



# News Release

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## **Perry Awarded Honorary Doctorate**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents awarded its highest honor Friday to Robert T. Tad Perry, who will retire July 7 as the regents’ executive director and chief executive officer.

The honorary degree, Doctor of Public Service, was presented to Perry in “recognition of extraordinary service and leadership to the South Dakota system of public higher education.” The degree was informally presented to Perry at a public retirement reception Thursday night in Pierre, with official board action to follow today. The title is reserved for individuals whose exceptional personal and professional contributions have merited special acknowledgement.

Perry’s 15 years as chief executive officer for the Board of Regents stands as the longest record of service in any one state by a state higher education executive officer. He leaves the system leadership role at a time when public universities in South Dakota are serving a record number of students, conducting record levels of research, and raising a record of nearly \$500 million in private funds across all six universities.

His tenure was marked by significant growth in service to non-traditional students, increases in graduate degree offerings and research programs, and enhancement of the technology environment for all students. He was instrumental in creating the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship program, which to date has supported more than 5,000 students and provides a financial incentive for students to take a rigorous college-prep curriculum and remain in South Dakota for their postsecondary education.

Regents’ President Terry Baloun said many of Perry’s achievements will be of lasting impact, including policies designed to make salaries more competitive for faculty and administrators, consolidating back-office functions among the six universities, and significant upgrading of campus facilities, including a system-wide focus on improving science facilities and laboratories.

During his public service in South Dakota, Perry worked with 27 regents and 25 institutional executives, and he was involved in the recruitment and selection of 17 of those institutional leaders.