



News Release

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Warner to Retire from Board of Regents' System

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents announces that Jack R. Warner will retire as its executive director and chief executive officer at the end of the current fiscal year.

Board President Dean Krogman said, “As of June 30, Dr. Warner will have completed six years of service as our system’s CEO, the second longest tenure of an executive director in the history of the South Dakota public university system. We thank him for the extraordinary work he has done for higher education in South Dakota, and we wish him the best.”

Warner leaves the system at a time when the state’s public universities are serving record numbers of students, with a headcount enrollment last fall of 36,532. At the same time, those same universities are pursuing new strategies, under Warner’s leadership, to ensure that students arrive at college better prepared for academic work, move successfully through their coursework, and graduate on time.

Warner is a native of Massachusetts who holds degrees from Boston College, Springfield College, and the University of Vermont. He came to South Dakota in 2009 after serving as higher education commissioner in Rhode Island for seven years. He also held senior leadership positions for public universities and community colleges in Massachusetts, while building an extensive portfolio of teaching experience at the Boston College Graduate School of Education and at two community colleges.

“During his time in South Dakota, we have served increasing numbers of non-traditional students, moved more courses and degrees online to meet unique student needs, improved affordability and efficiency by reducing the number of credits needed to graduate, expanded research grants and contracts, formed the basis for new research park development, and focused on new initiatives to improve student success in college,” said Randy Schaefer, vice president of the Board of Regents.

Schaefer noted that Warner has been very active in national organizations, advocating on behalf of higher education and focusing a national spotlight on South Dakota institutions. While in South Dakota, he served on the executive committee and as chair of the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization. He is currently a member of the executive committee for the National Association of System Heads.

After his retirement, Warner and his wife, Celeste, plan to reside in Rhode Island.

The Board of Regents has engaged John Thornburgh of the Witt-Kieffer executive search firm to assist the board in recruiting candidates as Warner’s successor. “The search process will begin immediately and will hopefully conclude by May, so a new leader will be in place this summer,” Schaefer said. The full Board of Regents will sit as the search committee.

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(A brief summary follows of accomplishments and activities during Dr. Jack Warner’s tenure at the South Dakota Board of Regents.)

Jack R. Warner System Initiatives in South Dakota 2009–2015

- Enhanced affordability and efficiency by reducing required credits to the degree from 128 to 120 for bachelor’s degrees and from 64 to 60 for associate degrees.
- Held tuition and fee increases to a minimum, despite state budget cuts of \$28 million during the recession years. Implemented a system tuition and fee freeze in FY2015.
- Created a performance funding pilot that allocated \$6 million in performance funds based on production of graduates, with premiums for producing graduates in fields of study needed in South Dakota.
- Expanded medical school enrollment by 30 percent with help from a state appropriation.
- Created a Physics Ph.D. program for the University of South Dakota and the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology to support the work of the Sanford Underground Research Facility.
- Improved commitment to American Indian student success by conducting a focus group study, forming a statewide task force to recommend strategies, and hiring a full-time director of student preparation and success.
- Received approval for a Bachelor of General Studies program and implemented the “Ready Adult” project to encourage adults who left college with significant credits to return and complete their degrees.
- Worked with legislators to create the state’s first need-based grant program and the Critical Teaching Needs Scholarship program.
- Acquired funding to establish a research enhancement funding pool.
- Received legislative approval for the Board of Regents’ 10-year capital plan.
- Worked collaboratively with the K-12 education system to:
 - Align Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessments with college readiness expectations;
 - Provide remedial coursework to high school students;
 - Greatly expand dual credit offerings;
 - Redesign teacher preparation and educational leadership programs.

- Redesigned remedial coursework to include self-paced mathematics, use of multiple measures for remedial placement, and co-requisite coursework.
- Improved student retention by implementing an Early Alert system at each campus, holding a statewide student success conference that was followed by individual campus consultations, and providing clearer pathways to the degree.
- Constructed two new University Center facilities in Sioux Falls and Rapid City.
- Implemented a wage-record matching system with the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation to track employment of graduates in South Dakota a year after college graduation.
- Enhanced institutional research capacity to expand data-driven reporting and use of interactive dashboard reporting tools.
- Increased investments in the Board of Regents' enterprise system to move to a relational database and create a data warehouse.
- Received Board approval for a system strategic plan and associated metrics through 2020.
- Received state authorization in 2012 to create university research parks, forming the basis for a new research park in Sioux Falls.
- Supported expansion of the research park in Brookings.
- Sponsored statewide conferences on student success, academic quality, professional development for mid managers, and Title IX implementation.
- Joined the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.
- Merged the administrations of the two special schools for the deaf and the blind and visually impaired.
- Received approval for 83 new degree programs (graduate, undergraduate, and minors) that are aligned with state workforce needs, while phasing out 74 underproductive programs, through a program productivity review process.
- Contributed to the publication, Vision 2020, South Dakota's Science and Innovation Strategy.