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Academic Programs Respond to Developing Workforce Needs

RAPID CITY, S.D. – A new four-year degree at Dakota State University will produce graduates skilled in creating scientific and technical documents for professional audiences. The South Dakota Board of Regents today approved the university’s request for a B.S. degree in professional and technical communication.

“Employers will always be looking for workers with excellent communications skills,” said Jack R. Warner, the regents’ executive director and CEO. “This particular degree goes a step further, preparing students for careers that require them to shape messages and translate technical jargon for targeted audiences.”

Dakota State plans to offer the new degree both online and at University Center in Sioux Falls, starting next fall. The number of students in the major is expected to grow from 15 to 60 within three years.

Employees who can use emerging technologies to produce highly technical documents are in high demand. Dakota State’s mission to educate students in the fields of computer science and information systems places it in a unique position to deliver this degree program for South Dakota and the region, regents’ officials said.

The program combines courses in writing, communication, computer graphics, and Web design and development. “The need for graduates skilled in preparing technical documents is increasing both regionally and nationally,” Warner said. “This major will be an excellent fit for students in both technical and business fields.”

In other action, the Board of Regents:

- Approved an 18-hour minor in nuclear engineering at South Dakota State University to enhance current offerings in physics, engineering physics, and mechanical engineering.
- Approved a 12-hour online certificate program in professional writing at Black Hills State University to meet employers’ increased demand for improved writing skills in business and industry.