



News Release

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Regents Approve Degrees, Delivery Options to Meet Workforce Needs

MADISON, S.D. – Earlier this fall, the South Dakota Board of Regents began a process to phase out some low-enrolled programs, freeing up resources to direct to more high-needs academic endeavors. Hand in hand with that program review, the board this week adopted a number of academic program changes.

“Our program productivity review of low-enrolled programs is well under way,” said Jack R. Warner, the regents’ executive director and CEO. “There will be savings realized over time, which we can direct to new or redesigned academic programs that meet critical and emerging workforce needs across South Dakota,” he said.

Final recommendations on the status of low-enrolled programs within the system—those that graduate five or fewer students each year—will be delivered to the board for its action in March. Academic program actions at the regents’ meeting this week included the following items:

- A new Ph.D. program in mechanical engineering at **South Dakota School of Mines and Technology** will drive engineering design and innovation through research. Preparing students for careers in industry, research, and higher education, this degree program is supported by donated funds and internal resources, so no new state appropriations are requested. High-tech manufacturing will be a particular focus, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship.
- **South Dakota State University** will once again offer a stand-alone master’s degree in electrical engineering, expected to attract high-quality South Dakota students interested in research-focused careers while enhancing the applicant pool for the university’s Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering. SDSU now offers a generic master’s degree in engineering. Individual students could select courses for an emphasis in electrical engineering, but the emphasis was not recognized by prospective students and faculty as a research-oriented degree. No costs are involved in establishing the new M.S. degree.
- An M.A. degree in addiction studies and an executive master of public administration degree were both authorized at **The University of South Dakota**. The addiction studies program prepares graduates for the highest level of state certification in the field, and responds to a 33.6 percent increase in projected number of job openings in South Dakota for substance abuse and behavior disorder counselors through 2016. The executive M.P.A. degree, to be offered online, prepares employed government and non-profit administrators for executive-level careers and responsibilities.

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- The board also approved **USD's** request to deliver its current B.S. degree in health sciences at sites in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, and online. The program prepares students for admission to graduate health care programs such as dentistry, physician assistant, and physical therapy, or for employment in the health care industry.
- **Black Hills State University** received permission to deliver its bachelor's degree in business administration via the Internet. Distance delivery is intended to bring the program to a wider audience, especially adult students unable to attend classes on campus due to their location or other commitments.
- **Northern State University** will soon offer two popular 12-hour certificate programs in banking to western South Dakota residents. The certificates were developed a year ago in response to increasing market demand for courses targeted at bank employees. By expanding delivery to the University Center-Black Hills in Rapid City, the certificates in intermediate banking and executive banking offer professional development opportunities to more people in the banking and financial services industry.
- **USD** will offer a bachelor of business administration degree in human resource management to replace a current specialization in the field; this does not change the curriculum or increase the number of course credits needed to graduate.
- New 18-hour minors in peace and conflict studies at **SDSU** and in creative writing at **USD** were approved, which may be added to undergraduate degrees.
- The board also granted permission to develop proposals for new degree programs. **BHSU** is considering a professional science master's degree that combines advanced study of science and business to produce more science and technology entrepreneurs, while **Dakota State University** is planning for a specialized master of business administration degree with an information technology focus. Both universities must return to the board for final approval, after all plans are in place.