



News Release

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South Dakota Student Performance Exceeds National Norms

MADISON, S.D. – Based on two important measures of academic progress, South Dakota public university students again outperformed their counterparts nationwide.

The South Dakota Board of Regents this week reviewed the College Assessment of Academic Proficiency Report, which combines information from two sources: a proficiency exam that all students take at the end of their sophomore year at South Dakota public universities and an assessment of student gains in postsecondary education when considering their ACT scores prior to entering college.

“We look to these measurements to help us gauge how we are doing as a system, and in what ways the college experience adds to a student’s knowledge base,” said Regents Executive Director Robert T. Tad Perry.

On average, South Dakota public university students who took the proficiency exam in 2006-07 exceeded the national averages in all four areas of the test: writing skills, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. A total of 4,681 students sat for the exam in the last academic year.

On a system basis, 9.5 percent of the students who were tested failed to earn acceptable scores in one or more areas of the exam. “The percentage of students requiring remediation in science and math has declined over the past five years, while increasing slightly in writing,” Perry said. Students who fail a part of the test are required to work on their deficiencies and retest within the next academic year.

When assessing achievement gains of South Dakota students who took the ACT college entrance exam and then later took the proficiency exam after their first two years of college, the report says South Dakota students demonstrated a higher percentage of achievement gains than did students on average in national reference groups. The greatest percentage of South Dakota students had gains in science reasoning (97 percent), followed by mathematics (96 percent), reading (93 percent), and writing (93 percent).