



News Release

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Public University System Seeks Tuition Freeze

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – In its budget request for the coming year, the South Dakota Board of Regents has pledged to freeze in-state students' tuition in exchange for more state government support. A request for nearly \$6 million, adopted today by the regents, would prevent more higher education cost shifting to students.

“The goal is to keep public higher education affordable and accessible for all South Dakota citizens,” said Regents President Dean M. Krogman. With the additional state funding to support salary policy, employee benefits, and inflation on operating costs, the public university system could hold its tuition increases for South Dakota resident students to zero, Krogman said.

In addition, the regents are requesting state investments to address deferred maintenance on academic buildings, expand the state's medical school to produce more doctors, fund student success initiatives, meet new financial reporting requirements, and update and expand an animal disease research lab at South Dakota State University.

The budget request overall seeks about \$11.6 million in new state resources linked to specific priorities of the six public universities. In its budget request to Gov. Dennis Daugaard, the regents asked the governor to make tuition buy down for resident students the highest priority when he puts together a recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2015.

Additionally, the regents are requesting \$160,000 to add two vision consultants at the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired to improve outreach services to students with vision loss across the state. An independent study in 2008 recommended the additional staffing to provide appropriate levels of service to students who are not enrolled at the residential school in Aberdeen but require specialized assistance.

The board also identified about \$7.5 million in one-time budget requests to finish construction on a swine research facility at SDSU, increase need-based scholarship payments from a state trust fund, and establish a South Dakota commercialization fund that encourages university campuses to pursue technology transfer and high-tech research innovations.

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The regents are seeking about \$1.65 million for the second year in a four-year process to increase the amount of funding for maintenance and repair of academic buildings. The goal is to reach an annual investment of 2 percent of the buildings' replacement values.

Another ongoing request is for just over \$1 million to increase the class size at the University of South Dakota's School of Medicine from 56 to 67 students per year. With the growing demand for new physicians, at least 48 new medical doctors must graduate each year to keep up with the state's needs.

The regents will request \$1 million for student success initiatives aimed at keeping students in college and on track to graduate. University officials have reported positive student outcomes from adding a cadre of professional advisors and career counselors on staff, and regents said they hoped to see more of those initiatives in the future.

A proposal for \$460,000 would continue a current appropriation for the Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory at SDSU. The plan is to enhance the lab's service capacity to meet the growing need for routine diagnostic services. The Brookings-based lab was last updated and renovated in 1992.

The regents also requested \$193,258 in base funding to support a Northern State University e-learning center that delivers critically needed courses to rural high schools and \$260,000 to pay health care professionals who oversee clinical experiences for nurses who pursue the doctor of nursing practice degree at SDSU.