



News Release

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Double-Digit Graduation Growth at South Dakota Public Universities

PIERRE, S.D. – As public university students return next week for another academic year, the South Dakota Board of Regents reports that more of them are graduating from the higher education system than ever before. The total number of students graduating with an associate or bachelor degree at the six public universities has increased by 21 percent since 2005.

Regents' data show that 3,986 students graduated last spring with a bachelor degree, compared with 3,237 in the 2004-05 academic year. That was good for a 23 percent increase over seven years; the number of associate-degree graduates at the public universities increased from 387 to 413, a 7 percent increase. Overall, the increase for both types of degree holders is 21 percent.

“This is encouraging news, since a priority for us is to retain more students within the system and see them through to successful degree completion and careers in our workforce,” said Jack Warner, the regents' executive director and CEO. “We continue to work very hard to increase the number of students who graduate; student success initiatives are a priority focus for all of our institutions,” Warner said.

“One key is to help students come well prepared for college. That's why we work closely with South Dakota high schools to help identify and work with students in need of remediation before they arrive on campus,” Warner said. “Other important initiatives include enhancing academic advising, creating math and writing centers, and offering freshmen success seminars to help ensure college students' success while they are enrolled,” Warner said.

The baseline year of 2004-05 has been established for tracking by the public university system because organizations such as the National Governors Association and Complete College America have projected that, between 2005 and 2025, U.S. higher education institutions must graduate at least 55 percent more students with a postsecondary credential for this country to become competitive economically with other high-performing countries.