



News Release

Contacts: Jack R. Warner, Executive Director and CEO
jack.warner@sdbor.edu

Janelle Toman, Director of Communications
Janelle.toman@sdbor.edu

Telephone: (605) 773-3455

Fax: (605) 773-5320

www.sdbor.edu

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Funding Last Step for Ph.D. Degree in Physics

SPEARFISH, S.D. – With today’s action by the South Dakota Board of Regents to approve a new Ph.D. degree in physics, all that remains to make the degree a reality is to secure funding for the program from the 2013 legislature.

A \$1.9 million request from the regents to fund the program in next year’s state budget was recommended by Gov. Dennis Daugaard in his budget message to lawmakers. “Now it becomes our job to convince South Dakota lawmakers that this is a very important step forward for the state’s investment in research, technology transfer, and long-term economic development,” said Regents President Kathryn Johnson.

Implementation of the Ph.D. degree in physics next fall is contingent on the legislature appropriating the funds needed to deliver the program. Both South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and The University of South Dakota will receive authority to grant the degree. It is estimated the program would launch initially with 12 students enrolled in fall 2013, growing to an enrollment of 48 five years later.

Gov. Daugaard told lawmakers last week the doctoral degree will support the state’s significant investment in the Sanford Underground Research Facility at the former Homestake Gold Mine. Regents’ officials said the degree will increase South Dakota’s national and international reputation in physics, and make its physics faculty more competitive for external grant funding because of the availability of doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers.

South Dakota is currently one of only two states without a doctoral program in physics; Vermont is the other.