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Adult Learners Attracted to University Centers

MADISON, S.D. – Attracting and retaining adult learners within South Dakota is an important priority for South Dakota public higher education. Expanded programs at university centers in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Rapid City have increased access to public higher education in critical-need areas.

Reports to the South Dakota Board of Regents by the three off-campus centers included information on program delivery and enrollment. “Each of the centers provides higher education opportunities to people who might not be able to attend a traditional campus,” said Regents President Kathryn Johnson. “The regents and university leaders will continue to identify ways to better serve our students at the centers, thereby increasing the quality of South Dakota’s workforce.”

Highlights from the annual reports include:

- **Capital University Center, Pierre** – In both the fall and spring semesters CUC reported a 14 percent decrease in the number of credit hours delivered. This decrease was attributed to the Missouri River flood of 2011. Last fall did see the first cohort of students enrolled that were the results from a talk with a group from Chamberlain who wanted to build economic development in rural areas through higher education. CUC and the USD-Pierre Nursing Program worked with the group to identify potential nursing students from Chamberlain and surrounding areas interested in the A.S. in nursing. These students are expected to graduate in 2013. CUC continues to support the adult learner, as 69 percent of CUC students are age 24 or older.
- **University Center-Sioux Falls** – A total of 3,195 unduplicated students were served at the Sioux Falls center over the past year, a decrease of 10.6 percent from the prior year. Total credit hours decreased by 7.9 percent. Most of the decrease is attributed to moving the USD nursing program off-site. To make offerings more affordable, the Regents adopted a reduced tuition program for foundation classes. A specific group of 100- and 200-level courses such as College Algebra, Fundamentals of Speech, Biology Survey, Composition, American Government, Principles of Accounting, and Business Writing will be offered at a rate below the current self-support tuition rate. This lower-cost option will be available this fall.
- **University Center-Rapid City** – Fiscal year 2012 was the first full year of classes held at the center’s new location. Credit-hour delivery was up 12.8 percent in the fall and 11.8 percent in the spring at University Center-Rapid City. The center delivered a total of 21,427 credit hours in the past academic year, up from 19,239 the previous year. Two new associate-degree programs were authorized for delivery in Rapid City, along with two new certificate programs and one new minor.