



News Release

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Four Finalists Named for USD Presidency

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Board of Regents announced today four candidates who are finalists to become the next president at the University of South Dakota.

Regent Kevin Schieffer, who chairs the presidential search process, said the finalists will be on campus in Vermillion next week (April 24-25) for scheduled meetings with constituents and regents.

The finalists, by alphabetical order, are:

- **Kelli R. McCormack Brown, Milledgeville, Ga., provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Georgia College & State University.** Since 2013, Brown has served as the chief academic officer for Georgia's public liberal arts university, guiding a 25 percent increase in the institution's four-year graduation rate. During a 2016 search for the next president of Valdosta State University in Georgia, she was appointed Valdosta's interim president while retaining her affiliation with Georgia College. Her previous experience includes administrative and academic appointments at the University of Florida, University of South Florida, Illinois State University, and Western Illinois University. Brown holds a Ph.D. in education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, master and bachelor degrees in public health from The University of Toledo, and an associate in applied science degree from Michael J. Owens Technical College.
- **Christopher Callahan, Phoenix, Ariz., dean, vice provost, and professor, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Arizona State University.** Callahan holds three leadership positions at ASU: founding dean of the Cronkite School, vice provost of the ASU Downtown Phoenix Campus, and CEO of Arizona PBS. He is responsible for 300 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, 2,000 students, a \$30 million annual budget, and a weekly audience of 1 million viewers in the combined Cronkite/PBS operation. As vice provost, he is the lead university officer for the downtown campus, which includes six colleges and 13,000 students. He previously held appointments as associate and assistant dean of journalism at the University of Maryland. He has a master of public administration degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a bachelor of science degree in journalism from Boston University.

- **Sheila Gestring, Vermillion, S.D., vice president of finance and chief financial officer, University of South Dakota.** As chief financial officer since 2010 and on the USD finance staff since 2006, Gestring has stabilized the university’s financial position, developed innovative financing plans for new facilities, and worked with the USD Foundation to set major fund-raising goals and priorities for the university. A record-setting donor campaign surpassed its goal of \$250 million several months early. Prior to coming to USD, Gestring was chief financial officer at Flathead Valley Community College in Montana and worked in increasingly responsible finance positions for South Dakota state government. She has a M.B.A. from the University of South Dakota and a bachelor’s degree in accounting and business administration from the University of Sioux Falls.
- **Philip K. Way, Slippery Rock, Pa., interim president, Slippery Rock University.** Since July 2017, Way has been responsible for the leadership of all facets of Slippery Rock University as interim president. He has been Slippery Rock’s provost and vice president for academic affairs since 2013 and for student affairs since 2014, while concurrently serving as a professor in the College of Business. Previously he was associate provost at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and held a variety of academic administrative positions at the University of Cincinnati, while a faculty member. Way was educated in the United Kingdom and came to the U.S. on a fellowship to Harvard University. He holds a Ph.D. in industrial and business studies and a master’s degree in industrial relations, both from the University of Warwick. His B.A. degree in economics is from Cambridge University.

Copies of the finalists’ cover letters and professional vitae are posted online at www.usd.edu/Presidential-Search/Presidential-Finalists. During their time on campus, the candidates will meet with faculty, students, administrative and professional staff, civil service employees, and representatives of the USD Foundation, alumni, and the Vermillion community. The Board of Regents will also meet in executive session with each of the finalists and with the campus representatives of the search committee. No action will be taken at these meetings.