



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, December 18, 2009

USD Advances Plans for Bachelor Nursing Degree

MADISON, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents has given The University of South Dakota permission to develop a plan for a bachelor-level degree in nursing to be offered at the Vermillion campus and online.

The board’s consideration of this request takes into account an urgent need to graduate more nurses with bachelor’s degrees in South Dakota, said Jack R. Warner, the regents’ executive director and CEO. “There is a long-term need for more registered nurses to meet our health care workforce needs, and vacancy rates in the nursing profession are projected to become very serious. We also recognize that associate-degree RNs need convenient access to a bachelor’s degree so they can advance in their careers and be eligible for admission to graduate programs,” Warner said.

He said USD officials will return to the Board later for official approval of the B.S. degree in nursing, once plans for the new program are completed. If approved, the USD program will be directed to registered nurses already in the field who have an associate degree from USD or another institution. It will deliver bachelor-level general education and advanced nursing courses required of a bachelor-degree program.

Warner also stressed that USD’s associate degree in nursing will continue with no changes, as it produces the majority of the system’s two-year degrees and there will continue to be strong demand across South Dakota to hire entry-level nurses with an associate degree. Likewise, the long-standing B.S. degree in nursing at South Dakota State University will continue, as will SDSU’s Upward Mobility program for RNs. “We see strong evidence that an additional bachelor’s program in nursing is justified, due to the changing direction of the nursing profession and our state’s workforce needs,” Warner said.

USD also intends to continue its “one-plus-one” arrangement with Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, so that Lake Area’s licensed practical nursing graduates can complete courses for the USD associate degree in nursing and become registered nurses.

There are no plans to request new state resources or additional student fees to support the B.S.N. program on the Vermillion campus.