



News Release

Contacts: Robert T. Tad Perry, Executive Director
tadp@sdbor.edu

Janelle Toman, Director of Information & Institutional Research
janellet@sdbor.edu

T: 605.773.3455

F: 605.773.5320

www.sdbor.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, December 3, 2008

National Report Grades Higher Education Performance

PIERRE, S.D. – A national report gives South Dakota higher education above-average marks for how well it prepares students for college, the opportunities available to participate in higher education, and the number of undergraduate degrees awarded relative to students enrolled. However, *Measuring Up 2008: The State Report Card on Higher Education* says the state still needs to look for ways to improve college affordability.

Measuring Up grades states on their performance in five categories: preparation, participation, affordability, completion, and benefits. The report, released today, includes both public and private higher education institutions. South Dakota received grades of “B” for higher education preparation, participation, and completion. It earned a “D+” for benefits the state accrues from higher education and a failing grade in affordability.

“Because the state has made no direct investment in need-based financial aid, this report consistently gives South Dakota the ‘F’ grade in affordability,” said Regents Executive Director Robert T. Tad Perry. In fact, 48 other states also earned an “F” in affordability, and only California fared higher with a “C-”. However, Perry said no one should overlook the very important step state policymakers took in 2004 to create the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, which encourages students to come better prepared for college and stay in state for their postsecondary education.

In particular, the national report noted that South Dakota does well in providing college opportunities for its residents. The likelihood of enrolling in college in South Dakota by the age of 19 is high, and has increased by 35 percent since the early 1990s, the report said.

This year’s *Measuring Up* report is the fifth in a series, which began in 2000. It is an initiative of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Copies of the report may be downloaded from the center’s Web site at <http://www.highereducation.org/>