



# News Release

Contacts: Jack R. Warner, Executive Director and CEO  
[jack.warner@sdbor.edu](mailto:jack.warner@sdbor.edu)

Janelle Toman, Director of Communications  
[Janelle.toman@sdbor.edu](mailto:Janelle.toman@sdbor.edu)

Telephone: (605) 773-3455

Fax: (605) 773-5320

[www.sdbor.edu](http://www.sdbor.edu)

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## Four Finalists Named for School of Mines Presidency

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents announced today four candidates who are finalists to become the next president at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Regent Terry Baloun, who chairs the presidential search process, said the finalists will be on campus in Rapid City Thursday and Friday (April 18-19) for scheduled meetings with constituents. A search is under way to replace former Mines President Robert Wharton, who passed away in September.

The finalists are:

- **Duane C. Hrcncir, Rapid City, S.D., acting president, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.** Hrcncir became acting Mines president upon the sudden death of President Wharton last Sept. 19. He also serves as provost and vice president for academic affairs, and partnered with Mines faculty to create a new College of Science and Letters, serving as its founding dean. His 28 years of higher education experience include work as associate vice president for academic affairs, dean of the School of Natural Sciences, and professor of environmental science at Mesa State College in Colorado. He began his academic career at the University of Texas at Dallas, as an assistant dean, faculty member, and chemistry department chair. He holds a Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry from Texas A&M University, a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts, and a B.S. degree from the University of Alabama.
- **H. Fred Walker, Honeoye Falls, N.Y., dean of the College of Applied Science and Technology, Rochester Institute of Technology.** In a career emphasizing the intersection of liberal arts with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education, Walker's research and scholarship has been focused on quality and reliability engineering. As dean at RIT, Walker has direct responsibility for leading all aspects of an academic organization numbering about 5,000 faculty, staff, and students. His previous higher education experience includes serving as professor and department chair at the University of Southern Maine. Walker holds a Ph.D. in industrial education and technology and a master of systems engineering, both from Iowa State University. He also has M.B.A. and B.S. degrees from California State University at Fresno.

- **Stephen G. Wells, Reno, Nev., president, Desert Research Institute, Nevada System of Higher Education.** As president of the Desert Research Institute, Wells oversees a non-profit division that conducts about 300 scientific research projects within Nevada, throughout the U.S., and around the world from two primary campuses in Las Vegas and Reno. The institute is considered one of the world's largest multi-disciplinary environmental research organizations, with about 500 scientists, technologists, students, and support staff. He also holds graduate faculty status at the University of Nevada-Reno. His previous academic experience includes time spent at the University of California-Riverside and the University of New Mexico. He has Ph.D. and master's degrees in geology, both from the University of Cincinnati. His undergraduate degree is from Indiana University.
- **Heather Wilson, Albuquerque, N.M., former member of Congress and president, Heather Wilson & Company LLC.** As an entrepreneur and small business owner, Wilson has worked with large defense and scientific companies, including top-tier national laboratories like Sandia, Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, the Nevada Test Site, Battelle Memorial Institute, and others. She served New Mexico in the U.S. Congress from 1998 to 2009. Before being elected to the Congress, she was the cabinet secretary of New Mexico's Children, Youth, and Families Department, where she was chief executive of a state agency with a \$216 million budget and 2,000 employees. Wilson earned her bachelor of science degree from the U.S. Air Force Academy in the third class to include women. She completed her master's and doctoral degrees as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University in England.

Copies of finalists' professional vitae are posted at <http://campaign.sdsmt.edu/president/search/index.html>. The Board of Regents will meet in executive session with the finalists during their campus visits. No action will be taken at these meetings.