



News Release

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Johnson Elected to Head Board of Regents

BROOKINGS, S.D. – Kathryn Johnson, a member of the South Dakota Board of Regents since 2005, is the board’s new president, succeeding Terry Baloun, who served in that role for the past two years.

Johnson is a Hill City resident and owner of Johnson Environmental Concepts of Rapid City. “These are challenging times for public higher education, but I am pleased to advocate on behalf of a system I feel so strongly about,” Johnson said. “Our public universities play a critical role to produce a competitive workforce and build a more robust economy for South Dakota,” she said.

Johnson holds a Ph.D. degree in geology from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, an M.S. in chemistry from Iowa State University, and a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Black Hills State University. She was appointed to the Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering, and Technology and is a member of the National Research Council Committee on Women in Science & Engineering.

At a time when state resources are stretched particularly thin, Baloun said he could not be more proud of the system’s six public universities and two special schools. “Time and time again, these institutions stepped up to the plate with new ideas, finding ways to innovate and become more efficient, and all the while making sure that service to our students and this state remained their top priority,” Baloun said.

During Baloun’s tenure as president, the public universities experienced record enrollment growth and record levels of research awards and expenditures. He led efforts to launch a productivity review across all campuses that resulted in termination of low-enrolled programs and new efficiencies for the system. Under Baloun’s leadership, plans were advanced to install or upgrade wireless technology throughout the system and new off-campus centers at Pierre and Rapid City were completed and opened for instructional use.

During this time, the Board of Regents also joined in several national initiatives to improve students’ access and success in college, including a “Ready Adult” project aimed at bringing back students with significant college credit who stopped out before completing their degree.

Regent Baloun remains on the board; his term continues through 2016.