



News Release

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Public University System Responds to COVID-19 Virus

PIERRE, S.D. – Public universities across South Dakota will extend their spring break by one week and cancel non-essential travel in an effort to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Spring break is already underway this week at all campuses within South Dakota’s public university system, but will be extended through Friday, March 20. The announcement Thursday comes from the South Dakota Board of Regents, which governs the six public universities.

“We have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 on any of our campuses, but we are taking reasonable steps to do what we can to protect our students, faculty, staff, and the university communities,” said Paul B. Beran, the regents’ executive director and CEO. “The focus for all of us is the well-being of our students and employees.”

An extended spring break period will allow faculty and staff to adjust programs and coursework, adapt instructional methods, and prepare other appropriate responses to COVID-19 going forward. For students who must remain on campus, essential services such as food service and residence hall accommodations will be available.

As part of the system-wide response, Board of Regents’ officials are directing campus administrators to cancel all non-essential international travel and limit domestic travel on a case-by-case basis, until further notice.

University and system administrators have consulted with state health officials and emergency managers as they enhance prevention strategies across all campuses. Those strategies include reducing travel, limiting large group events, and encouraging the use of distance learning technologies.

“Prevention and personal responsibility all play a large part in this,” Beran said. “We encourage everyone to adopt and promote everyday preventive health behaviors.” Beran urged students, faculty, and staff to pay close attention for further updates from system or university officials through email and websites.

The state of South Dakota maintains updated information and guidance on its COVID-19 website at COVID.SD.GOV.