



News Release

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From Unmanned Aircraft to Biology: New Academic Offerings at SDSU

BROOKINGS, S.D. – Students at South Dakota State University will have several new academic options available to them this fall, including a master’s degree in human biology, an undergraduate certificate in unmanned aircraft systems, and a minor in applied statistics.

The South Dakota Board of Regents approved the new offerings at its meeting this week in Brookings.

The master of science degree in human biology offers graduate-level preparation for students seeking competitive admission to professional schools in fields such as osteopathic medicine, optometry, chiropractic, and dental surgery. The SDSU program differs from other graduate biology programs that emphasize research skills. This degree program will focus instead on academic and professional skills needed to gain admission to professional programs in healthcare. The human biology program at SDSU is expected to graduate 20 students a year after full implementation.

A 12-hour undergraduate certificate in unmanned aircraft systems provides students a credential to plan and operate unmanned aircraft, plus the knowledge necessary to attain a Federal Aviation Administration Part 107 license. Certificate programs in the Board of Regents’ system usually require fewer credit hours to complete than a minor. They are developed by packaging a small set of courses that allows students to develop expertise within a focused area of study, addressing identified market and workforce development needs. This certificate will be especially useful to people working in precision agriculture, geographic information systems, construction, and engineering.

An 18 credit-hour minor in applied statistics at SDSU will provide training to apply statistics concepts in a wide variety of fields, including economics, geography, psychology, political science, and sociology. Applied statistics differs from statistics in the level of mathematical knowledge required. The study of applied statistics focuses instead on standard statistical methods and commonly occurring data sets. SDSU officials said demand for the minor came from many industries that need employees trained in data analysis. Fifteen graduates a year are expected to earn the minor after full implementation.