



News Release

Contacts: Jack R. Warner, Executive Director and CEO
jack.warner@sdbor.edu

Janelle Toman, Director of Communications
janelle.toman@sdbor.edu

Telephone: (605) 773-3455

Fax: (605) 773-5320

www.sdbor.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, April 25, 2013

CORRECTION: After President Wilson's arrival, it was discovered that an inadvertent counting error occurred several years ago in announcing one of the university's prior presidents. President Wilson should be correctly referred to as the 18th sitting president at South Dakota School of Mines & Technology.

Wilson to Lead School of Mines and Technology as President

RAPID CITY, S.D. – Heather Wilson, a former member of Congress, Rhodes Scholar, and small business owner who has worked with large defense and scientific companies, will become the 18th president of South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, the South Dakota Board of Regents announced Thursday.

Wilson succeeds the late Robert Wharton, who passed away in September. She will begin her duties on the Rapid City campus on or about June 17, and will become the first female president in the school's 128-year history. Since last fall, Duane Hrcncir (*HURN'-sur*), provost and vice president for academic affairs on the Mines campus, has served as the acting president.

“Heather Wilson is a high-energy leader who brings exceptional communication skills and public-sector experience to her new position,” said Regent Terry Baloun, chair of the search committee. “At a time when higher education increasingly must make its case for more external funding and sustained research support from the federal and private sectors, our search committee took particular note of Dr. Wilson's Capitol Hill experience, as well as her connections to decision makers in Washington and throughout the scientific research community,” Baloun said. “We are excited to have her join our team,” he said.

As president of Heather Wilson & Company LLC of Albuquerque, N.M., Wilson has worked as a senior adviser to top-tier national laboratories such as 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, where she was on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and was the chair of the House Subcommittee on Technical and Tactical Intelligence.

“Higher education is facing serious challenges,” Wilson said. “The South Dakota School of Mines is showing how great schools can meet those challenges. Mines provides a rigorous, world-class education that prepares graduates for leadership in science and engineering at a price families can afford. It's a great school and I'm very proud to be the newest Hardrocker,” she said.

About 96 percent of Mines graduates have jobs upon graduation, at an average starting salary of \$62,696 last year. That's better than Harvard and Yale, and, on average, Mines students have less than \$25,000 in student debt upon graduation.

"I look forward to leading the expansion of Mines that Bob Wharton inspired and, tragically, was unable to finish," Wilson said. "We will increase research, build needed facilities, and expand the student body so that more young people are prepared professionals for the 21st century."

Nestled against the beautiful Black Hills in the southwest corner of the state, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology offers bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees in science and engineering. It has a student body of 2,400 students and has been named one of America's Best College Buys for 14 consecutive years. It is one of the best colleges for military vets and more than 250 students are veterans or active-duty service members.

Before being elected to Congress, Wilson was the cabinet secretary of New Mexico's Children, Youth, and Families Department, where she was chief executive of the state agency which had a \$216 million budget and 2,000 employees. She also served on the National Security Council staff in Washington after she concluded her service as a U.S. Air Force officer.

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 in international relations as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University in England. She is the second Mines president to have graduated from a U.S. military academy (the first being Harvey Fraser, who served 1966-1975) and the third to have served in the U.S. Air Force.

Wilson is married to Jay Hone, an attorney and retired Air Force colonel. They were foster parents and have one adult adopted son, Scott Hone, and two biological children, Joshua Hone, 19, and Caitlin Hone, 16. The family is active in Boy Scouts, soccer, and music. They enjoy skiing, walking, reading, musical theater, and film. They have an overly friendly King Charles-Beagle cross named "Miss Money Penny" and two sugar gliders (Australian marsupials) named "Scout" and "Jem".

On Thursday, Baloun also conveyed the Board of Regents' special thanks to Duane Hrcir, who continues to serve as acting president until Wilson's arrival. "Duane has been a solid and steady presence on this campus," Baloun said. "He brought students, faculty, and staff together during a time of loss and heartache, while diligently pursuing the university's long-term goals and future vision. We look forward to Duane's continuing service as provost and vice president for academic affairs," he said.

SDSMT President - 2



Heather Wilson