



News Release

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USD Student Groups Earn Recognition

VERMILLION, S.D. – Student organizations from the University of South Dakota were recognized this week for their outstanding academic, community, and organizational work by the South Dakota Board of Regents.

Student organizations honored with special recognition were:

- **Award for Academic Excellence** – The **PanHellenic Council** serves as the governing body for four sororities at USD. With their focus on academic success, sorority members have an average GPA that is three-tenths of a grade point higher than other female peers at USD. The council has stressed use of a card-swipe system for logging study hours, scheduling presentations from campus academic resource centers, and maintaining a competitive drive to achieve at the highest academic levels.



Dr. Jack Warner, BOR executive director and CEO, Kassie Hoiland of Sioux Falls, S.D., Dean Krogman, BOR president, Amber Groh, director of Sorority/Fraternity Life & Leadership, and James Abbott, USD president

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- **Community Service Award** – This award goes to two groups: **AWOL (Alternative Week of Off-Campus Learning)** and the **Mortar Board Honor Society**.

Alternative Week of Off-Campus Learning immerses students in educational, service-learning experiences through exposure to diverse social issues. Some of the activities include book drives, volunteer events, a hunger banquet, spring and winter break trips, and alternative weekend trips. These learning experiences are organized, budgeted, and facilitated by students in the AWOL organization.



Dr. Jack Warner, BOR executive director and CEO, Jessica Sundleaf of Sioux Falls, S.D., Dean Krogman, BOR president, Karl Reasoner, assistant director for Academic Engagement, and James Abbott, USD president

Mortar Board Honor Society recognizes college seniors for exemplary scholarship, leadership, and service. The local group held a 5K run where they gathered donated books for the Vermillion community library, collected funds for an elementary school book fair, held a Valentine’s Day fundraiser to sponsor a dance marathon participant, and partnered with a local elementary school to raise literacy awareness.

Representatives of the Mortar Board Honor Society, which shared the Community Service Award, were not available for the presentation.

- **Award for Organizational Leadership** – The **Union of African American Students** educates the campus community to the cultural traditions, experiences, and values of the African American community. The group co-hosted a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service and presented at the We Stand Together Diversity Symposium and the Thurgood

Marshall Law Day. The union also organized activities in honor of Black History Month, including a keynote speaker and Celebration of Soul Food event.



Alafia Wright (back, left) advisor, Dean Krogman, BOR president, Brian Griffin of Jacksonville, Fla., James Abbott, USD president, Dr. Jack Warner (front, left), BOR executive director and CEO, Monique Robinson of Burtonsville, Md., and Marije Wright of Madison, Wis.