



News Release

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959 New Opportunity Scholarships Awarded

MADISON, S.D. – South Dakota’s colleges, universities, and technical institutes welcomed the largest group of Opportunity Scholarship recipients this fall since the state began awarding the scholarships in 2004. There are 959 new recipients enrolled as college freshmen this fall; that is 11 percent more Opportunity Scholarship recipients than in either of the previous two years’ freshmen classes.

The 959 also represent 10.5 percent of the 9,109 students who graduated from South Dakota high schools last spring, according to the South Dakota Board of Regents. The regents administer the Opportunity Scholarship, which is worth up to \$5,000 over four years to students who take a rigorous college-prep curriculum while in high school and stay in state for their postsecondary education. Students may enroll at any of the 17 participating higher education institutions in the state.

“These numbers confirm our expectations that this scholarship would become more popular over time,” said Regents President Harvey C. Jewett. “High school students and their parents do recognize the financial incentive offered by the state, which guides those students in making the right course-taking decisions to prepare for postsecondary education.”

Records indicated that 69 percent of the students who received the scholarship prior to this fall remain eligible. More than half of those students lost eligibility because they fell below the required 15 credit hours of coursework per semester. Another 23 percent fell below the required 3.0 cumulative grade point average. Jewett noted that students who lost the scholarship because of their grade point averages could regain eligibility and have the scholarship reinstated if they raise their GPAs back to at least 3.0. The table below shows the number and percentage of students who lost eligibility for the Opportunity Scholarship program as of this fall:

| Reason for Ineligibility | Number of Students | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Fell below required GPA | 124 | 23.4% |
| Fell below required credit hours | 281 | 53.1% |
| Withdrew/transferred from program | 117 | 22.3% |
| Graduation | 7 | 1.2% |
| Failure to pass proficiency exam | 0 | 0% |

The following table shows the participating institutions, the number of new students receiving scholarships this fall, and total number of continuing eligible recipients at each institution:

| Number of Scholarship Recipients Attending Various Institutions | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Participating Institution | # Students New Fall 2006 | Continuing Eligible Recipients from Classes of 2004 & 2005 |
| Augustana College | 82 | 86 |
| Black Hills State University | 55 | 53 |
| Colorado Technical University | 0 | 3 |
| Dakota State University | 40 | 37 |
| Dakota Wesleyan University | 18 | 11 |
| Lake Area Technical Institute | 6 | 5 |
| Mitchell Technical Institute | 2 | 1 |
| Mount Marty College | 11 | 28 |
| National American University | 1 | 2 |
| Northern State University | 38 | 46 |
| Presentation College | 11 | 8 |
| SD School of Mines and Technology | 79 | 83 |
| South Dakota State University | 373 | 506 |
| Southeast Technical Institute | 7 | 6 |
| University of Sioux Falls | 34 | 40 |
| University of South Dakota | 201 | 256 |
| Western Dakota Technical Institute | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 959 | 1171 |