum of two Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses in high school and a minimum passing score on the exams for those classes. Students must score 3 or higher on AP exams and 4 or higher on IB exams.

Rounds said the grants provide further incentive for students to take more challenging courses in high school and to pursue college majors in high-demand areas, such as science, math, technology, engineering, and critical foreign languages. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that about 500,000 students nationwide will qualify to receive these grants.

The AC grants provide college students who completed a rigorous course of study in high school with additional funds of up to \$750 during their freshman year and up to \$1,300 during their sophomore year. This is in addition to Pell Grant funds students are already receiving. College juniors and seniors who are eligible for SMART grants automatically will receive up to \$4,000 in additional aid next year.

Students can receive more eligibility and application information for both of these grant programs online at [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov) or by calling 1- 800- 4FEDAID (or 1-800-433-3243).