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## **New General Studies Degree Helps ‘Ready Adults’ Graduate**

BROOKINGS, S.D. – The public university system in South Dakota has developed a new degree aimed specifically at students who want to earn a bachelor’s degree and already have a significant number of college credits completed.

The bachelor of general studies degree is available starting this summer at Black Hills State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University, and The University of South Dakota. The degree will be available to students on campus; at off-campus centers in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Pierre; and by distance delivery.

“This degree accommodates students with a variety of career goals,” said Jack Warner, executive director and CEO for the South Dakota Board of Regents. “It will be a very attractive option for those students who have accumulated significant credits and want to complete a bachelor’s degree,” he said. “We invite such students to contact us to discuss this new option.”

Warner said it is one more important step the state is taking to increase the number of postsecondary graduates in South Dakota. “We know that there are many so-called ‘ready adults’ who have earned significant college credit but stopped out before completing their degree. This new degree option allows them to use credits they have already earned,” he said.

In South Dakota, there are about 113,500 people who have begun college but did not earn a degree. Research by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education found that people in certain fields, especially nursing, engineering, and math or science, are more likely to stop out before completing a degree. Oftentimes, these people have already completed 90 or more credit hours of study, Warner said, and need some flexibility to finish out a degree program.

No new state resources were requested for this program, since most courses used to complete the degree are already available. Earlier this year, the regents also terminated a number of low-enrolled academic programs and specializations to free up resources for this and other high-priority initiatives.