News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, December 13, 2006

Four More Ph.D. Degrees Proposed

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Building on a statewide research initiative launched three years ago, the South Dakota Board of Regents will ask state legislators to approve three more Ph.D. degrees in 2007. The board also plans to create another new doctoral degree with existing university resources.

The state's economic future is dependent on developing university-level research capacity, Regents President Harvey C. Jewett said. "Ph.D. programs are needed to recruit distinguished faculty who can generate research grants, expand the state's research capacity, and contribute to economic development," Jewett said.

Since 2004, six new Ph.D. degrees have been funded by the state, and another three were created from existing resources within the higher education system. Gov. Mike Rounds included $1.8 million in funding for three more doctoral degrees in his proposed budget, which he presented to lawmakers Dec. 5. If approved by the legislature, the universities involved will match that state investment to create the new programs.

The regents Wednesday approved the details for these doctoral programs, which the Legislature will be asked to fund when the session opens in January. They are:

- A **Ph.D. degree in materials chemistry at The University of South Dakota**. Materials chemistry focuses on the development and characterization of materials for technology applications. It involves branches of chemistry, physics, biology, and engineering, and its graduates are employed by industry, federal agencies, research universities, and consulting firms. Faculty and students will work closely with two 2010 research centers already established in South Dakota—the Center for the Research and Development of Light-Activated Materials and the Center for Accelerated Applications at the Nanoscale.
- A **Ph.D. degree in pharmaceutical sciences at South Dakota State University.** Graduates of this program are trained in drug discovery and delivery and the science of genetically-based individual diagnosis and treatment of disease. Students are involved through study and research in medicinal chemistry, pharmaceutics, and pharmacology/pharmacogenomics. A large number of Ph.D-trained faculty in pharmaceutical sciences is needed to address the national shortage of pharmacists brought about by an increasing demand for pharmacy services.

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- A **Ph.D. degree in chemical and biological engineering at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.** This program fuses chemical engineering, biochemical engineering, and industrial microbiology into a coherent curriculum. Graduates will be prepared for careers in such fields as biochemical and petrochemical processing; bio-based energy technologies such as biomass and biofuels; and polymer and composite materials and processing. With recent developments involving crude oil supplies and production and the threat of global warming, there is a significant demand for research engineers with this type of training that cuts across chemical engineering and industrial microbiology.

Additionally, the board approved a Ph.D. degree in wildlife and fisheries sciences at SDSU, using only existing university resources and no additional funding from the state. This science-based degree will emphasize original research in natural resources. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at SDSU currently offers two specializations within an existing Ph.D. program in biological sciences—fisheries science and wildlife science. Creating this new degree program in wildlife and fisheries sciences eliminates the need for the specializations, while making it easier to recruit faculty and students into the program, university officials said.

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