



**LUMINA NAMES SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS RECIPIENT OF \$100,000 CHALLENGE GRANT;
FUNDING BACKS EFFORT TO INCREASE STATE POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT TO 65 PERCENT BY 2025**

PIERRE, SD, May 24, 2017 – The South Dakota Board of Regents today announced it has been selected to receive a \$100,000 attainment challenge grant from Lumina Foundation. Funding will support strategic initiatives to increase the state’s postsecondary attainment rate to 65 percent by 2025.

According to the 2017 issue of *A Stronger Nation*, Lumina’s annual report on postsecondary attainment, South Dakota’s attainment rate was 43.8 percent in 2015, the most recent year for which data are available. That’s below the national rate of 45.8 percent and short of estimates from labor economists, who say 65 percent of all jobs will require some form of high-quality postsecondary credentials by the end of this decade.

Recognizing the need to increase the number of residents with education beyond high school, the Board of Regents recently adopted an attainment goal for 65 percent of adults ages 25-34 to hold some type of postsecondary credential by 2025. Gov. Dennis Daugaard voiced his support for the goal in his 2016 State of the State address, calling it a “worthy goal to pursue.” This goal was also adopted by the state’s Workforce Development Council.

Approaches to improving the quality and quantity of South Dakota’s workforce will focus on increasing the percentage of recent high school graduates enrolling in South Dakota institutions; improving retention and graduation rates for traditional students; and raising the number of completions by students with postsecondary credits who currently lack a credential.

“We applaud the South Dakota Board of Regents for its commitment to increasing education attainment beyond high school,” said Jamie Merisotis, Lumina’s president and CEO. “Today’s workplace demands a greater breadth and depth of talent and South Dakota is wise to pursue a strategy focused on ensuring its residents possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in our rapidly changing labor market.”

The Lumina grant will also support efforts to increase the enrollment and graduation of historically underrepresented populations, especially Native Americans. South Dakota has the third largest Native American population in the country, yet only 20 percent of the state’s Native American adults have a postsecondary credential, compared to 44 percent of white South Dakotans.

“We have set a bold goal to meet our state’s education and workforce needs,” said Mike Rush, executive director and CEO of the South Dakota Board of Regents and executive committee member of the State

Higher Education Executive Officers. “This grant will allow us to ensure all stakeholders are working together to develop the strategies needed to reach our goal.”

Lumina launched its Attainment Challenge Grant program last fall and committed to support states with up to \$100,000 for developing and implementing evidence-based policies to improve student success, close equity gaps, and help their states reach a robust postsecondary attainment goal.

During a meeting at South Dakota State University May 9, the Board of Regents convened a presidents’ roundtable discussion on the attainment goal and strategies to improve student success. “Our ability to meet this attainment goal will require that we target new students, improve retention efforts, and encourage ready adults to return to earn credentials needed for the state’s current workforce needs,” said Regents President Bob Sutton. “Leadership on our six campuses will work aggressively to develop strategies for improving efforts in these areas in the coming year.”

For more information, go to <https://www.sdbor.edu>

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About the South Dakota Board of Regents: The Board of Regents has constitutional authority to govern the system of public higher education in the state of South Dakota. Supported by an executive director and staff, the board provides leadership and sets policies for programs and services delivered by its six public universities and two schools serving special K-12 populations: the deaf and the blind/visually impaired.

About Lumina Foundation: Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. Lumina envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation’s need for talent through a broad range of credentials. The Foundation’s goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy.

Media contacts:

Janelle Toman
South Dakota Board of Regents
605.773.3455
janelle.toman@sdbor.edu

Lucia Anderson Weathers
Lumina Foundation
317.951.5316
landerson@luminafoundation.org