



News Release

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Study: State Must Address Shortage of Qualified Workers

RAPID CITY, S.D. – A new study conducted by the South Dakota Board of Regents finds that the state’s long-term economic health soon may be threatened by a shortage of qualified workers. The study further demonstrates the importance of graduating more South Dakotans with postsecondary degrees to meet that need.

The most recent data, based on public university graduation cohorts from 2011, confirm that 72 percent of South Dakota resident students will remain here the year following college graduation to either work or to pursue additional postsecondary education. Looking at outcomes for all students who graduate from South Dakota public universities, the percentage employed in state or enrolled somewhere for further education is just over 65 percent.

Further, 33 percent of out-of-state students who attended one of South Dakota’s public universities also remain in the state the year following graduation, according to the special data analysis.

“This placement rate is consistent with the rates recorded by other recent graduation cohorts,” Jack Warner, the regent’s executive director and CEO explained. “But because these rates increasingly are based on larger cohorts, the actual number of students we’ve placed has climbed steadily since 2005-06,” he said.

The supply of jobs in the state is growing, with more than 41,000 new jobs expected to be created in South Dakota between 2008 and 2018. However, the next generation of South Dakota’s homegrown workforce will almost certainly be smaller than its current working population. Census Bureau projections show South Dakota’s population in the 14 to 44 age range will either remain flat or fall modestly by 2030, while the number of South Dakotans age 65 or older will climb by a staggering 61.7 percent. From 2000 to 2030, South Dakota’s median age will rise from 35.6 to 41.5.

“While jobs are the engine of economic growth, South Dakota’s economic prospects would seem to hinge equally on the availability of skilled workers,” the study says. To gauge how the public university system fares in its effort to produce skilled workers, the study examined data sets from the Board of Regents, the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, and the National Student Clearinghouse to determine the extent to which public university degree completers were retained in state after graduation.

Link to the report:

<http://www.sdbor.edu/mediapubs/documents/2013PlacementOutcomesRegentalGrads.pdf>