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New Academic Options Connect Students to Workforce Needs

VERMILLION, S.D. – Responding to identified workforce needs and student demand, the South Dakota Board of Regents this week created new minor degree programs in public health and agriculture, approved additional certificate programs in the fields of health, sciences, and community development, and authorized new delivery options for a South Dakota State University geography degree.

Two of the new minors—public health at the University of South Dakota and meat science at SDSU—fit closely with the state’s workforce emphasis in biosciences and value-added agricultural industries. Both minors require 18 credit hours of study.

- The **public health minor at USD** provides new opportunities for students across all disciplines to prepare for careers as public health professionals, a segment of the workforce projected to see double-digit growth in the decade ahead.
- The **minor in meat science at SDSU** focuses greater attention to educating the consumer on issues from animal production to consumption of meat products. University officials say it is a critical content area for South Dakota’s strong agricultural focus.

Certificate programs package a small set of courses that allow students to develop expertise in a focused area of study, based on identified market and workforce development needs. The board approved new certificate programs for:

- **Allied health at Northern State University.**
- **Organismal biology at NSU.** The intended audience will be students entering professions related to zoology, botany/horticulture, ecology, education, and conservation.
- **Native communities and economic development at SDSU.** This certificate is geared to graduate students interested in working with American Indian tribes and Native communities.

In order to bring its coursework to a wider audience and as an added convenience for commuting students, SDSU will begin offering its B.S. degree in geography this fall through Internet delivery. The request came from non-traditional, place-bound students who find it difficult to travel to Brookings to complete the existing geography major on campus.

In addition, the Board of Regents also approved new minor degree programs in legal studies and museum studies, to be offered starting this fall at SDSU. Both minors require 18 credit hours of study.