



News Release

Contacts: Mike Rush, Executive Director and CEO
mike.rush@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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USD Offers Dental Hygiene Degree Online

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The University of South Dakota will soon offer its bachelor’s degree in dental hygiene online in response to changing entry-level standards for the dental hygiene profession.

The South Dakota Board of Regents this week approved USD’s request to offer the degree through online distance delivery starting this fall. USD is the only public university in South Dakota with a dental hygiene program. Officials said online delivery will help practicing dental hygienists earn a bachelor’s degree, which is now the recommended entry-level degree within that profession.

Programs of this nature are often termed “BS Degree Completion” and likely have a market for students for the next five to 10 years, as the field transitions to the standard of a bachelor’s degree from the two-year associate degree, USD officials said.

Individuals targeted for this online offering will be those who have already graduated with an associate degree in dental hygiene or who are currently enrolled in an accredited program anywhere in the country. In the upper Midwest alone, programs in North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Wyoming, and Minnesota grant associate degrees in dental hygiene and could offer new prospective students for the USD degree. For some students, completing an online degree through USD may be less expensive and more convenient than completing a degree at another institution in their state, the regents noted.