



News Release

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Regents' Budget Request Covers Many Needs

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents will request state funds to shore up base operating budgets of the public university system, while making strategic investments in facilities, technology, and research.

The regents Friday finalized their Fiscal Year 2010 budget request and submitted it to Gov. Mike Rounds. The governor's budget office will use this request as the basis for formulating a final budget recommendation to the legislature later this year.

“This is a modest request for new investments, given the many needs of our campuses,” said Harvey C. Jewett, board president. “If we are going to build South Dakota's competitive workforce, these requests are essential.”

Under the category of budget maintenance, the regents request state funds to cover escalating utility costs, meet inflation on the basic operating expenses of the campuses, and support a growing student population. Additional investment in facilities is sought to continue the state's support for maintenance and repair of campus buildings, as well as to bond for a replacement structure for the public higher education center that serves non-traditional students in western South Dakota. Ongoing operational support also is requested for the REED (Research, Education, and Economic Development) Network, which was created by lawmakers last year.

Details of the major maintenance items in the regents' budget include:

- \$2.4 million for projected utility costs;
- \$2.8 million for inflationary increases on operating expenses;
- \$2.3 million to support growth in student enrollments;
- \$1.6 million to match a like amount paid by students for maintenance and repair of campus buildings;
- \$1.2 million for annual payments on a 25-year bond for the Higher Education Center-West River in Rapid City; and
- Slightly over \$1 million for operational and technical support of the REED network. This network connects South Dakota public universities, the underground lab at Homestake, EROS Data Center, and other entities to a national grid so that South Dakota researchers can share vast amounts of data among research institutions worldwide.

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The regents also identified several priorities for new investments. One is a Mobile Computing Initiative to establish universal wireless access on all public university campuses and redesign college instruction to include use of laptops, tablets, and other mobile devices. Additionally, the regents called on the state to fund more faculty research positions at the public universities, and support projects to create a stronger connection between the universities and the work that is soon under way at the Sanford Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory at Homestake. Another critical new investment requested in the budget is a master's degree in social work.

Details of the major new investments requested in the regents' budget include:

- \$3.8 million as the state's share of the price tag for a mobile computing partnership. Students will be asked to pay for their own laptops, while the university system redirects \$10.9 million of existing resources to pay for one-time start-up costs. The state funds would cover network and equipment upgrades and technical staff support;
- \$2.7 million to build the public universities' capacity to conduct high-tech research, as recommended by a national report. The funds would be used to hire and support another 16 faculty members conducting research in critical fields;
- \$545,701 for initiatives to connect the public universities with research projects at the Sanford lab; and
- \$470,813 to establish a master's degree in social work at The University of South Dakota, responding to a growing demand from the health care industry. South Dakota is the only state in the country without a master's degree program in this field.