



News Release

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Wharton Named President at South Dakota School of Mines & Technology

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Robert A. Wharton, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Idaho State University, will become the 18th president of South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, the South Dakota Board of Regents announced Friday.

Wharton assumes leadership of the Rapid City campus on July 1. He replaces Charles Ruch, who is retiring June 30 after five years as School of Mines' president.

“We are pleased to welcome Dr. Wharton to South Dakota,” said Regent Randy Morris, chair of the search committee. “His depth of experience in senior administrative positions, and his talents in leading higher education research and academic programs, will be a great asset to our system.”

Regents President Harvey C. Jewett praised Wharton's strong connections to national research initiatives. “We look forward to tapping into Dr. Wharton's past experience as chief research officer at Idaho State University and from his work for federal research agencies such as the National Science Foundation, NASA, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory,” Jewett said. “Dr. Wharton's leadership will prove invaluable as the state advances plans to increase its national research profile.”

“I am honored to be selected by the Board of Regents to serve as the next president of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology,” Wharton said. “I am enthusiastic about leading the dynamic growth and stewardship of this elite, world-class university and continuing the institution's proud heritage of excellence in preparing students to serve as leaders in the professions of engineering and science.”

“I am extremely fortunate to be assuming the presidency from Dr. Charles Ruch, who has provided incredibly successful leadership over the past five years,” Wharton said. He said he looks forward to collaborating with the regents, administrative colleagues, faculty, staff, foundation trustees, alumni, community, political and business leaders, legislators, and other university stakeholders to “achieve academic excellence, enrich students' lives and ensure their success, substantially grow the research enterprise, create public value, and fulfill the school's exciting 21st century vision and its mission.”

He added, “Working together, we will significantly enhance the School of Mines' reputation and contribute robustly to the economic development of South Dakota.”

As the chief academic officer at ISU, Wharton has been responsible for advancing the academic and scholarly life of 13,280 students and 670 faculty members on the Pocatello campus and at four outreach centers. He successfully led the first campus-wide effort to implement and align evidence-based strategic planning, budgeting, and assessment at ISU, and led student recruitment and retention efforts that resulted in a 4 percent enrollment increase as of fall 2007. The new SDSM&T president is a tenured professor of biology at ISU and previously served as its chief research officer, leading the university's efforts to foster, support, and expand its research enterprise.

His Ph.D. in botany is from Virginia Polytechnic Institute. He also holds a M.A. degree in biology and a B.A. in botany from Humboldt State University in California.

The new president is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, The Explorers Club, and the Royal Geographic Society. Wharton is a recipient of the United States Antarctic Service Medal and has served on the National Research Council's Polar Research Board. He has been actively involved in a number of community outreach and volunteer activities, including Rotary International and service on the local boards of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Boy Scouts of America, the Greater Pocatello Chamber of Commerce, and the Bannock Development Corp.

President-elect Wharton is married to Carolyn R. Fassi, a native of St. Louis, Mo. Dr. Fassi has 20 years of experience working in health care administration at the federal, state, and local levels, in private industry, and in academe as a faculty member. Her doctorate in public administration is from the University of Southern California and she holds a master in public health degree from San Jose State University. Dr. Wharton's son, Matthew Wharton, is a software engineer with Medtronic Corp. in Colorado.



Dr. Robert A. Wharton