



News Release

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Perry to Retire from Board of Regents' System

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents announces that Dr. Robert T. Tad Perry will retire as executive director at the end of the current fiscal year.

Harvey Jewett, president of the board, said, “Perry will have completed 15 years of service to South Dakota as the system’s chief executive officer. This is a long tenure for a system executive. He is currently the longest serving state higher education executive officer in the nation,” Jewett said. He further noted that “Perry has served longer in the South Dakota system executive officer role than any of his predecessors, the longest prior tenure having been five years.”

Perry leaves the system leadership role at a time when the public universities are serving record numbers of students, doing record levels of research, and are involved in record levels of fundraising that approaches \$500 million across the six universities.

Perry, a Missouri native who holds degrees from Central Methodist University and the University of Missouri, came to South Dakota after a 23-year career at Ball State University in Indiana, where he was a professor of political science and a university administrator.

“During his tenure, there has been significant growth in service to non-traditional students, increases in graduate degrees and research programs, enhancements in the technology environment for students, improvements in competitive salaries for faculty and administrators, consolidations of numerous back-office functions among the six universities, upgrading of campus facilities, and the transition to Division I athletics in the state,” observed Terry Baloun, vice president of the Board of Regents.

“Perry has helped put South Dakota on the national higher education community map by providing leadership to several higher education organizations during his tenure. He served as chair of the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and as secretary-treasurer for the National Association of System Heads,” Jewett said. He also served on the executive committees of the Education Commission of the States and the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

Perry and his wife, Carolyn, plan to continue to reside in the Pierre-Fort Pierre area.

The Board of Regents has engaged Elaine Hairston of Academic Search Consultation Service to assist the board in recruiting candidates for the executive director and system chief executive officer position. Baloun said, “The search process will begin immediately and will hopefully conclude by May, so a new leader will be in place this summer.” The full Board of Regents will sit as the search committee.

-30-

(A brief summary follows of accomplishments and activities during Dr. Perry’s tenure at the South Dakota Board of Regents.)

Fifteen Years—1994–2009

- A significant growth in students being served, especially non-traditional students in the Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Rapid City areas. Self-support enrollment is up 194 percent, while total enrollment grew by 23 percent.
- The development of a research culture with graduate programs, including a major expansion of doctoral programs:
 - 19 new doctoral programs;
 - Graduate enrollment has grown by 61 percent;
 - Research expenditures have increased by more than 150 percent;
 - Eleven 2010 Research Centers have been implemented.
- The creation of distance education opportunities that today serve 9,342 student enrollments.
- A significant investment in renovating, replacing, and acquiring new facilities for the students and faculty across the system, highlighted by more than 45 projects with a value of nearly \$400 million.
- A closing of the salary competitiveness gap with surrounding states from nearly -20 percent to -5 percent that has resulted in the attraction and retention of faculty and administrative staff.
- The consolidation of backroom data systems for the student, financial, and human resource areas by creating a single system for records and practices across the six universities.
- The approval of nearly 200 new degree or site programs for the six universities.
- The system’s total budget has increased by 122 percent, while state funding has increased by 43 percent during this period.
- The establishment of the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship program that has served more than 5,000 students.
- Two of the state’s universities have become or are becoming Division I programs, giving South Dakota its first Division I athletic programs.

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- Agreements with all four technical institutes were reached on the delivery of general education curriculum and 128 program-to-program articulation agreements.
- Created a “Reinvestment through Efficiencies Program” that directed 10 percent of state resources to higher policy priorities.
- Created the only public university-required proficiency exam in the nation.
- Initiated laptop programs at two universities and planning is under way at the others.
- Held tuition and fee increases below double-digit increases in every year.
- Worked for 26 Board of Regents’ members.
- Worked with 25 different institutional executives—recruitment and selection of 17.