



# News Release

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## **South Dakota Gains Ground as Net Importer of College Students**

PIERRE, S.D. – A new study shows that South Dakota continues to import more college freshmen than it sends to colleges in other states and is, in fact, gaining ground on this exchange.

An analysis was first conducted more than a year ago, looking at data from the high school graduating class of 2008. This year, the study was updated with more current data, which was shared with the South Dakota Board of Regents last week in Spearfish.

“The latest data show South Dakota has gained significantly in an exchange between those students who leave and those who come into the state for higher education,” said Jack Warner, the regents’ executive director and CEO. “This is very positive news for a state like ours looking to fill the workplace pipeline, but challenged by a graying population.”

Taken in context with another study released last week, which shows that more South Dakota public university graduates than ever before end up staying here for work or more education, it is further proof that South Dakota is tackling the perceived “brain drain” head on, Warner said. “It’s all about pursuing strategies to keep South Dakota students here for higher education, retain them through their college careers, and then employ them within the state in highly-skilled positions,” he said.

Using existing datasets from the U.S. Department of Education, researchers looked at high school graduates in 2010 who were first-time college students in the fall of 2010. The study drew specific comparisons between two groups: first-time freshmen from other states enrolled in postsecondary institutions in South Dakota and first-time freshmen from South Dakota who enrolled in other states.

The data show that South Dakota was a net importer of college freshmen in fall 2010. There were 2,288 freshmen imported from other states, while only 1,458 freshmen left to attend college out of state, for a net gain to South Dakota’s benefit of 830 students.

Further, the study demonstrated that the gain to South Dakota of college-going students improved by nearly 46 percent from the previous analysis conducted on 2008 high school graduates.

“So we can say, once again, that South Dakota attracts more college freshmen than it loses to other states,” Warner said. “And further, our analysis shows that South Dakota is benefitting from even more students making a decision to stay or come to the state for their higher education.”

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Warner noted that historical data show the import/export ratio started to shift around 2000, when South Dakota began to bring in more college students than those who left. “However, many people still believe that an exodus of students is occurring, so it is very helpful to have solid data that challenge these misperceptions,” he said.

A link to the full report is available on the Board of Regents’ website at:  
<http://www.sdbor.edu/theboard/agenda/2012/December/29.pdf>.