



# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Wednesday, January 20, 2010

## **Public University System Targets More Budget Reductions & Savings**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota public university system will aggressively pursue additional steps to achieve even more targeted budget reductions and savings. University officials said these actions will build on a variety of cost-saving measures first advanced more than a year ago.

“In today’s economy, all of us are trying to find new ways to deal with ongoing deficits,” said Jack R. Warner, the public university system’s executive director and CEO, who came to South Dakota last July. “We have been and will accelerate plans to deal with this budget challenge, so that we are positioned in the best way possible to make the hard decisions we believe are coming.”

At the same time, Warner said, the efficiencies recouped must not impact the quality of higher education. “We must stay affordable and guard against significant cost increases to our students, and we must continue to grow South Dakota’s economy through the recent research and development initiatives that have been so successful on our campuses,” he said. “I am recommending that we focus for the most part on travel, essential hiring, and other operational savings,” Warner continued. “I have been meeting with campus leadership and advanced several steps that we will take immediately.”

Warner said those actions include the following:

- Implement a system-wide hiring freeze that permits hiring only for positions approved by the executive director as meeting a critical need;
- Mandate further reductions in business travel, with particular attention paid to all out-of-state travel requests.
- Secure additional cuts and savings from administrative and operational sectors of the public university system.
- Require campuses to provide strong justification for why any low-enrolled programs currently under review should be retained.

Earlier this fall, the regents mandated a system-wide review of all associate and bachelor’s degree programs graduating five or fewer students per year, and a review of all graduate-level programs graduating three or fewer per year. Initial recommendations that these programs be retained, consolidated, or terminated will be considered at the board’s March meeting.

“This request is well timed, because faculty, administrators, students, and the taxpaying public need to understand that we will look long and hard at every single low-enrolled program,” Warner said, “It is very likely that a good many of those programs will be phased out, so that we can achieve even greater budget savings in the future.” Warner added that campuses will work closely with students in programs targeted for elimination, identifying a step-by-step process for all affected students to complete their degree programs.