



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, October 19, 2006

Campuses Work Together on Academic Initiatives

MADISON, S.D. – Representatives from all six South Dakota public universities have partnered to enhance opportunities for students to engage in international and civic-minded education.

“With each university coming to the table in this collaborative way, it has really helped us focus more on system-wide approaches to student engagement,” said Regents Executive Director Robert T. Tad Perry.

One academic team recently came together to discuss ways to promote civic engagement in the undergraduate curriculum. “Public universities across this country have a strong interest in producing college graduates who are committed to engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democratic society,” Perry said. For example, a recent workshop in Yellowstone National Park brought college and university officials together to discuss curriculum materials and program ideas they could use to educate undergraduate students about political disputes and environmental issues associated with the use of public resources and public lands.

Perry said the South Dakota team hopes to develop an experience-based course for public university students beginning next fall. Starting with a pilot project involving 25 to 30 students, the class would be introduced to a topic relevant to South Dakota. Students’ work would then be focused on developing specific and realistic public policies based on a thorough understanding of the issue.

Another collaborative team in the public university system has identified specific strategies to promote and support learning activities abroad. “Each of our universities works to support study abroad by creating new programs, establishing campus committees to set policies, and providing information to students about what international study opportunities exist out there,” Perry said. “We saw a need, however, to give international study more of a statewide focus and do a better job of coordinating existing efforts among all universities.”